

The background of the top half of the poster is a close-up photograph of a wood grain, showing concentric growth rings in shades of orange, red, and brown. The texture is organic and flowing.

7th Annual

FALL FRONTIERS

**UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH
POSTER EXHIBITION**

October 30, 2019

5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Wilbur Cross North Reading Room

Sponsored by the
University of Connecticut

Office of Undergraduate Research
Enrichment Programs



About Frontiers in Undergraduate Research

The Fall Frontiers Poster Exhibition is a multidisciplinary research forum showcasing undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative projects at the University of Connecticut. Fall Frontiers complements the longstanding spring Frontiers exhibition, providing an additional **opportunity for UConn's student researchers to share their exciting work.** This is the seventh fall event sponsored by the Office of Undergraduate **Research (OUR). This year's exhibition includes** 91 students presenting posters for 83 research and creative projects.

Students' projects span the disciplines and include both independent research and work pursued in collaboration with other undergraduates. The projects presented reflect the invaluable contributions of research mentors, including graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, staff, and faculty members. We hope you enjoy meeting our wonderful students and learning about their innovative projects.

About the Office of Undergraduate Research

The Office of Undergraduate Research is a resource for students interested in enriching their undergraduate experience through participation in research, scholarship, and creative activity. The OUR provides information and advising to assist students in identifying relevant opportunities, as well as several funding programs to support the students and their faculty mentors.

Many of the Fall Frontiers presenters have received financial support for their projects from the OUR, which awarded over \$625,000 in 2018-19 in **support of students' research and creative endeavors.** These awards are funded by the Office of Undergraduate Research with generous support from the Office of the Provost, the Office of the Vice President for Research, the Deans of the schools and colleges, and private donations from alumni, parents, and other friends of UConn and undergraduate research.

7th Annual Fall Frontiers Poster Exhibition

Poster Exhibition

Wednesday, October 30, 2019
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Speaking Program

5:30 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Caroline McGuire

Executive Director, Enrichment Programs, and
Director, Office of Undergraduate Research

Keynote Speaker

Thomas C. Katsouleas

President, University of Connecticut

Closing Remarks

Jennifer Lease Butts

Assistant Vice Provost, Enrichment Programs, and
Director, Honors Program

Sequential Listing of Poster Presentations

This listing of projects includes the undergraduate student authors and their faculty mentors. Please note that this is not a comprehensive listing of mentors: many projects also reflect the contributions and mentorship of dedicated graduate students, post-doctoral scholars, and research staff members. An alphabetical listing of presenters is included at the end of the program.

1. Awareness and Outreach at Two Safety-Net Medical Neighborhoods with a High Prevalence of Tobacco Use

Maria Latta, Pharmacy Studies

Aboli Ghatpande, Pharmacy Studies

Mai Vestergaard, Pharmacy Studies & Music

Advisor: Fei Wang, Associate Clinical Professor, Pharmacy Practice

2. An Interdisciplinary Approach to Increasing Resilience to Tsunamis Using Protective Systems

Kade Courtois, Civil Engineering

Maya Rudd, Mechanical Engineering

Sean Walters, Biomedical Engineering

Advisor: Richard Christenson, Professor, Civil and Environmental Engineering

3. Using a Community-Based Bird-Parasite Study for the Development of a K-12 Outreach Program

Rachel Bahouth, Biological Sciences

Sharan Ghai, Biological Sciences

Amelia Mascolo, Biological Sciences & Anthropology

Advisor: Sarah Knutie, Assistant Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

4a. Impact of the Undergraduate Research Assistant Program (URAP)

Adrienne Nguyen, Molecular and Cell Biology & Individualized Major: Health in the Environment

Advisor: Sharon Smith, Adjunct Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology

4b. Relationship Between Internalizing Problems and Internet Gaming Disorder Symptoms Among Treatment-Seeking Youth
Adrienne Nguyen, Molecular and Cell Biology & Individualized Major:
Health in the Environment

Advisor: Kristyn Zajac, Assistant Professor, Medicine

5. Assessing Xlr3 Expression in shRNA-Xlr3 Transgenic Mouse Neocortex

Sarah Hernandez, Diagnostic Genetic Sciences

Advisor: Michael O'Neill, Associate Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology

6. Characterization of the Ventricular-Subventricular Stem Cell Niche in Response to Neuraminidase-Induced Hydrocephalus
Tanya Miller, Physiology and Neurobiology

Derek Pan, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Joanne Conover, Professor, Physiology and Neurobiology

7. Can Inclusive Education Programs Reduce Racial and Gender Discrimination in the Labor Market?

Mary Vlamis, Economics & Political Science

Advisor: Jorge Agüero, Associate Professor, Economics

8. Does Personal Experience Matter: Understanding Public Opinion on Immigration

Shanelle Jones, Political Science & Human Rights

Advisor: Virginia Hettinger, Associate Professor, Political Science

9. Working Toward a Safer Future: Limiting the Effects of Regulatory Capture in the Aviation Industry

Shreya Murthy, Individualized Major: Criminology & Human Rights & Finance

Advisor: David Richards, Associate Professor, Political Science & Human Rights

Advisor: Kimberly Bergendahl, Assistant Professor in Residence, Political Science

