



COUNCIL ON UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

2024-2025 Elections Geosciences Division: Division Representative Candidates

Position Purpose: The work of Divisions is done by Division Representatives who advance undergraduate research by providing networking opportunities, activities, and educational content. Their aim is to create and foster community and value within the organization. Representatives support the members of their division in activities and programs that align with the CUR strategic plan, mission, vision, and values.

Needed Qualifications:

- Capable mentor: Experienced guide and supporter of others looking to advance their personal growth and development in areas connected to but not limited to UR.
- Communication: Professional and effective communicators, experienced in difficult conversations and able to hear and disseminate community needs
- Collaborative Spirit: Team players making space for all voices to be heard, furthering the collective understanding of the group, and cultivating outcomes to best serve CUR and its membership

There are 9 individuals running.

You may vote for all candidates presented to be elected as representatives for this division.

This division will also be accepting write-In candidates for this election cycle.

Candidate information is presented on the following pages. Click on each candidate name below to be taken to their Information In the document.

- [Claire McLeod](#)
- [Donna Charlevoix](#)
- [Jeff Marshall](#)
- [Kevin Williams](#)
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Claire McLeod, Miami University

Geosciences Division Nominee

NOMINEE STATEMENTS

Please comment on your involvement in undergraduate research activities in the context of your institution and its mission.

Undergraduate education is at the core of Miami University's mission with Miami one of the top three public schools for Undergraduate Teaching in the United States (US News and World Report 2025).

Since establishing an undergraduate research program at Miami, 7 undergraduate students have published first-author peer-reviewed publications. In each case, we worked through the entire process from the first manuscript draft to preparing all the files required for journal submission, to addressing reviewer comments (sometimes multiple), and finally, to reviewing manuscript proofs. Undergraduate students have presented 68 first-author abstracts at local, regional, and national conferences: 10 oral and 58 posters. 32% of these presentations are associated with student team-based projects while 47% involve structured mentorship from MS and/or PhD students. Many undergraduate student research accomplishments to date have been supported through an NSF GEOPATHs award (2018-2023): Advancing Undergraduate Geoscience through Integrated Training Experiences (AUGITE). Being the PI on this grant is my proudest accomplishment of my career to date. This student-centered initiative focused on career-readiness and has impacted >40 students from across the geosciences and biological sciences. Now, >90% of those students are employed in STEM fields, pursuing graduate education, or are current juniors/seniors. Four students from this program have been nationally recognized for their research accomplishments through the Goldwater Scholarship, the Astronaut Scholarship, and the NSF GRFP. Components of the GEOPATHs program that were specifically related to professional development will be integrated into a new 1-credit hour course offered to all sophomores that I will start teaching in Fall 2024 (e.g., research project design, CV/resume preparation, study abroad, NSF REU applications, internship/fellowship applications, NSF GRFP preparation, graduate school roundtable discussions). I am incredibly excited to embed knowledge gained from the GEOPATHs program into the undergraduate curriculum and continue to support the professional development students at Miami.

In what ways have you helped promote diversity and inclusion in URSCI?

Fundamental to the approach our research group takes to mentoring undergraduate students is the establishment of an inclusive research environment. It is my goal that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be welcomed into my research group, that their research interests be supported, and that the diversity they each bring be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit to all. I commit to providing advice, guidance, and resources that respect diversity in all forms including age, country of origin, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, veteran status, perspective, and other backgrounds.

In support of these efforts, our research group reviews and revises our Research Group Guidelines and our Code of Conduct every semester. These resources have been informed by conversations and dialogue with students at Miami, internal and external workshops and trainings, and ongoing engagement with relevant peer-reviewed literature.

These ongoing efforts continue to be supported by our active URGE pod and the work of our departmental DEI committee (on which I serve) which aims to foster belonging within our department for all students, staff, and faculty.

How do you anticipate your skills will help successfully uphold the Division Representative charge?

I started at Miami University as a pre-tenure Assistant Professor in Fall 2015 and began serving as a Division Representative for the Geosciences in summer 2016. I was motivated to apply to this position almost a decade ago as I had (like many of my colleagues) received little to no guidance on effectively leading and managing a productive and inclusive undergraduate research program. From conversations and networking at the annual CUR meeting, to Division meetings at our annual discipline conferences, to the resources CUR provides, I deeply appreciate the community this organization has to offer. Please see my response below regarding service to the Geoscience discipline and opportunities that support undergraduate research at the regional and national level.

