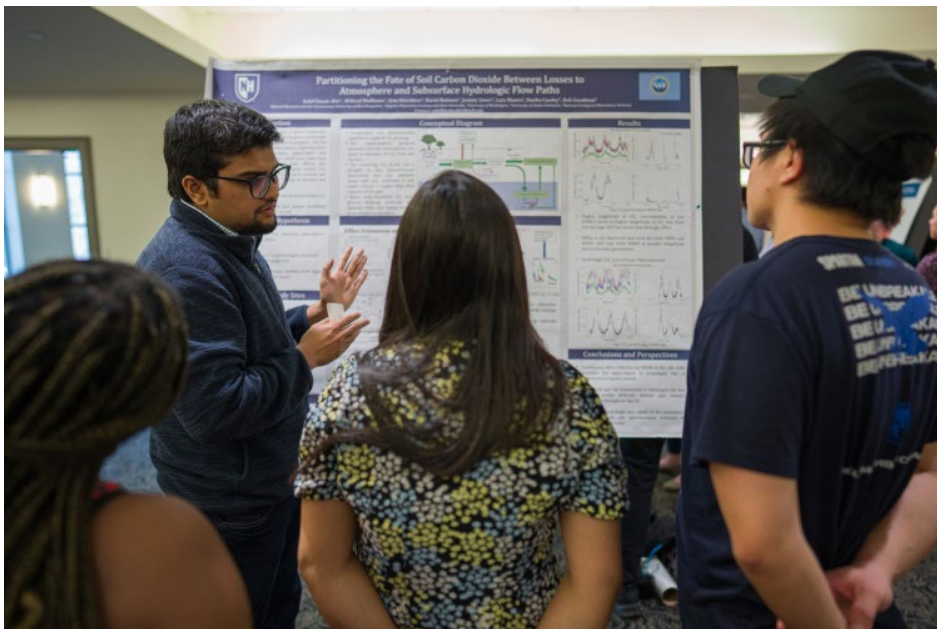


Annual Graduate Research Conference Continues to Build Momentum

Tuesday, April 18, 2023



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Last week, the annual Graduate Research Conference, or GRC, took place with oral presentations on Monday and poster presentations on Tuesday filling up three rooms in Holloway Commons. There were 54 oral presentations and 89 poster presentations in all, a marked uptick from previous years.

Graduate assistants Jo Field and Dylan Kelly led the charge in organizing the conference. “The level of participation was great this year,” says Kelly. “It makes a big difference when departments encourage students to attend, and we get groups of peers coming to present and support each other. We saw more of that this year than in recent years.” He added that there were also

a considerable number of first-year students presenting, which “was great to see.”

Alexa Green, who recently defended her dissertation in chemistry education, presented her research on Monday during the oral portion. “I’ve talked about my research a lot,” Green said, “But I appreciate the opportunity to present to non-experts [at the GRC].” Denise Desrosiers, a Ph.D. in education, used her slot as an opportunity to do a trial run of a presentation she was giving in Chicago a few days later. She added, “This conference is small, and the audiences are friendly, which is encouraging.”

Some students took the opportunity to present on both days.

Michael Coughlan, a Ph.D. in physics, presented at both the oral and poster presentations. He said he liked the ability to present research to an audience more formally, but then to have one-on-one conversations with people around his poster.

In addition to in-person events, a GRC media space was available online, where oral and poster presentations could be uploaded and viewed asynchronously.

Awards given to GRC participants this year were the annual Leitzel Award, given for exemplary STEM education and outreach, and the Sustainability Award for Research, which recognizes research that contributes to a more sustainable future. The Leitzel Award was given to a poster presentation by Cheryl Lavoie, a Ph.D. student in chemistry education.

Nine students won the Sustainability Award, including Christine Bunyon, a master’s student in natural resources and the environment. Her project, on the use of an unmanned aerial system to monitor cyanobacteria in New Hampshire lakes, was confidence-building, Bunyon said. “I had to carry my project through from start to finish, from project design to data analysis ... so I learned a lot and it’s cool to share that with the public at the GRC.” She said the Sustainability Award will help her topic reach

a broader audience.

Event organizer Kelly echoed what many students had said about the GRC being a great place to gain experience presenting your work. He added, “It also offers the opportunity to connect with the broader UNH graduate student population and learn about all the fascinating research that happens here.”

2023 Sustainability Award for Research Winners:

Oral presentation winners: Isaac Ativor, Ph.D. student in earth and environmental sciences; Diana Reyes Gomez, Ph.D. student in agricultural sciences; Allison St. John, Ph.D. student in chemistry; Emily Whitmore, Ph.D. student in sociology; and Oladayo Komolafe Ph.D. student in civil and environmental engineering.

Poster presentation winners: Christine Bunyon, master’s student in natural resources and the environment; Nia Jeffers, master’s student in marine biology; Imran Khan, Ph.D. student in civil and environmental engineering; and Thomas McDonough, master’s student in political science.

WRITTEN [Sarah Earle](#) | Graduate School | sarah.earle@unh.edu

BY:

PHOTOGRAPHER [Jeremy Gasowski](#) | Communications and Public

Affairs | jeremy.gasowski@unh.edu | 603-862-4465

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