From the *CURQ* Issue Editor

Most undergraduate students today do not remember a world without the Internet, cellphones, or GPS. Theirs is a world of connectedness and interconnectedness. A video chat with friends around the world is not only possible but also commonplace. There is an immediacy in the exchange of complex information.

So, too, is there an increased awareness that the world is broader than the context of our local neighborhoods. The appliances of communication suggest a facile globalization in which otherwise geographically bound issues and perspectives are freed from the fetter of provincial chains. The reality is far more complex. That is where this issue begins its journey. To be connected is one thing, but as Jonathan Swift shows in the satirical eighteenth-century classic *Gulliver's Travels*, mere connection is insufficient. Arrival is but the first step along a much less certain path. For today's undergraduate, the "travel" is easy, but a deep understanding of the new world is far more elusive. This, then, is our task: How do we provide students with research opportunities that both assist in their comprehension and forge a better global community?

In the spring 2017 *CUR Quarterly* print issue, innovative models of undergraduate research in the international context are presented in two articles. "Establishing Undergraduate Project Centers in Cuenca, Ecuador, and Panama City, Panama" by Laureen Elgert and Aaron Sakulich (Worcester Polytechnic Institute) describes a project-based curriculum implemented at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 1970. As part of the degree requirements, students must complete two research projects at one of 40 off-campus sites. Currently more than 800 students per year conduct research projects in these immersive settings, which not only increases students' professional skills but also contributes to the development of a global competence. Elgert and Sakulich discuss the logistics of establishing two new project centers in Panama and Ecuador, as well as the importance of engaging local governments, NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders in research projects. They note that projects with tangible effects on the local community ultimately lead to better learning outcomes, as students are more likely to take ownership of these projects.

In their article, "Undergraduate Learning from the Ground Up: Linking Belowground and Aboveground Diversity in Costa Rica," Daniela Shebitz (Kean University), William Eaton (Pace University), and Juyoung Ha (Kean University) discuss an undergraduate research program funded by the National Science Foundation that benefited students and a rural Costa Rican community. As part of the project, students traveled to a lowland wet forest located in a remote region in northern Costa Rica. Once there, they conducted a variety

of studies examining the flora, fauna, and soil characteristics of the rainforest. While improving research skills, the program increased the students' awareness about local culture, improved their confidence as researchers, and encouraged some students to apply for graduate programs in ecology. Furthermore, the research findings will be used to assist the community with local land management decisions.

John E. Banks and Juan José Gutiérrez (California State University, Monterey Bay) discuss the benefits of stacking high-impact practices in a global setting in their article, "Undergraduate Research in International Settings: Synergies in Stacked High-Impact Practices." They present two case studies from the natural sciences and the social sciences involving three high-impact practices: undergraduate research, service learning, and study abroad. Banks and Gutiérrez discuss the benefits and challenges of implementing these programs, as well as the importance of creating a culture of research at the university level.

John McKillip (Ball State University) provides an interdisciplinary model for undergraduate research and the global community in his article, "Partnering with Students in Iceland and Continental Europe to Develop a New Undergraduate Microbiology Research Journal." This unique program brings students from multiple disciplines together to manage *Fine Focus*, a peer-reviewed digital and print journal for undergraduate microbiology research. Because the journal is edited, designed, and marketed by undergraduate students, they are in a unique position to learn about the entire research process from start to finish.

In "Undergraduate Research Abroad: Different Program Designs Serve Different Needs," Carol Bender (University of Arizona), Kirsten Yaffee (University of Arizona), and David Lopatto (Grinnell College) analyze the scientific and cultural gains of student participants in a group research experience in the Czech Republic and a solo research experience in various other countries, comparing these to outcomes for students involved in a domestic research experience.

The vignettes in the spring 2017 *CUR Quarterly* explore additional ways of implementing undergraduate research in a global setting. Aaron P. Boesenecker (American University) describes the School of International Service's new curriculum, which provides several pathways for students to engage in undergraduate research in international settings. Kristine A. Hildebrandt (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville) discusses efforts to document the endangered languages of Nepal. She highlights undergraduate students' work transcribing digital narratives, analyzing interviews, developing a word corpus, and constructing a community dictionary. Lastly, Maxwell Borella and Darren M. Gravley (Frontiers Abroad/University of Canterbury) present the Frontiers Abroad program, an international study abroad program for

undergraduate students in earth and environmental sciences. Frontiers Abroad is administered by an educational organization with university partnerships in the United States and New Zealand. The program is unique in that it focuses on longitudinal learning by linking an intensive, five-week field camp that introduces students to research techniques and fieldwork skills, followed by a one-semester research course.

Although the benefits of research abroad programs are myriad, the monetary costs associated with overseas travel can serve as a significant barrier to student participation. Thus, short-term opportunities and the use of technology to promote international collaboration can offer substantial benefits to students who might otherwise miss these opportunities. *CURQ on the Web* features one article and one vignette addressing these issues. In their article, “A Delicious Connection: Global Awareness through Structured Multimedia Dialogue,” Brandon Inabinet, Amanda Richey, and Tami Blumenfeld (Furman University) describe a novel program designed to foster dialogue between students in South Carolina and farmers in China. The project paired students in South Carolina with local farmers and food producers to create a documentary about food production in the United States. Students also created a second documentary about farming in China, using previously obtained footage from Yunnan province. As Inabinet and colleagues explain, students, by exploring farmer reactions to the documentaries during and after the film screenings, promoted a global dialogue about food production and increased their own awareness about international food production and sustainability issues.

In her vignette, “Enhancing Global Citizenship through Student Research Presentations,” Rachel Core (Stetson University) demonstrates that short-duration study abroad programs can encourage undergraduate research. She describes an optional spring-break seminar in Shanghai for students enrolled in her sociology class. While in China, students assumed the role of participant observers, taking field notes as they visited factories and farms, as well as met with representatives from NGOs. Upon returning to Stetson University, students analyzed their field notes and presented their research to fellow students.

The themes presented in both the print and online editions of *CUR Quarterly* challenge the academic community to engage students on several levels. As noted, technology appears to make the world smaller, while research innovations such as those presented in this issue reveal vast differences in culture, a diversity of ideas, and a range of sensibilities that blanket the Earth. In both subtle and more obvious ways, the contributors have shown how to bridge global gaps without falling victim to the temptations of exoticism or exceptionalism. Through these varied approaches, students come to appreciate other cultures without the dispassion of Swift’s

Gulliver. Rather, students are given the tools to understand other societies on their own terms. In so doing, they create opportunities for mutual aid and deeper appreciation of the broader human condition.

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CUR Calendar

MARCH 2017

15	Deadline, Transforming Undergraduate Research Culture and Curricula
29	Deadline, Undergraduate Research Collaborations Conference Grants

APRIL 2017

3-7	Undergraduate Research Week
6-8	National Conference on Undergraduate Research, University of Memphis

MAY 2017

22	Deadline, Proposal Writing Institute Application

JUNE 2017

27-29	Undergraduate Research Programs: Undergraduate Research Collaborations Conference, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff

Be sure to check www.cur.org for the most up-to-date news and the Event Calendar.