



# THE STUDENT SCHOLAR: NEWS FROM THE URC

Undergraduate  
Research Center

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## The URC is “Official”

Happy fall semester to our returning undergrad researchers, SOAR members, and faculty mentors! For those of you new to MTSU, we cannot wait to meet you and welcome you to our community. Please do not let the word “research” intimidate you. Undergraduate research at MTSU spans all academic disciplines – agriculture, business, chemistry, dance and theatre, political science, biology, sociology, health and human performance, art and design, engineering, and everything else in between. Let us help you find a way to get involved!

Before diving into our summer research adventures, new student leaders for 2024-25, and our upcoming events and workshops, we are thrilled to share some long-awaited news. **The Undergraduate Research Center is now an official MTSU research center!** We are grateful to President McPhee and Provost Byrnes for their commitment to supporting undergraduate research and creative activity at MTSU. A very special thank you to Dr. David Butler, Vice Provost for Research & Dean of Graduate Studies, and Rachel McGinnis, Director for the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, for their encouragement and mentorship as we helped build the URC the past several years and implemented new programs, developed additional resources for our students, and expanded our engagement regionally, nationally, and internationally.

NEW for 2024-25. The URC is pleased to offer an *Undergraduate Research Distinction* digital badge, which is an official MTSU accreditation issued to a student upon successful completion of a set of competencies in undergraduate research. We are also excited to kick off our Council for Undergraduate Research, Vision, and Exploration (CURVE), a student advisory group comprised of passionate undergraduate researchers tasked with bringing innovation, academic excellence, and diversity to our programs. A few other initiatives in the works include faculty and mentor awards, a faculty advisory group, and several new workshop offerings for the fall semester.

Never hesitate to let us know how we can help. Looking forward to a fantastic semester!

Jamie Burriss, Ph.D.

Director, Undergraduate Research Center



# THE URC TEAM

**YOU**, our students and faculty, are our **#1 priority**. We are here to help however possible, whether it is getting you involved in undergraduate research, helping you find a faculty mentor, thinking through a research or creative activity project, hosting a workshop on a topic of need, or facilitating events. Meet our team!



Jamie.Burriss@mtsu.edu

## DR. JAMIE BURRISS

Director

Dr. Burriss oversees the URC, the Student Organization for the Advancement of Research (SOAR), our SOAR Ambassador program, the URECA grant program, Scholars Week, Posters at the Capitol, and all other activities related to the URC.

Prior to returning to MTSU, Dr. Burriss served as the Curriculum Administrator for the SELECT MD Program at the University of South Florida while pursuing her doctorate. After USF, she accepted a position at Vanderbilt University as the Assessment Analyst for the College of Medicine. But, her heart has always been TRUE BLUE and she is happy to once again serve her undergraduate alma mater.



Casey.Penston@mtsu.edu

## CASEY PENSTON

Coordinator

Casey Penston, the URC Coordinator, is responsible for supporting initiatives and programs provided by the URC. If you have questions about events, workshops, URECA grants, stipends, travel, or SOAR, she's your go-to!

Casey is a small-town Tennessee native who has called Murfreesboro her home since 2012. She attended MTSU while earning her Bachelor of Science in Biology and has a background in environmental science, education, and office administration. Currently, Casey is pursuing a Master's Degree in Professional Studies.

Finding purpose in empowering students to set and achieve personal and professional goals, Casey brings her passion for supporting student success to the URC program.

## URC Student Workers

Meet our wonderful student team! These ladies balance school work, extra curriculars, multiple jobs, and several other commitments. They are always eager to help and serve our MTSU research community!



## EDEN ANDERSON

Major: Biochemistry  
SOAR Involvement:  
President, 2024-25,  
Scholars Week Chair,  
2023-24



## HANNAH ANTRICAN

Major: Psychology &  
Sociology  
SOAR Involvement:  
Vice President, 2024-25

# FALL URECA GRANTS

APPLICATION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 5, 2024 BY 4:30PM  
[LEARN HOW TO APPLY HERE](#)



## Want to get paid to do research or work on a creative project?

THEN CHECK OUT OUR UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY GRANTS

To support our vision of nurturing a culture of research and creative activity at MTSU, the URC offers Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity (URECA) grants to students three times a year. Awards range from \$500 for beginners to \$2,000 for experienced researchers.

To learn more about URECA grants and how to submit proposals, check out our [website](#) and learn more about our new SOAR Ambassadors on [Page 8](#).

**Need assistance finding a mentor or figuring out which level grant is best for you?** Those interested in creative activities and projects can contact Connor Prim at [cap8d@mtmail.mtsu.edu](mailto:cap8d@mtmail.mtsu.edu). Michaela Harrison or Emily Callison can help with STEM proposals. Contact Michaela at [mlh2c@mtmail.mtsu.edu](mailto:mlh2c@mtmail.mtsu.edu) or Emily at [enc3m@mtmail.mtsu.edu](mailto:enc3m@mtmail.mtsu.edu). They can also help with proposal development, budget and justification, creating a timeline, and proposal review.