If you have served a previous term as Division Representative (previously Division Councilor), are there any particular contributions during your previous term(s) that you would like to highlight?

As noted above I have served as a Division Representative for the Geosciences since 2016 and am immensely grateful for the community of scholars and practitioners that CUR provides. Through collaborations with CUR geoscience colleagues, we have developed and chaired Student Research Showcase sessions at regional meetings of the Geological Society of America. This has occurred annually since Spring 2022: Joint North-Central & Southeastern Section Meeting, 7-8 April in Cincinnati, OH; North-Central Section Meeting, 4-5 May 2023 in Grand Rapids, MI; Joint North-Central and South-Central Section Meeting, 21-23 April 2024, Springfield, MO. This session will be offered at the upcoming 2025 GSA Joint Northeastern and North-Central Section Meeting, 27-30 March in Erie, PA. In addition, we plan to submit this session to the national GSA meeting in San Antonio, October 2025.

Session description: This session will highlight research from students in a hybrid oral-poster format. Although presenters will submit only one abstract for this session, they will prepare two presentations (i.e., a three-minute lightning talk in the morning session; a poster for the afternoon session). This will offer student presenters with multiple opportunities to practice a variety of science communication techniques.

Donna Charlevoix, University of Washington Tacoma

Geosciences Division Nominee

NOMINEE STATEMENTS

Please comment on your involvement in undergraduate research activities in the context of your institution and its mission.

The mission of EarthScope where I work is to “support transformative global geophysical research and education.” As the VP of the Engagement Directorate, one element of my portfolio is supporting next-generation scientists. This includes an undergraduate research program that runs every summer, supporting on the order of 20 students (the RESESS program, Research Experiences in Solid Earth Science for Students). Students are primarily from groups historically underrepresented in geosciences. 2025 is the 20th year of running the program. I have overseen this program for the past 13 years. My role is to ensure financial support is available and staff have the resources they need in order to run the program. In the first 5 years of my involvement, I worked very closely with the staff member who executed the internship. I assisted with day-to-day decisions and reviewed the annual evaluations to identify and help implement improvements. My role now is oversight.

We have found that by providing a supporting environment that includes both financial and structural supports, students thrive in the research environment. The program covers housing, stipend and travel to and from the research location (students are placed nationally). During my time overseeing the program we instituted travel stipends to support students while they were in a new town/university. We also offer hybrid programs for students who cannot leave for an entire summer. In addition, we offer alternative housing to dorms for students who have children or families.

The most significant impact I’ve had on our undergraduate research program is to move it from soft funding into our core cooperative agreement. This was challenging and difficult as it is an expensive program. However, this has allowed us (and me in particular) to focus on programming rather than continually writing proposals to fund the program.

In what ways have you helped promote diversity and inclusion in URSCI?

Our premier undergraduate research program is RESESS. RESESS began in the summer of 2005 with the mission of supporting students from groups underrepresented in geosciences. Our application process asks students to speak to their life experience as it relates to their interest in geoscience and barriers they have encountered. We recognize that they may not even recognize some barriers before them. In the application we also offer opportunities where students can talk about their allyship with students from groups underrepresented in geoscience. We ultimately create cohorts that are widely diverse, in every sense of the word. We have ethnic diversity and also diversity in many other areas such as socioeconomic status, geographic location, and type of undergraduate institution they attend.

The programming for this undergraduate research program is core funded from our NSF Cooperative Agreement. This allows us flexibility that we would not have if we had an NSF-REU award or similar. There are restrictions on those awards in terms of who you can accept into your program. The most notable is that internship managers are encouraged to accept students who have not already had a research experience. Our program does not have this restriction. We can invite students to apply for a second summer with us. This allows for cross-cohort networking (returning students introduce new students to members of the previous

year) that would not be possible if we did not have returning students. All student alumni are supported to attend the American Geophysical Union (AGU) fall meeting the year after their internship. This provides a unique scientific networking experience. Many of our alumni go on to graduate school and attend the AGU meeting in that capacity. They meet up with other alumni at our annual reception. All activities help to grow the community of students underrepresented in geosciences.

How do you anticipate your skills will help successfully uphold the Division Representative charge?

My professional career positions me to bring both experience and ideas as a Division Representative. Prior to working at non-profits supported by NSF and previously NASA, I was a member of academia for 12 years. I worked on campus with students, supporting honors projects, independent study, and student research. In my roles with non-profits I have been able to create programs that support student research and offer opportunities to students nationwide.

