UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

May 16, 2019

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Rewarding Research

For undergraduate scholars and researchers, the UC Santa Barbara Library plays a key role in their academic success. Every day — and in countless ways — students tap into the library's vast resources and services.

"Our undergrads conduct legitimate research and are in every way functioning as young scholars," said Jane Faulkner, a student success librarian. "What better way to honor and recognize this than to have the library award them with a prize for their efforts?"

That prize? The newly established UCSB Library Award for Undergraduate Research, which recognizes student projects that make skilled use of the collections, resources and services of the campus library.

The award recognizes more than students' abilities to simply find information, a ubiquitous skill for students who "have grown up with Google at their fingertips," Faulkner said. "What they're now learning as young researchers," she added, "is how to *evaluate* the information that they find, and how to use it effectively and ethically in their work."

"Students and their professors know how important the library is to their academic success, but the integral role the library plays can be invisible to others," said University Librarian Kristin Antelman. "The new Library Award for Undergraduate Research showcases the deep engagement that students have with library collections, librarians and library services."

Faculty members and subject specialist librarians served as judges for the awards, selecting first- and second-place winners in each of the three broad categories: humanities and fine arts, social sciences and science and engineering. The judges considered different types of submissions within these categories, including creative work, empirical research and interpretive analysis.

Indeed, the inaugural competition focused on how well students took advantage of library resources. Each student was required to submit an essay — which accounted for 40% of their overall score — describing their research process and detailing how they used library resources. The project itself represented 30% of the total score, with the final 30% allocated to a robust bibliography, naturally.

And the winners are:

• Humanities and fine arts — Sydney Martin, a history major, won the first prize with her work on the battle of St. Quentin canal and the American experience in World War I; Zheng Chen took second place for research on the Cantonese and Hakka Gazetteers of Guangdong, China during the 18th and 19th centuries.

• Social sciences — Erika Prado, in the linguistics department, won first prize for her work on communication with a nonverbal, bilingual teen with autism; Emily La won second place for her investigation of the relationships between psychology and health in different communities.

• Science and engineering — Jake Eisaguirre took first place with his research on food web dynamics in kelp forest ecosystems; Jeffrey Rong earned second place for his work on contact-dependent growth inhibition, mechanisms that some bacteria use to inhibit competing bacterial strains.

“The Library Award honors these students and recognizes the research and scholarship they’re doing,” Faulkner said. “I hope this award sparks an awareness in our students that they are each, in their own way, contributing to the larger academic conversation.”

Faulkner expects the competition, open to all current, full-time students working towards an undergraduate degree at the university, will grow in the coming years. “The competition is still in its infancy, and we’ve been getting a lot of interest from students who didn’t make this year’s deadline but who want to apply next year,” she said.

The Library will host a reception and awards ceremony from 5 to 6 p.m. Thursday, May 30. The event is free and open to the public and will take place in Instruction & Training 1312, on the north side of the library's first floor.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.