### STUDENTS MAY APPLY FOR THE FOLLOWING LEVELS:

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**Assistant** - beginners, one semester project, \$500 stipend

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**Silver Scholar** - experienced student researcher, one semester project, \$1000 stipend

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**Gold Level** - experienced student researcher, 2 semester project (fall & spring), \$2,000 stipend

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**Team** - All levels





# URECA *News*

## PROGRAM UPDATES\* & HIGHLIGHTS

| Individual Award Levels | Student Stipend   | Semester Duration  | Expected Hours |
|-------------------------|---|--------------------|----------------|
| Assistant               | \$500   | 1 semester         | 50 hours       |
| Silver Scholar          | \$1,000   | 1 or 2 semester(s) | 100 hours      |
| Gold Scholar            | \$2,000*  | 2 semesters        | 200*           |
| Platinum Scholar        | \$3,000*  | Full-time Summer   | 300*           |
| Team Award              | A Team consist of 2 to 4 students of varying individual levels, seen above. Stipend, duration and hours depend on the team members individual levels. |                    |                |

### Travel funding for all award levels:\*

\$300 domestic or \$400 international

### Supply Budget:\*

up to \$300 for Individual awards  
up to \$500 for Team awards

[Click Here for More Info](#)

## URECA WORKSHOP

IT'S TIME TO LEARN ABOUT THE

# URECA!

COME AND LEARN ABOUT EVERYTHING URECA!

- **WHAT IS A URECA?**
- **HOW TO APPLY**
- **HOW TO WRITE A PROPOSAL**  
*and more*

### WHERE?

STUDENT UNION  
ROOM 220

### WHEN?

THURSDAY,  
AUGUST 29TH  
9:00AM-10:00AM

*Introducing...*

## INFOREADY



**New for 2024-25!** Submit your URECA proposal with InfoReady!

**InfoReady** is a proposal management system that streamlines application submissions, document collection, routing, reviews, notifications, and reporting into one web-based platform.

[Click Here to Learn how to APPLY!](#)

**URECA** offers students the opportunity to engage in faculty driven mentored research. The program supports the **Undergraduate Research Center's** mission to nurture a culture of research and creative activity at MTSU.





# FEATURED FACULTY MENTOR

**DR. KIEL ORMEROD**

BIOLOGY



## RESEARCH INTERESTS

The Ormerod lab seeks to understand the cellular and molecular mechanisms underlying cellular communication. Dr. Ormerod offered the following information pertaining to his lab's focus: We aim to understand how neuromodulatory substances alter cellular communication underlying the coordination and orchestration of physiological and behavioral processes. We explore foundational principles including: i) how signaling molecules like neuropeptides are encoded, sorted, trafficked, and undergo fusion at synapses; ii) how modulatory substances impact the efficacy of neuronal synapses; iii) excitation-contraction coupling mechanisms; iv) how changes in these processes manifest as changes in animal physiology and behavior; v) and how diseases and disorders impact physiology and behavior.

## WHAT IMPACT HAS THE URC HAD ON YOU?

The Undergraduate Research Center has been a wonderful resource for my students and myself during my time at MTSU. As an active researcher, finding and recruiting talented and eager undergraduate students is critical for my success. The URC is a tremendous resource for undergraduate students to identify a faculty mentor as well as providing them with incredible opportunities like the Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity awards, support to attend local/state/national conferences, and creating a platform for research engagement, networking, and communication. I have been fortunate during my time here to have numerous students receive URECA awards to support their research projects in the lab. These students have taken full advantage of these opportunities, not only via direct involvement in meaningful research, but also by presenting their research findings on a university-wide, state, and national scale. Last year alone, members of the lab presented at conferences in Washington, San Diego, Cape Cod, and Birmingham, (U.K.) which would not have been possible without the support of URC. The three most recent publications coming from our lab are co-authored by 6 different MTSU undergraduates who all received URECA awards, and two of these publications are led by MTSU undergraduates. Collectively, the URC has had an immensely positive impact on myself and our research group. The most meaningful impact to me is being able to spend time interacting with the exceptional students at MTSU, aiding in their scientific and professional progress, and watching them achieve their academic and vocational aspirations!"

**Check Out Our  
Expanded List of  
Faculty Mentor  
Profiles Here!**

**To learn more about the  
Ormerod Lab, click [HERE!](#)**



# What is the Student Organization for the Advancement of Research? AKA "SOAR"



SOAR is our awesome student organization comprised of undergraduate students who are committed to developing and sustaining an active and successful undergraduate research environment at MTSU.

## SOAR's Mission

To enhance student's research capacity through increased awareness, collaboration and skill building.

## Why Join?

- SOAR will enhance a student's research capacity through increased awareness, collaboration and skill building by offering workshops and trainings to fulfill the needs of undergraduate researchers.
- SOAR will assist students in the preparation of poster presentations and development of abstracts to increase conference presence on a national level, encourage students to attend the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, and facilitate travel preparations.
- SOAR will provide peer mentoring to students new to undergraduate research.