Within my Directorate we actually run 3 internship programs. The RESESS program focuses on undergraduate student research. The Geo-Launchpad program is designed to provide students with an internship where they focus on developing research-ready skills. While they do not conduct authentic research, they work with an investigator on a project that supports research. This provides students with exposure to the scientific research process as well as develop skills that will make them competitive when they apply to a research experience. The third program (Career internship) we run is a work-focused internship. Students (undergraduate and graduate) conduct work within the scope of our organization. This internship gives them real-world work experience and exposes them to working at a research support organization.

Through my work with these programs (I developed the GeoLaunchpad and Career internships) gives me a diverse perspective about supporting students and what works well with various groups of students.

If you have served a previous term as Division Representative (previously Division Councilor), are there any particular contributions during your previous term(s) that you would like to highlight?

I served previously on the CUR Executive Board (now the Board of Directors). My involvement with the Geosciences Division was minimal at that time. I proposed suggestions and ideas to strengthen that communication.

Jeff Marshall, Cal Poly Pomona

Geosciences Division Nominee

NOMINEE STATEMENTS

Please comment on your involvement in undergraduate research activities in the context of your institution and its mission.

While completing my Penn State Geosciences PhD, I served as a visiting faculty member at Franklin & Marshall College (1998-2001). All F&M geology students complete a senior research thesis, and many participate in high-impact summer research projects of the Keck Geology Consortium. At F&M, I supervised multiple student theses and engaged in Keck projects as a faculty advisor (Florida, 1999; Minnesota, 2001) and project co-director (Costa Rica, 1998; Pennsylvania, 2001).

After completing my PhD, I joined the Geological Sciences faculty at Cal Poly Pomona, where I've been teaching and conducting research with students for over 20 years. CPP is a Primarily Undergraduate Institution that promotes hands-on Learn-by-Doing pedagogy, including faculty-mentored research experiences. At CPP, I've supervised dozens of undergraduate researchers, continued to engage with the Keck Geology Consortium (faculty advisor, Australia, 2002; project director, Costa Rica, 2013), and led NSF funded REU programs linked to my research in Costa Rica (NSF Margins 2010-12) and New Zealand (NSF IES 2016-21).

In 2008, as a result of my CUR involvement, I was appointed Faculty Associate with the CPP Office of Research, tasked with building a campus undergraduate research program. Working with Dr. Beth Ambos (then CSU Associate Vice Chancellor for Research), we partnered with CUR to run Institutionalizing Undergraduate Research Workshops for the entire CSU system. Moving forward, I was selected as the first CPP University Coordinator for Undergraduate Research, and led the founding of the Undergraduate Research Faculty Advisory Council (URFAC), Kellogg Undergraduate Scholars Program (KUSP), FuTURE Faculty Mini-Grants Program, and CPP Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR). To fund KUSP and FuTURE, I acquired two Kellogg Foundation grants, totaling \$200,000. In 2015, I relinquished my campus leadership role to return to my own research efforts, passing the reigns of the newly-established OUR to colleague Dr. Winny Dong.

In what ways have you helped promote diversity and inclusion in URSCI?

Raised in multi-cultural southern California, I've always appreciate the value of diversity and inclusion. I learned Spanish as a teenager, traveled Europe, North Africa, and Latin America after college, and later served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Costa Rica. Now, as an educator and research mentor, I recognize the benefits of blending perspectives and building a worldly mindset among students.

Cal Poly Pomona serves a cosmopolitan student population, routinely ranking among the most diverse of U.S. universities. Many CPP students are first-generation Americans or international immigrants themselves, often the first to attend college in their family. Multiple languages are heard on campus every day. Our students are the face of California, and eventually the nation.

DEI might seem easy and automatic in this environment, but there are significant challenges in encouraging cross-cultural students to communicate and collaborate across perceived boundaries. I've learned that a key strategy is to build URSCI camaraderie and cohesion through up-beat, inclusive group meetings and social activities. In recent years, I led a diverse student team in international fieldwork through an NSF research project in New Zealand. Of 10 students, the team included Indonesian, Singaporean, Korean, Palestinian, Costa

Rican, African, and European ethnicities. Gender identities and sexual orientations were also mixed. While this “accounting” may seem awkward, I believe it is important for research mentors to recognize the richness of the team learning environment and the potential challenges of integrating students with widely varying life experiences.

