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UNH Hosts Second Annual Undergraduate Research Conference

Students present projects at URC2001 May 3 - May 5

By [Kim Billings](#)
UNH News Bureau

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DURHAM, N.H. -- For the second year in a row, the University of New Hampshire will host its undergraduate research conference, URC2001. The three-day conference -- Thursday, May 3 through Saturday, May 5 -- is an extravaganza of student research projects from business, health, psychology, the fine and performing arts, engineering, life sciences and agriculture, sociology and English.

Projects range from an examination of home schooling to the origins of the Spanish Inquisition, from looking at the reintroduction of wolves to the French Alps to a mother's experience with her daughter's bulimia.

"These are projects that have taken students to other parts of the world and other parts of the human soul," says Marc Hiller, professor of health management and policy and faculty fellow in the research and public service office. "What distinguishes UNH from other places is the degree to which students are involved in ground-breaking research which, in turn, can have an enormous impact not only on their future but in some cases, the future of society."

The program begins Thursday, May 3, at 6 p.m. at the Manchester campus of the university and culminates Saturday, May 5 with the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture Undergraduate Research Conference. The COLSA conference is now in its tenth year, according to Paul Tsang, professor of animal and nutritional sciences and chair of the conference committee.

"Undergraduates are an integral part of the research programs of many COLSA faculty members, providing a rewarding experience for both the faculty member and the students involved," he explains. "Through direct interaction with faculty and by designing and carrying out their own research projects, students learn the process by which information is gathered and presented in science."

Tsang notes that faculty members also benefit from these experiences through closer contact and communication with the undergraduate population and increased research productivity.

On Friday night at 8 p.m., undergraduates from the music department will host a concert in the recital hall of Paul Creative Arts Center, and the Fine Arts Exhibition opening will be held in The Art Gallery.

More than 200 students and their faculty advisors are expected to participate during the three days of presentations and poster sessions. It is estimated that up to 75 percent of UNH students are involved in research during their undergraduate education and last year, the Office for Research and Public Service organized the conference to highlight student achievements.

Oral presentations, poster sessions, competitions, performances and exhibitions will showcase student success in all academic areas. In addition to research presentations at UNH-Manchester on Thursday, events include the distinguished Paul J. Holloway Jr. Prize for Business Competition, the psychology department's Haslerud Undergraduate Research Conference and electrical engineering senior project presentations -- to name just a few. All events are free and open to the public. For a complete listing, go to www.unh.edu/urc/May_2001.html or contact Marc Hiller at 2-3411.

"The university provides significant opportunities for students to undertake meaningful guided and independent research efforts as undergraduates," notes Hiller, who organized the conference. "These extraordinary learning opportunities -- ranging from highly structured laboratory science to the decision and empirical sciences, from qualitative methodology in the social sciences to creative expression in the fine arts --

give students the skills they need to pursue graduate study and meaningful careers."

Hiller adds there also are benefits for the faculty, who report that the teamwork essential to these efforts strengthens instruction and lays the groundwork for future challenges.

The three-day extravaganza is the culmination of a year or more of research conducted by students under the guidance of faculty researchers, and is free and open to the public. For more information on the conference, go to www.unh.edu/urc and www.colsa.unh.edu/Announcepg.htm.

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