Meet our 2024-2025

# SOAR Officers!



Student Organization for  
the Advancement of Research



## **EDEN ANDERSON** **PRESIDENT**

MAJOR: BIOCHEMISTRY

RESEARCH ACCOLADES: SCHOLARS WEEK 2023, SCHOLARS WEEK 2024, NCUR 2024, URECA RECIPIENT, POSTERS AT THE CAPITOL 2024, URC STUDENT WORKER

## **HANNAH ANTRICAN** **VICE PRESIDENT**

MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY & SOCIOLOGY

RESEARCH ACCOLADES: NCUR 2024, URECA RECIPIENT, SCHOLAR'S WEEK 2024, ICUR 2024 URC STUDENT WORKER



## **ALLISON THROM** **SECRETARY**

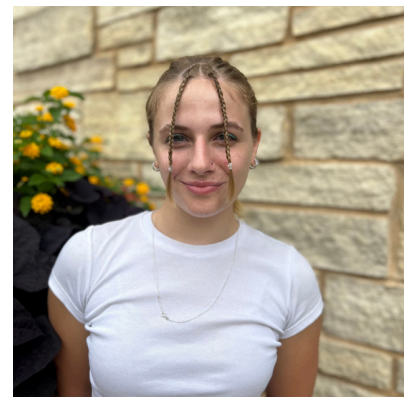
MAJOR: BIOLOGY

RESEARCH ACCOLADES: URECA RECIPIENT, MT PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE 2024, EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING INTERNSHIP AT ST. JUDE. AT ST. JUDE CHILDREN'S RESEARCH HOSPITAL SUMMER 2022 & 2023

## **IZZY JACOBER** **TREASURER**

MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY

RESEARCH ACCOLADES: URECA RECIPIENT, RESEARCH EXPERIENCES FOR UNDERGRADUATES (REU) 2024





Meet our 2024-2025

# SOAR Ambassadors!



Student Organization for  
the Advancement of Research



## ANNA COLLINS

### READY TO SOAR COORDINATOR

#### ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

OVERSEE THE THE “READY (RESEARCH EXPERIENCE ACTIVITY DESIGNED FOR YOUTH) TO SOAR PROGRAM. THIS NEW PROGRAM IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR AREA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO VISIT MTSU’S CAMPUS FOR AN IMMERSIVE RESEARCH OR CREATIVE ACTIVITY EXPERIENCE DURING SCHOLARS WEEK.



## SIERRA CRUZ

### COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

#### ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

ASSIST WITH THE URC MONTHLY NEWSLETTER, SOCIAL MEDIA TAKEOVERS, FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM POSTS, LAB DIRECTORY, AND MARKETING FOR EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS.



## KATIE BAUMANN

### GRADUATE MENTOR

#### ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

HELP STUDENTS WITH APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL. INCLUDING ASSISTING WITH APPLICATIONS, PERSONAL STATEMENTS, AND ANY QUESTIONS STUDENTS HAVE ABOUT THE PROCESS.

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## ARIEL NICASTRO & JONATHAN MAGDY

### SCHOLARS WEEK CO-CHAIRS

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:  
HELP ORGANIZE EVENTS FOR SCHOLARS WEEK, PRIMARILY FOCUSED ON THE RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY EXPOSITION. SERVE AS STUDENT LIAISON TO MTSU SCHOLARS WEEK COMMITTEE.



# MICHAELA HARRISON, EMILY CALLISON & CONNOR PRIM

## PEER MENTOR SCHOLARS



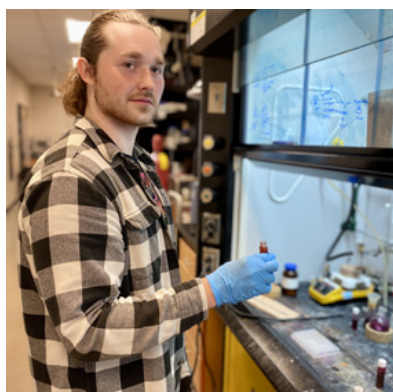
Michaela Harrison



Connor Prim

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES;  
MENTOR STUDENTS INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED WITH UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH. PROVIDE GUIDANCE RELATED TO URECA GRANTS (PROPOSAL, BUDGET, TIMELINE) AND THE DISSEMINATION PROCESS.

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### ISAAC PUCKETT

#### RESEARCH ASSISTANT

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:  
ASSISTS WITH RESEARCH PROJECTS, IDENTIFICATION OF EXTERNAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS, DATA ANALYSIS, AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS.



### EMILY CALLISON

#### PEER MENTOR SCHOLAR READY TO SOAR COORDINATOR

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:  
ASSISTS IN MENTORING STEM STUDENTS INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED WITH UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH. ALSO HELPS PLAN AND EXECUTE THE READY TO SOAR PROGRAM.



# FEATURED SOAR STUDENT



## VICTORIA GRIGSBY

**Major:** Political Science and German

**Faculty Mentor:** Dr. Mary Evins

**Current Research Focus:**  
Know Your Ballot: MTSU Students Educate  
Fellow Students About our Legislators

**Project Description:**  
The American Democracy Project, will present a poster covering legislation on key political topics supported or opposed by TN House and Senate representatives of Rutherford County, TN. In the following fall 2024 semester, this research will be converted to signs around MTSU's campus to educate MTSU students before the 2024 elections.