As most geologists understand, fieldwork tends to break down social barriers and build group cohesion. International field research creates an immersive learning experience that enhances cognition, encourages inclusivity, and expands a worldly mindset. Having experienced this firsthand with my URSCI students, I would advocate that diversity and inclusion are fundamental for growing our profession and enhancing student career success.

How do you anticipate your skills will help successfully uphold the Division Representative charge?

Undergraduate Research is now widely embraced across US higher education as a high-impact practice that increases student learning, self-confidence, and scholarly engagement. I believe that my substantial experience and involvement in undergraduate research will continue to benefit the CUR mission. I am a six-term CUR Geosciences Councilor, serving since 2004. Through CUR involvement, I became the first Cal Poly Pomona University Coordinator for Undergraduate Research, founding chair of the Undergraduate Research Faculty Advisory Council, and Director of the Kellogg Undergraduate Scholars Program (undergraduate research diversity initiative). In addition, I have engaged in undergraduate research leadership with the National Science Foundation, Geological Society of America, Keck Geology Consortium, On the Cutting-Edge Program, Southern California Conferences for Undergraduate Research, and Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS). I routinely engage undergraduate students in field research in California, Central America, and New Zealand, resulting in multiple co-authored manuscripts and presentations, as well as a GSA special paper on strategies for international undergraduate field research. I studied geology and earth surface processes at UC Santa Barbara (BS), UC Santa Cruz (MS), and Penn State (PhD), all programs that emphasize student involvement in research. From 1998-2001, I taught as a visiting faculty member in the Geosciences Department at Franklin & Marshall College, a program deeply committed to quality undergraduate research. Since 2001, I have been a professor at Cal Poly Pomona, a highly diverse, primarily undergraduate institution, where hands-on research based learning is a fundamental part of the science curriculum.

If you have served a previous term as Division Representative (previously Division Councilor), are there any particular contributions during your previous term(s) that you would like to highlight?

- CUR Geosciences Session Chair, Undergraduate Research Posters, Geological Society of America Cordilleran Section Meetings: 2006 (Anchorage, AK), 2007 (Bellingham, WA), 2008 (Las Vegas, NV), 2010 (Anaheim, CA), 2011 (Logan, UT), 2016 (Ontario, CA), 2017 (Honolulu, HI), 2018 (Flagstaff, AZ), 2019 (Portland, OR), 2020 (Pasadena, CA – Cancelled), 2021 (Reno, NV – Virtual), 2022 (Las Vegas, NV), 2023 (Reno, NV), 2024 (Spokane, WA).
- NSF GeoPRISMS Education Advisory Council (GEAC) - promoted best practices for student research engagement, ran workshops and field trips, developed research-based pedagogy (mini-lessons), 2011-2020.
- CUR Geosciences Workshop Presenter, Getting Started in Undergraduate Research Workshop for New, Future, and Current Faculty, American Geophysical Union (AGU) Fall Meetings, San Francisco, California: 2014, 2015, 2016.
- University Coordinator for Undergraduate Research & Director of Kellogg Undergraduate Scholars Program, Cal Poly Pomona University, 2008-2015.
- CUR Workshop Team Leader, Workshop on Institutionalizing Undergraduate Research for State Systems and Consortia (Team Leader for Cal Poly Pomona), California State University Chancellor’s Office, Long Beach, CA, Nov 1-2, 2012.

- CUR Workshop Team Leader, Workshop on Institutionalizing Undergraduate Research for State Systems and Consortia (Team Leader for Cal Poly Pomona), California State University, Los Angeles, CA, Oct 21-22, 2011.
- CUR Workshop Team Leader, Workshop on Institutionalizing Undergraduate Research within the California State University System (Team Leader for Cal Poly Pomona), California State University, San Bernardino, CA, Oct 31-Nov 2, 2008.
- CUR Workshop Facilitator - Campus Follow-Up Visits, California State University, San Marcos, CA, Sep 18, 2008 & Apr 6, 2010.
- CUR Workshop Facilitator, Regional Workshop on Institutionalizing Undergraduate Research (Team Facilitator for Cal State San Marcos & Point Loma Nazarene College), California State University, Northridge, CA, Feb 15-17, 2008.
- CUR Workshop Facilitator, Conversation on Undergraduate Research in Community Colleges, Mt. San Antonio College, Walnut, CA, Feb 15, 2007.

