Summer is almost here, and while many students may choose to go on vacations or just relax for a few months before another grueling semester, some of Oxy’s brightest students will be staying on campus for ten weeks from May 26 until August 1 to conduct research with faculty. Students will be researching topics ranging from The Depictions of Power and Sexuality in Women Surrealist Art to Testing Potential Vaccines for Pigeon Fever in a Mouse Model. These students, regardless of their major, will conduct cutting edge research while developing their leadership, research, and public speaking skills. Furthermore, they will get to create a poster presentation at the end of the program and learn about the research that other students in a variety of disciplines are doing. This enriching academic experience is a great opportunity for these students.

Sophomore Oscar Yip will be, “doing research in Professor Baran’s Lab this summer working with C. elegans, a nematode worm. I will be doing some genetic mapping and phenotypic characterization of stub (rb4), a suppressor of tba-1 neural defects in C. elegans. Tba-1 is a gene that affects microtubule structure in C. elegans.” Complicated as that may sound, Yip feels that by “doing summer research this summer, I hope to gain some experience doing lab-work. I plan on going further in the field of cellular and molecular biology and I think that doing research with Professor Baran this summer will teach me a lot.”

Junior Jessica May will be conducting research the effects of government subsidized healthcare on the public and public health. May hopes to “be able to contribute to the larger conversation about health care in America. It is a very controversial topic but I feel that it is very important and deserves a great deal of attention.” Furthermore, she hopes that through her research, she will practice extremely important research techniques in data collection and cleaning. Says May, “I am also excited to work with Professor Lehr because he is such an amazing professor and great mentor.”

However the Summer Research Program is not all about academics! Since students have the opportunity to live on campus, they have the opportunity to explore Los Angeles in their free time. Often, the URC will host events for students’ enjoyment.

If you are interested in summer research for 2016, it’s never too early to begin thinking about faculty you would like to work with. You can find relevant information on the URC’s website by clicking here, or come by the URC office in the Academic Commons on the main floor in the old wing.
Drones and Super Athletes

Have you ever had an amazing idea that you really wanted to develop or wanted to go somewhere to supplement your learning but didn't have the cash to do so? Occidental College maintains a fund to support small academic projects by students. Students simply need to apply for an Academic Student Projects grant (ASP grant) at the URC. Whether you need money for art supplies and materials for a production or for the purchase of lab reagents for an experiment, any full time student can apply for an ASP grant for their academic project, regardless of their major. However, these grants are limited to a maximum of $300 and each student is limited to one grant a year. This is because the ASP grant should not be the only source of funding for a large project.

Sophomore Thao Nguyen applied to for an ASP grant at the URC to help her develop an autopilot system for the Digital Scholarship Department's Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) so that it can avoid collisions. Says Nguyen, “while I was working for the Digital Scholarship department as a student assistant, I spent my time self-teaching and became interested in programming Arduino. The UAV crashed and malfunctioned often because of the inexperienced users, so I thought that an autopilot was needed to protect the UAV since it's quite an expensive property.” She hopes that this project will gain her more experience in engineering and programming.

Senior Teran Mawhinney also applied for an ASP grant. She used the grant to fund her research into the effects of sodium phosphate on anaerobic capacity in relation to the 300-yd shuttle. Studies have found that when cross country runners ingest sodium phosphate for 6 days, they were able to run at an eight minute pace for nine minutes longer than those who did not receive the pill. However, Mawhinney says, “It will be one of the first studies to look at the anaerobic benefits of sodium phosphate on anaerobic athletes (Occidental College Football Players) on an anaerobic spring shuttle.” She became interested in this topic of research when her Exercise Physiology professor, Professor Sternlicht, mentioned that sodium phosphate would cause you to not feel the burning feeling in your muscles that is experienced during exercise-induced acidosis and would allow you to outperform your competition. This piqued Mawhinney's interest and she is now studying it for her senior comps. Says Mawhinney, “I'm hoping to find significance in my study. If I don't, that is ok, because I'm sure to gain experience and knowledge on how to conduct original research.” She adds, “The URC has provided me with funds to be able to start my study. Without them, I honestly would be doing a literature review on the subject instead of actively collecting and analyzing data that I obtained myself.”

If you too are interested in obtaining funds for a project of your own design, click HERE to visit the URC's website for more details.
Presenting your research at a conference is not only a rewarding experience that allows one to receive recognition for hard work well done, but is also a great addition to one's resume. Graduate schools and employers alike view presentations as an indicator of dedication to research as well as confidence in one's knowledge and expertise. One amazing opportunity to present at a national conference to students and faculty from across the country is the National Conferences on Undergraduate Research (NCUR). Not only do you get to present at a national conference, but the URC pays for your travel, lodging, registration, and other costs associated with presenting at the conference!

A handful of the brightest of Oxy student researchers took advantage of this wonderful opportunity earlier this month. They went to this year’s NCUR at Eastern Washington University and presented to a diverse group of students and researchers from across the country from a variety of disciplines. The mission of NCUR, which was established in 1987, is to promote undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative activity in all fields of study by sponsoring an annual conference for students. NCUR stands out from most conferences in that it welcomes presenters from all institutions of higher learning from a wide swath of academic subjects.

Oxy students majoring in Biology, Chemistry, CTSJ, and Religious Studies presented on their research that, in most cases, has taken up much of their undergraduate careers! NCUR provides a fantastic outlet to present work of such longstanding effort and Occidental was proud to have these students representing us at Eastern Washington University.

Congratulations to Rachel Buckner ‘15, Zoe Goozner ‘15, Alexander Graves ‘15, Mealani Kaiser ‘15, Sabrina Moffly ‘15, Carlina Perna ‘15, and Rachel Seibert ‘17 for their successful participation in NCUR this year and thank you for representing us at this national event.

If you are interested in following in the footsteps of these seven wonderful students by presenting at NCUR next year, come by the URC located on the main floor of the academic commons in the old wing or check out our website HERE. Abstract submission for next year’s NCUR will begin in September so start preparing now!
**Deadlines and Announcements**

**May**
- 1: NCUR final reports and expense reimbursements due by 3 PM
- Spring Semester funding (ASP, etc.)
- 11: Final report due
- 25: Memorial Day (campus closed)
- 26: First Day of Summer Research Program

**June**
- All month: SRP in Progress

**July**
- All month: SRP in Progress
- 29: End of Summer Conference

**Announcements:**

April 23rd 11:30 to 1:30, JSC Salsbury Young. SRP 2015 orientation. Stop by and ask questions and to fill out any missing forms.

Planning to be on campus this summer? Watch for an announcement from the campus post office about summer forwarding addresses, and be sure to follow those directions to let everyone know that you will be on campus this summer.

Part of the SRP this summer? Please go ahead and complete the CITI ‘Responsible Research’ training modules. Instructions were sent out with your SRP contracts. If you need more info, please contact the URC at urc@oxy.edu and we will email you instructions. This must be completed by June 24, 2015.

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