### Why does this topic interest you?

Tennessee has one of the lowest rates of youth voter turnout in the country. Young people, such as ourselves at MTSU, are not going out to vote. It is our mission to increase MTSU's voter turnout to create civically engaged students.

### What are your professional aspirations?

After graduating from MTSU, I plan to attend graduate school in the D.C. area and I would like to work in public or foreign policy making after finishing my education.

### Do you have any advice for future researchers?

My advice to future researchers would be to focus on what they are passionate about and to have a strong partnership with faculty advisors and mentors.

**Check Out More SOAR  
Student Profiles Here!**

[MTSU.EDU/URC/SOAR-PROFILE/](https://www.mtsu.edu/urc/soar-profile/)



# URC FEATURED SOAR ALUMNI



## MATTHEW JOHNSON



**FRESHMAN YEAR**

**Alumni Major:** Biochemistry

**Favorite SOAR memory:**

My favorite SOAR memory, aside from all the friends and connections I made with faculty, was being able to travel to the 2023 SERMACS meeting in Durham, NC to present a talk about my research! Little did I know when I traveled to present that I would end up living in the area after graduating!

**Advice to current SOAR members:**

Advice I would give to current SOAR members is to embrace uncomfortable or difficult situations to grow from them, and also to not sell yourself short on your abilities and your value! I never thought I would be in the place I am now even as recent as a year ago. You absolutely just have to believe in yourself and your capabilities as a researcher and an individual.

**Plans for the future:** What I'm doing now is beginning to work on my Ph.D. in Pharmaceutical Sciences in the Eshelman School of Pharmacy at UNC Chapel Hill.



**CURRENT PHOTO**

# CONNECT WITH SOAR

LOOK FOR US AT SEVERAL EVENTS THIS FALL!  
AND MORE TO COME!

## PRESIDENT'S PARTY

 **STU COMMONS**

 **Fri, August 23rd, 5:00pm-8:00pm**



## URECA WORKSHOP

 **STUDENT UNION ROOM 220**

 **Thu, August 29th, 9:00-10:00am**

## STUDENT ORGANIZATION FAIR

 **STU BALLROOM COMMONS**

 **Thu, September 5th, 2:00-5:00pm**



Student Organization for  
the Advancement of Research


## SOAR INTEREST MEETING

 **STUDENT UNION ROOM 220**

 **Mon, September 9th, 4:30-5:30pm**

## FALL BUSINESS MEETING & BREAKFAST

 **STUDENT UNION GALLERY/ROOM 142\***  
\*Outside entrance next door to Blue Print

 **Thu, September 12th, 9:00-10:00am**



Student Organization for  
the Advancement of Research

# LEARN MORE ABOUT SOAR

## Students for the Advancement of Research (SOAR) Interest Meeting!

**MON, SEPT 9  
4:30-5:30 PM  
STUDENT UNION 220**

### What:

SOAR is a student organization of undergrads who are committed to developing and sustaining a successful undergraduate research

### Who:

Students who are interested in learning more about getting involved with research and SOAR! People who are completely new to research are welcome!

## Fall Business Meeting -&- Breakfast

**THUS, SEPT 12  
9:00-10:00 AM  
STUDENT UNION 142\***

\*Outside entrance next door to Blue Print

### Who?

ALL Majors - yes, all of them!! Anyone interested in being a part of a really cool student organization and is interested in advancing their involvement in undergraduate research or creative activity should join us!

### How?

RSVP [HERE](#) by September 1st!





# STAY ACTIVE WITH SOAR!

## Hey SOAR Members!

Do You Want to Graduate with a Distinction in Undergraduate Research or obtain a Digital Badge?  
Make Sure You're On Track Below...

### Distinction in Undergraduate Research Requirements

- Successful Completion of an **Assistant-Level** URECA Project
- **Poster Presentation** at Fall Open House, Scholars Week, or Summer Research Celebration
- **Endorsement** From URECA Faculty Mentor
- **Active Participation** for at Least One Academic Year



### Scholar Distinction in Undergraduate Research Requirements

- Successful Completion of a **Scholar-Level** URECA Project
- **Poster Presentation** at Fall Open House, Scholars Week, or Summer Research Celebration
- One of the following: **Poster or Presentation** at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research **OR** Published in **Peer-Reviewed** Academic Journal **OR** Service as a **SOAR Ambassador, Officer or URC Student Board Member**
- **Endorsement** From One or More URECA Faculty Mentors
- **Active Participation** for at Least One Academic Year

## WHAT DEFINES "ACTIVE PARTICIPATION"

- Attend the Fall/Spring **Business Meeting**
- **Volunteer** at 1+ SOAR Events (Open House, Scholars Week, etc.)
- Create a **SOAR Profile**