Kevin Williams, Buffalo State University

Geosciences Division Nominee

NOMINEE STATEMENTS

Please comment on your involvement in undergraduate research activities in the context of your institution and its mission.

As a predominantly undergraduate institution (and having only undergraduate students in my department), my own research activities almost always include undergraduate projects. Additionally, I have mentored over 30 students in their own, independent research projects. Many of our university's students are first generation students, and at least half of the students in our department are from under-represented groups in the Geosciences. As a relatively small department, we are known on campus for offering numerous, impactful research opportunities to our students. In the context of the university's mission and its place within the State University of New York (SUNY) as an "urban-engaged campus", many of our students enter the university either under prepared or lacking confidence in their abilities. My involvement in undergraduate research opportunities are most rewarding for me because they enable me to help students realize their abilities and to grow their confidence as they learn how to frame questions, develop research plans, and carry out all of the steps in a research project. Additionally, many of my students have presented their results at regional and national geoscience conferences, which further helps them realize their potential.

In what ways have you helped promote diversity and inclusion in URSCI?

I feel that I can do more to promote diversity and inclusion, especially because the geosciences often have difficulties recruiting from diverse populations. However, because our university has a high percentage of students from diverse backgrounds, students in our department might already be more diverse than many peer departments. I think the best way that I have helped promote diversity and inclusion in working with research students is that I have never said no to working with a student who expressed interest in conducting undergraduate research. This has also included encouraging students to get involved in research as soon as they want to, and I have mentored several first-year students in research projects.

How do you anticipate your skills will help successfully uphold the Division Representative charge?

My university has a history of supporting and celebrating undergraduate research. I have learned from peers in CUR that not all colleagues are as fortunate. If re-elected, my goal would be to work with fellow division representatives to connect more with faculty and students across the country involved in undergraduate research. I think part of that will be to expand already-strong collaborations with other professional organizations such as GSA and NAGT and part will be to raise awareness of CUR within the geoscience community.

If you have served a previous term as Division Representative (previously Division Councilor), are there any particular contributions during your previous term(s) that you would like to highlight?

I am in my first term serving as a Geosciences Division Representative, and it has honestly taken longer than I expected to figure out how I can best contribute. Much of the reason it took longer than expected was because I was busy co-hosting a conference then planning and hosting events and programming for the 2024 total solar eclipse (I am also director of our planetarium). Now having more time to devote to CUR, I have been serving as the Geosciences representative on the CUR DEI committee since October, and I look forward to helping the Geosciences Division further connect with geoscience faculty and students involved in undergraduate research.

Larry Collins, Longwood University

Geosciences Division Nominee

NOMINEE STATEMENTS

Please comment on your involvement in undergraduate research activities in the context of your institution and its mission.

I currently work at a 4-year institution and maintain an active research program in geoscience education research that involves several undergraduate students. My students are working on projects related to developing concept inventories to studying perceptions of climate change risk in fellow undergraduate students. Lastly, we also regularly participate in our University's Showcase for Undergraduate Research and Creative Inquiry.

In what ways have you helped promote diversity and inclusion in URSCI?

As a white male, I have made this a focus of mine by working to elevate the voices of members of our community. I think that the best work that I have done is support in the mentoring of students from various communities and support them in maintaining access to geology programs and careers.

How do you anticipate your skills will help successfully uphold the Division Representative charge?

I have previously served as Division Chair for the Geoscience Education Division of the GSA and as the representative for 4-year colleges and universities through GSA as well. These opportunities provided me a role in building community in our organization that led to new opportunities for undergraduate students to showcase their research at our annual GSA Connects meeting. I also regularly participate in mentoring of undergraduate geoscience students virtually and at annual conferences. I think that these experiences and my dedication to involving undergraduates in research align with the mission above.

If you have served a previous term as Division Representative (previously Division Councilor), are there any particular contributions during your previous term(s) that you would like to highlight?

I have not previously served a term with Geo CUR.

Lisa Theo, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Geosciences Division Nominee

NOMINEE STATEMENTS

Please comment on your involvement in undergraduate research activities in the context of your institution and its mission.

One goal outlined in the mission statement of the University of Wisconsin-Madison is “Generate new knowledge through a broad array of scholarly, research and creative endeavors, which provide a foundation for dealing with the immediate and long-range needs of society.” In my role as the Geoscience Undergraduate Program Manager, I advise students in course selection, assist them in finding SREUs and other research opportunities, and guide them in matching their interests and life goals with both graduate student and faculty mentors.