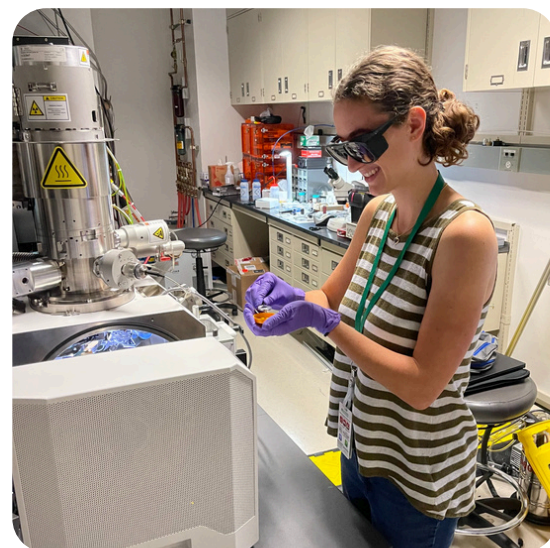
FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit [https://www.mtsu.edu/urc/graduation\\_distinction.php](https://www.mtsu.edu/urc/graduation_distinction.php)

# SOAR STUDENTS SUMMER RESEARCH PROJECTS

## SCIENCE UNDERGRADUATE LABORATORY INTERNSHIPS (SULI) 2024

SOAR Ambassador Ariel Nicastro participated in a SUL internship this summer at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory studying pan sharpening cathodoluminescence images. SULI are funded by the U.S. Department of Energy and provide students with the opportunity to be mentored by a leading expert in a specific research area.



**Ariel Nicastro**

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCES FOR UNDERGRADUATES (REU) 2024



The Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program supports active research participation by undergraduate students in any of the areas of research funded by the National Science Foundation. REU participants work closely with faculty at their host institution and receive stipends for their work, often alongside housing or travel assistance. This summer, three SOAR students took part in the program!



**Isabel Jacober**  
Computational neuroscience



**Lula Baldriche**  
Renewable energy generation and storage



**Ian Wilson**  
Fungal pathogens



# ICUR

## SOAR MEMBERS PRESENT AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Four SOAR students presented their research at the 11th annual International Conference of Undergraduate Research this June, marking the first time MTSU has participated.

Students from over 15 institutions across the globe participated in the conference. ICUR fosters a supportive interdisciplinary research community that provides meaningful experiences for undergraduates without them having to leave their home institutions.

### *Presentations:*



“The Ordinary Price of Zero” - Anna Collins



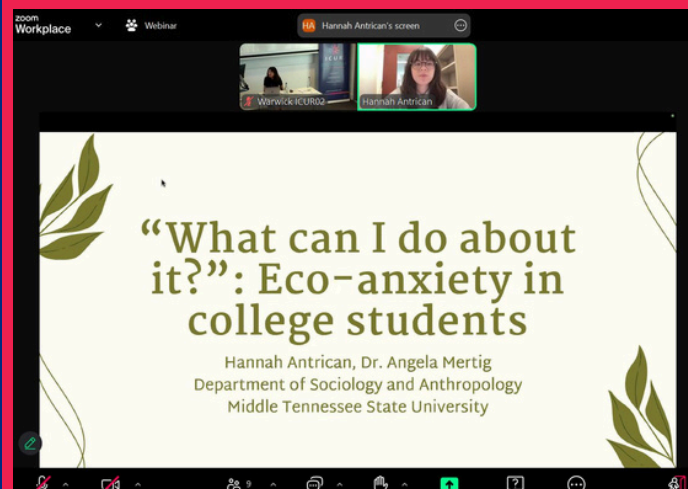
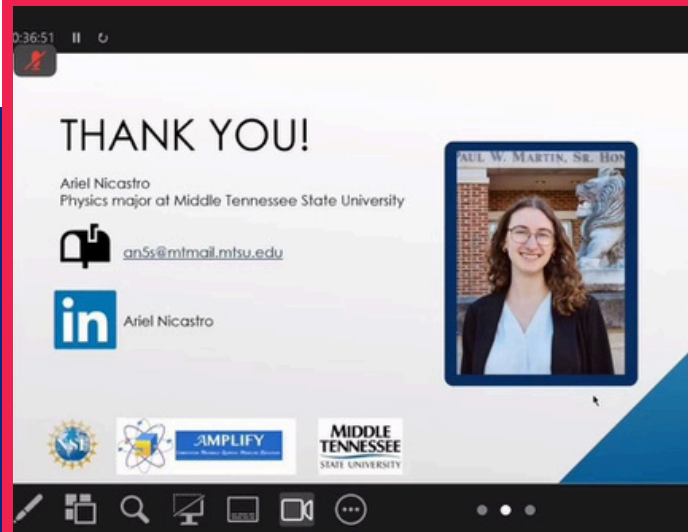
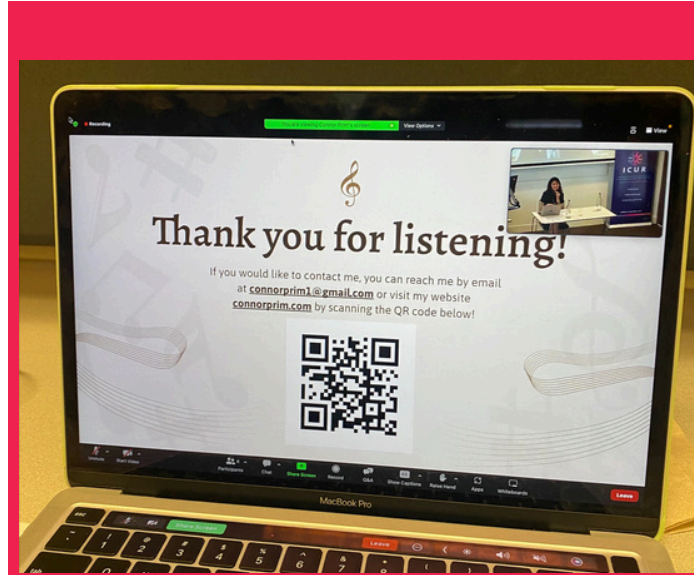
“Modeling Disorder Effects in Quantum Materials” - Ariel Nicastro



“What can I do about it?: Eco-anxiety in College Students” - Hannah Antrican



“Integrating Classical Music into the Elementary Classroom” - Connor Prim





# MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



**Undergraduate Research  
and Creative Activity**

## OPEN HOUSE



Undergraduate  
Research Center

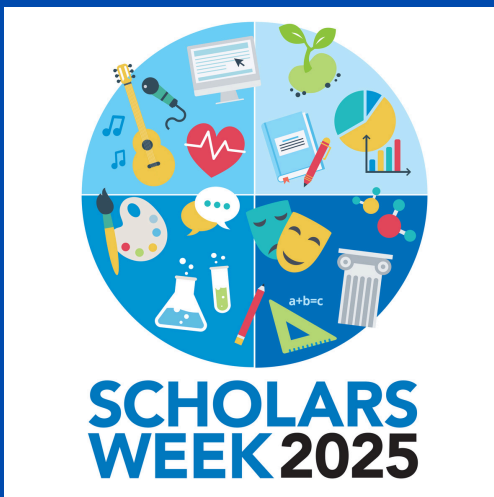
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MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

## URC FALL OPEN HOUSE

**Thursday, November 7th, 2024 | 11:00am-1:00pm**  
**SCI Building, 2nd floor, Atrium**

The Open House is an informal poster session that showcases undergraduate student research and creative projects at MTSU. All students, particularly new students and transfer students, are invited to attend. Registration will open soon!



**SCHOLARS WEEK 2025**  
**MARCH 11-15, 2025**

**Scholars Week** is a week long tradition during which MTSU's academic colleges celebrate scholarship, research, and creative activity through a variety of events and activities.



**NCUR 2025**  
**APRIL 7-9, 2025**

The **National Conference on Undergraduate Research** hosts 3,500 to 4,000 students from across the globe, presenting their research through posters, oral presentations, visual arts, and performances.

# JOIN US FOR OUR GRADUATE SCHOOL WORKSHOP

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**THINKING ABOUT ATTENDING  
GRADUATE SCHOOL?**



**IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO START PREPARING!**

Join the URC and the Career Center to learn tips and tricks on application process, test prep, letters of recommendation, personal statements, and more!



OCTOBER 29, 2024  
6:00-7:00PM  
STU 220

\*ALSO INCLUDES DINNER & HALLOWEEN TREAT



Undergraduate  
Research Center

# COMPACT<sup>25</sup>

## Uniting through Public Purpose: Coalition Building for Impact

MARCH 31- APRIL 2, 2025 | ATLANTA, GA



<https://events.compact.org/compact25/5578435>

### SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL

Key topic areas:

- Addressing systemic inequities and wicked societal problems
- Anti-racist community and civic engagement teaching, research, and service
- Assessment, evaluation, data, and storytelling
- Authentic campus-community partnerships
- Bridge building, dialogue, and discourse to support an engaged democracy
- Centering mental health, belonging, and well-being
- Civic learning and student success strategies
- Infrastructure and support for community engagement
- Student-led, Student-driven engagement and leadership

**PROPOSALS ARE DUE SEPTEMBER 27, 2024**



[Submit a proposal](#)



[Questions about proposal process](#)



### REGISTRATION

- Currently, registration is only open to Campus Compact members. General registration opens **September 17th**. For students, the conference rate is **\$300**.

### ACCOMODATIONS

- Campus Compact has rooms available at Marriott Marquis Atlanta for **\$232** per night. Room block expires on **Monday, March 10, 2025**.

### SESSION TYPES

- Roundtable
- Poster
- Author Talk
- Knowledge-to-Action Workshop
- Promising Practice

### PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

- You can find the preliminary schedule [here](#).

For any questions, contact Campus Compact,

 [conference@compact.org](mailto:conference@compact.org)

 (617) 357-1881



# JOIN the Council for Undergraduate Research, Vision, and Exploration (CURVE)

*Let's Shape the CURVE Together!*



## What is CURVE?

NEW for 2024-25, CURVE is the Council for Undergraduate Research, Vision, and Exploration—our goal is to promote student involvement in undergraduate research. We offer a dynamic space where passionate undergraduate researchers like you come together to create the boundaries of innovation and academic excellence.

## Benefits



### Experience & Graduate with Distinction

Along with receiving valuable experience in the interworking of the Undergraduate Research Center, council members will be eligible for graduation distinction.

## Eligibility

1

At least one semester of research experience

2

Not on Academic Probation

3

Graduation no earlier than May 2025

## Contact Us



For more information, please contact Eden Anderson at [ela3e@mtmail.mtsu.edu](mailto:ela3e@mtmail.mtsu.edu)

## Responsibilities

### Connect

- Attend monthly meetings with Undergraduate Research Center (URC) staff.