In what ways have you helped promote diversity and inclusion in URSCI?

I served as principal investigator for “Campus/Community/Culture” – a Wisconsin Alliance for Minority Participation in STEM (WiscAMP; LSAMP sub-award). This program included funding for first-year underrepresented minority students in STEM to participate in a developmental math course, a week-long “mini” First Year Seminar, and 1-credit “Introduction to Research” and “Research Careers” courses each semester during their first year. I also earned a \$50,000 grant from the UW System to implement First-year Seminar courses for underrepresented minority students in Physics, Paper Science and Engineering, Chemistry, Math, Computer Science, and Geology.

Before accepting my current position, I ran an annual research-based field course titled “The Environment and Culture of the Mississippi Delta.” The course included a spring break field trip to The Mississippi Delta. Students learned of both the environmental and cultural history of Mississippi and the Deep South and visited museums, the Army Corps of Engineering Engineer Research and Development Center, the USDA Agricultural Research Station, the Old River Control Structure, a cotton cooperative, as well as juke joints, restaurants, etc. Over the years, participation from underrepresented students increased from NONE to 14 (out of 25 students total). In addition, students were required to present their research results at our annual research symposium (and many presented at their discipline’s annual meetings/conferences).

Finally, because of my experiences as a first generation/low-income student, I am committed to helping those that come after me. I make an extra effort to connect with students who may not have had the easiest time getting to and/or succeeding at the college level. My primary role at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Geoscience Department is to increase the number of underrepresented minority students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. I was selected for this position because of my success in doing just that at all my previous institutions.

How do you anticipate your skills will help successfully uphold the Division Representative charge?

Before the pandemic, I regularly attended CUR Dialogues, NCUR, ConnectUR, and the Annual Business Meeting. Since the pandemic, travel funding is a bit tighter, but I make the most of each opportunity through formal and informal networking. Examples include hosting the Geoscience Division “Open House Reception” and co-hosting a lunch “discussion table” on Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships at ConnectUR 2024. I also attended our division “meet-ups” at GSA (when we did those in person).

If you have served a previous term as Division Representative (previously Division Councilor), are there any particular contributions during your previous term(s) that you would like to highlight?

I have served as a Division Councilor and Division Representative since 2021. I have served on the Divisional DEI Committee since being elected, and I also represented our division at the National level DEI Committee. I currently serve as the co-chair of the Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships Committee at the National level and have participated in panel presentations at ConnectUR promoting Advocacy. As of the beginning of this academic year, I also serve as the Geoscience Division Vice Chair.

Michael Guidry, University of Hawaii at Manoa - Honolulu, HI

Geosciences Division Nominee

NOMINEE STATEMENTS

Please comment on your involvement in undergraduate research activities in the context of your institution and its mission.

I am part of the university's Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program, which awards financial support for undergraduate research and creative works. I also sit on the university's council on undergraduate research. Finally, I chair an undergraduate environment program that has a thesis experience as part of its undergraduate degree requirements. Through these activities I am involved in the daily undergraduate research efforts and helping guide the university's overall direction re: undergraduate research and creative works.

In what ways have you helped promote diversity and inclusion in URSCI?

The program I oversee has a higher than average (compared nationally) undergraduate geoscience graduation rate of underrepresented groups (gender and ethnicity). We employ a variety of efforts (e.g., external review of draft thesis and practice presentation, structured curricular approach and support for finding a thesis mentor & project) and dedicated positions (e.g., faculty chair and administrative assistant, faculty academic advising) that positively impact retention, learning, and guidance of these groups.

How do you anticipate your skills will help successfully uphold the Division Representative charge?

The University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM) has a diverse undergraduate population with its own specific challenges and needs. My perspective, experience, and skills developed while being heavily invested and engaged in undergraduate research at UHM all support upholding this charge.

If you have served a previous term as Division Representative (previously Division Councilor), are there any particular contributions during your previous term(s) that you would like to highlight?

I have served on the GeoCUR awards and nominations committee during the prior term and would be willing to continue this effort.

Vijay Vulava, College of Charleston

Geosciences Division Nominee

NOMINEE STATEMENTS

Please comment on your involvement in undergraduate research activities in the context of your institution and its mission.

I am a faculty member at a predominantly undergraduate university offering some master's programs. Due to the liberal arts model of the university, we aim to provide our students with a solid experiential focus that extends beyond the classroom. My professional training centers on using environmental analytical geochemical tools to study environmental pollution. This area of expertise allows me to engage with students in laboratory and field settings. My research approach involves utilizing data collected from labs and the field to address specific questions related to the fate and transport of contaminants in surface environments.

I developed a student-centered research program and worked closely with students to give them the resources they needed to succeed in their research endeavors. To date, I have mentored 48 undergraduate students on various research projects, including assisting them in writing intramural grants totaling \$200,000 to support 40 students. Most of these students have successfully gained admission to top graduate schools or secured employment in the environmental sector. Notably, two former students are now faculty members at R-1 research universities. Additionally, five of my undergraduate students have co-authored peer-reviewed articles with me.

I have obtained extramural research grants totaling over \$1,000,000 to support my research program, allowing me to fund several graduate and undergraduate student research projects. Six graduate students have co-authored peer-reviewed articles with me, and more publications are coming.

In what ways have you helped promote diversity and inclusion in URSCI?

The College of Charleston's strategic plan includes the following strategies: "recruit, retain and graduate greater numbers of underrepresented minority and first-generation students," and "create a welcoming and inclusive environment where all students feel they belong." While the college is working towards making this a reality, the key metrics on the Strategic Plan site show that the college is behind on the student enrollment targets for the AALANA group. Student diversity is also very stark in STEM majors and especially in the geosciences discipline at my college.

I am currently serving as the director for the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LS-AMP), a NSF-program designed to help increase the number historically underrepresented minority students in STEM majors and encourage these students to pursue graduate or professional school opportunities. In this role, I help with recruitment of minority students into STEM majors, as well as connecting these students with research faculty on campus and beyond, providing them with mentoring and summer research funding. We have also sponsored student visits to conferences and graduate schools.

Recently, the college implemented a requirement that all students take two courses that focus on REI issues - and most courses that were offered were in the realm of humanities and social sciences. I created a new introductory environmental geology class, that include discussion of race, equity, and inclusion. We hope that my class could be model for other introductory science majors to offer similar content.

I have actively recruited underrepresented minority students for my research group. Additionally, I collaborate with nonprofit organizations working in environmental justice communities.

How do you anticipate your skills will help successfully uphold the Division Representative charge?

I am happy to share my experiences and perspectives with other Division Representatives and also learn from them to advance undergraduate research. I think research experiences are crucial for our future leaders and educators. I am happy to be part of CUR and fully support its mission.

If you have served a previous term as Division Representative (previously Division Councilor), are there any particular contributions during your previous term(s) that you would like to highlight?

N/A

Virginia Isava, California State University-Fullerton

Geosciences Division Nominee

NOMINEE STATEMENTS

Please comment on your involvement in undergraduate research activities in the context of your institution and its mission.

In the Geological Sciences department at California State University, Fullerton, all Geology (B.S.) majors must complete a 3-semester senior thesis research project under the supervision of a faculty advisor. In addition, some Earth Science (B.A.) majors also choose to complete a senior thesis. During my four years at CSUF I have advised three completed undergraduate theses (2 B.S. and 1 B.A.), and am currently advising two theses in progress.

In what ways have you helped promote diversity and inclusion in URSCI?

Along with a department colleague, I have developed a new course in my department - Geoscience Peer Mentoring for Student Success. This course teaches incoming students (freshmen and transfer students) about soft skills that can help them succeed in academia, as well as field skills that will prepare students for field experiences related to their undergraduate geoscience degree (e.g., safety protocols, proper field attire, how to pitch a tent, etc.). This course also includes a service-learning project where students communicate science with the local community (Fullerton K-8 School District), as well as weekly one-on-one sessions with a peer mentor – recruited from our department's more senior undergraduate and/or graduate student pool. These peer mentors, who receive training in topics related to active listening, strategic learning, and emotional intelligence prior to the start of the program, provide tailored assistance to their mentees (the course's students), including social support and guidance on how to succeed in the academic environment.

How do you anticipate your skills will help successfully uphold the Division Representative charge?

I regularly attend both the Geological Society of America and the Earth Educators' Rendezvous, allowing me to reach out to folks with opportunities for CUR activities and programs. I'm also comfortable with cold-emailing (the digital version of cold calling) folks to request help or information.

If you have served a previous term as Division Representative (previously Division Councilor), are there any particular contributions during your previous term(s) that you would like to highlight?

N/A