### Contribute

- Advise the URC by sharing your vision for programming and more.

### Cultivate

- Promoting undergraduate research at workshops, tabling events, and speaking engagements.

### Collaborate

- Work as a team to develop, strengthen, and expand the undergraduate research awareness at MTSU.

*Be a pioneer in your field. Join us to shape CURVE and explore your unique impact on undergraduate research. All majors welcome!*



Follow us on

LinkedIn

Undergraduate Research Center



The screenshot shows the LinkedIn search interface. At the top, the search bar contains the text "Undergraduate Research Center" and is highlighted with a red border. Below the search bar are navigation icons for Home, My Network, Jobs, Messaging, and Notifications. A filter bar includes "Companies" (highlighted in green), "Locations", "Industry", "Company size", and "All filters". The search results section shows "11 results". The first result is for "Undergraduate Research Center" in Murfreesboro, TN, with a red arrow pointing to a "Follow" button that is circled in red. Below the company name, there is a brief description: "The URC provides MTSU undergraduates the opportunity to engage in mentored research across diverse disciplines." and a "connection works here" indicator.



## UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH DISTINCTION

# DIGITAL BADGE

A digital badge is an official MTSU accreditation that is issued to a student upon successful completion of a set of courses, programs, or other competencies. Digital badges are visual representations of your skills, knowledge, and achievements. Share them on social media, websites, resume, or digital portfolios to showcase your accomplishments to potential employers, peers, and educators. Embrace digital badges to highlight your journey and stand out in a competitive landscape!



## Required Competencies:

- ✓ Successful completion of an Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity (URECA) grant project.
- ✓ Poster presentation or creative performance at one of the URC's signature events.
- ✓ Active participation in the Student Organization for the Advancement of Research (SOAR).
- ✓ Endorsement from the student's faculty mentor.

## Description:

The Undergraduate Research Distinction badge recognizes students who have achieved excellence in undergraduate research or creative activity through active engagement, mentorship, and a scholarly or artistic contribution to their academic discipline.

## Outcomes:

Students will make a scholarly or artistic contribution to knowledge through their research or creative activity.

**CLICK TO**  
**LEARN MORE**



Undergraduate  
Research Center

## CONTACT US:

- 🌐 [urc.mtsu.edu](http://urc.mtsu.edu)
- ✉ [Casey.Penston@mtsu.edu](mailto:Casey.Penston@mtsu.edu)



# UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH GRADUATION DISTINCTIONS



## LEVELS OF RECOGNITION:

### Distinction in Undergraduate Research

- Students receive a dark blue, light blue, and white cord

### Scholar Distinction in Undergraduate Research

- Students receive a dark blue, light blue and white cord  
**AND** a medallion (see image in the upper right corner)

## DISTINCTION CRITERIA

### Distinction in Undergraduate Research

\*Students must fulfill all requirements

- 1 Successful completion of an Assistant level URECA project - 50 hours of research or more.
- 2 Poster presentation or creative performance at one of the URC's signature events: Fall Open House, Scholars Week, or Summer Research Celebration.
- 3 Active participation for at least one academic year in the Student Organization for the Advancement of Research (SOAR).
- 4 Confirmation of support from URECA faculty mentor.

### Scholar Distinction in Undergraduate Research

\*Students must fulfill all requirements

- 1 Successful completion of a Scholar level URECA project - 100 hours of research or more.
- 2 Poster presentation or creative performance at one of the URC's signature events: Fall Open House, Scholars Week, or Summer Research Celebration.
- 3 Active participation for at least one academic year in the Student Organization for the Advancement of Research (SOAR).
- 4 Poster or presentation at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, published in a peer-reviewed academic journal or service on CURVE.
- 5 Confirmation of support from URECA faculty mentor.

# STUDENT RESOURCES: THE URC RESEARCH GROUPS & LABS DIRECTORY + THE STUDENT RESEARCH GUIDE

## Faculty Mentors: **Contribute to the URC RESEARCH GROUPS & LAB DIRECTORY**

The URC Research Group & Laboratory Directory is a valuable resource for MTSU's research groups and labs. It aids students in finding lab positions and helps faculty connect with student researchers. The directory includes lab descriptions, required skills, semester openings, and details on each lab's achievements and goals. Click below to add or update your lab or research group.

Click below to view the 2023-24 Directory...2024-25 coming soon!  
[RESEARCH GROUPS & LAB DIRECTORY](#)

*New?*

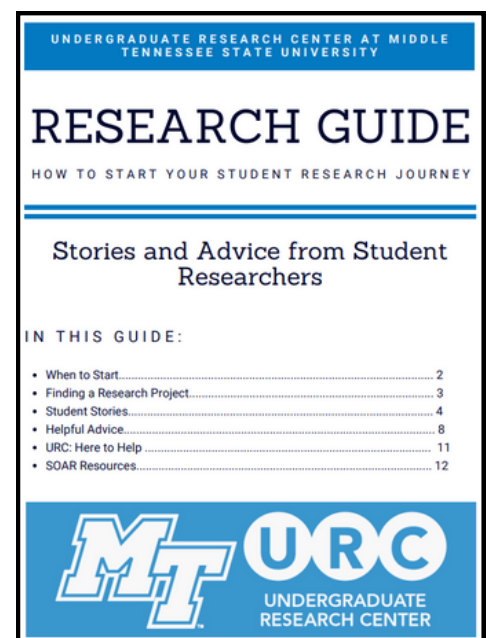
**[CLICK HERE TO CONTRIBUTE](#)**

*Already featured?*

**[CLICK HERE TO UPDATE](#)**

## Students: **Check Out Our STUDENT RESEARCH GUIDE**

The URC's guide for upcoming student researchers, Research Guide: How to Start your Student Research Journey, is a great resource for undergraduates seeking to enter the world of research! This guide covers when to start research, how to find a project, student experiences, helpful advice, URC resources, and SOAR resources at MTSU.



# INTERNSHIPS & RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Check out the following opportunities for fall research!

## [The National Science Foundation \(NSF\) Search Page](#)

- The National Science Foundation has a [search page](#) that includes the contact information for Research Experiences for Undergraduates summer research programs. You will need to contact the specific program for application information. Additionally, programs may submit their specific application information for publishing in the list below.

## [PathwaysToScience.org](#)

- PathwaysToScience.org has a [searchable database](#) of 600+ summer research programs for undergraduates in all STEM disciplines. These are all fully funded opportunities including programs sponsored by NSF, NASA, NIH, etc. They also have a selection of resources to help you strengthen your applications.

## [Scholars Transforming Through Research \(STR\): Council on UR's Advocacy Program](#)

- The STR Program was developed to broaden participation, allowing students at varied stages of the undergraduate research process to engage. Participants will learn valuable skills in communicating the impact of their undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative inquiry experience to a variety of audience members and stakeholders. Submissions for the 2024-25 Program closes on Friday, September 20, 2024.

## [Practical Geo-communication - Geologize- American Geosciences Institute](#)

- The American Geosciences Institute (AGI) is pleased to offer free training in geoscience communications to members of AGI Member Societies, with generous support from the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) Foundation, starting March 1, 2023. This free training opportunity will be available for one year. [Click here](#) for more information.

## [U.S. Department of Energy Seeking Applicants for the Science Undergraduate Laboratory Internships \(SULI\) Program](#)

- Are you an undergraduate student pursuing a degree in science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) or recent graduate who completed an associate's degree or bachelor's degree in STEM? Do you want to develop and hone your research skills at a national laboratory while learning from some of our nation's best scientists and engineers? Then the Science Undergraduate Laboratory Internships (SULI) program is for you. As a SULI participant, you'll gain valuable hands-on research experience and build your professional network while collaborating on an exciting project under the guidance of a mentor. You will also have opportunities to present your research to your mentors and peers, join in social activities, and engage in a variety of professional development activities to enhance your career skills. Applications for the Science Undergraduate Laboratory Internships (SULI) Program are now open for the 2025 Spring Term. Applications are due Wednesday, October 2, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. EDT. Apply [HERE](#).

Interested in more opportunities? [Click here](#) to explore more internship/research opportunities!



# PAPER & PRESENTATION OPPORTUNITIES

Check out the following opportunities for papers & presentations!

## [CUR Social Sciences Conference Grant](#)

- The Social Sciences Division of the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) is offering a limited number of grants, up to \$400 each, for undergraduate students presenting the results of research that they have conducted at a national or international, discipline-specific meeting (in person or virtually) during the academic year 2024-2025. Subject areas include psychology, economics, politics and more. Fall 2024 applications are due October 31st. [Apply here](#).

## [Kentucky Academy of Science Annual Meeting](#)

- Each November KAS hosts about 700 students & faculty from around our region to present their research as papers and posters. Registration fees are modest- Join us on November 1st and 2nd, 2024 at Kentucky State University. Submissions open September 1st.

## [Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference for Undergraduate Scholarship \(MARCUS\) - Randolph College](#)

- MARCUS is a presentation venue for undergraduate scholarship in all disciplines. This event will take place at Randolph College campus, Lynchburg, VA on November 2nd, 2024. Abstracts are due October 4th.

## [WCBSURC - Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA](#)

- The 48th annual West Coast Biological Sciences Undergraduate Research Conference (WCBSURC) will take place on Saturday, April 6th, 2025, at California State University San Marcos. The WCBSURC is among the oldest intercollegiate conferences of its kind in the nation and has so far brought together participants representing 200 different institutions in 40 states, plus Canada.

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## STUDENT JOURNALS

Student journals create unique avenues by which emerging scholars can engage with research more profoundly. They offer a more viable path for students to earn publication and provide valuable professional opportunities, as student leaders can experience academic publishing from a distinct vantage point and develop as leaders in research. Student journals often play an integral role in research engagement programs at the institutional level. CUR offers a Student Journals community as a place for those involved in student research journals---students, faculty, librarians, administrators, and others---to share resources, foster discussion of best practices, seek solutions to issues encountered in the operation of student journals, and provide support and networking to such individuals.

**Check out the links below to explore student journals!**

[Undergraduate  
Journal  
Catalog](#)