Advisor: Shareen Hertel, Associate Professor, Political Science & Human Rights

10. The Great Migration Comes to Hartford

Chloe Murphy, Africana Studies

Advisor: Fiona Vernal, Associate Professor, History

11. The Cut of a Steer: A Contemporary American Satire

James Grindley, English

Advisor: Fiona Somerset, Professor, English

12. Exploring the Upper Crust of Mesopotamian Society: An
Archaeological Study of Bread Production at Tell Leilan

Stephen Baker, Physiology and Neurobiology & Anthropology

Advisor: Alexia Smith, Associate Professor, Anthropology

13. Uneven Aksak Meter in Romanian Folk Music

Maria Mandoiu, Music History & Anthropology

Advisor: Daniel Goldberg, Assistant Professor in Residence, Music

14. Exploring Social Medicine-Based Approaches to Combating
Alcohol Addiction in the Colombian Amazon

Darius Javidi, Molecular and Cell Biology & Spanish

Advisor: César Abadia-Barrero, Assistant Professor, Anthropology

15. Trusting the System: The Impact of SEC Insider Trading
Complaints on Stock Prices

Caitlyn Pesavento, Finance & Individualized Major: Crime, Law and
Gender

Advisor: Paul Gilson, Associate Professor in Residence, Finance

16. Relationship Between Self Perceived Creativity, Religion, and
Spirited Views

Yasmine Weiss, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: James Kaufman, Professor, Educational Psychology

17. Perception and Beliefs of God and Other Supernatural Beings:
Development of an Instrument for Religious Head versus Heart
Beliefs

Erin Blake, Individualized Major: Mental Health and Well-Being

Advisor: Crystal Park, Professor, Psychological Sciences

18. Perceived Teacher Support as a Moderator of Depression
Among Transgender Youth

Nicholas Bennett, Psychological Sciences & Human Development and
Family Sciences

Advisor: Ryan Watson, Assistant Professor, Human Development and
Family Sciences

19. Memory Complaints and Depression Treatment in Older Adults
Margaret Lewerk, Allied Health Sciences

Advisor: Kevin Manning, Assistant Professor, Psychiatry

20. Interactions Between Key Brain Regions During Perception of
Music

Zoe Schaefer, Biomedical Engineering

Advisor: Roeland Hancock, Assistant Research Professor, Psychological
Sciences

21. Skin Pigmentation Variability in Baboons: Implications for
Vitamin D Deficiency

Srishti Sadhir, Anthropology & Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Advisor: Sabrina Sholts, Curator of Biological Anthropology, Smithsonian
National Museum of Natural History

22. Interrelationships Among Representational Formats of Number
in School-Age Children

Caroline Hebert, Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences & Cognitive
Science

Advisor: Marie Coppola, Associate Professor, Psychological Sciences

23. Treating Trauma: An Analysis of the Reactions to Shell Shock
in Britain During and After World War I

Isabella Ferrante, History

Advisor: Meredith Rusoff, Adjunct Faculty, History

Advisor: Joel Blatt, Associate Professor, History

24. The Effect of Feedback on Ability to Understand an Object's
History in Developing Children

Kristen Shubert, Allied Health Science

Advisor: Gerry Altmann, Professor, Psychological Sciences

25. Defining a Tachykininergic Projection to Melanin-Concentrating Hormone (MCH) Neurons in the Lateral Hypothalamic Area (LHA)
Lily Zhong, Physiology and Neurobiology
Advisor: Alexander Jackson, Assistant Professor, Physiology and Neurobiology

26. FISHing in the Eye: An Investigation into the Mechanisms of Axon Regeneration
Kathleen Renna, Diagnostic Genetic Sciences
Advisor: Ephraim Trakhtenberg, Assistant Professor, Neuroscience
Advisor: Judy Brown, Associate Professor in Residence, Allied Health Sciences
Advisor: Kenneth Campellone, Associate Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology

27. Effect of Positive Interaction on Heart Rate Variability in the Parent and Child Emotions Study
Molly vanLuling, Molecular and Cell Biology & Nutritional Sciences
Advisor: Carolyn Greene, Assistant Professor, Psychiatry

28. Developing and Optimizing a Novel Model of Blast-Induced TBI
Emmalyn Lecky, Biological Sciences & Psychological Sciences
Alexela Hoyt, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology & Physiology and Neurobiology
Advisor: Ephraim Trakhtenberg, Assistant Professor, Neuroscience

29. Understanding Barriers to Patient Recruitment and Enrollment in Clinical Research: Keloid Study
Sarah Tsuruo, Biological Sciences
Advisor: Ernst Reichenberger, Professor, Center for Regenerative Medicine and Skeletal Development

30. Measuring the Effect of the Ketogenic Diet on Seizure-Like Activity (SLA) in a *Drosophila melanogaster* Model
Adeline Bray, Physiology and Neurobiology
Riccardo Fornari, Biological Sciences
Advisor: Geoffrey Tanner, Assistant Professor in Residence, Physiology and Neurobiology

31. Genetic Determinants of Ketone Body Effects on Post-TBI Aggression in *Drosophila*

Faria Mahjabin, Biological Sciences

Advisor: Geoffrey Tanner, Assistant Professor in Residence, Physiology and Neurobiology

32. Behavioral Screen to Test the Function of Candidate Olfactory Genes in *Drosophila melanogaster*

Tiffany Liang, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Karen Menuz, Assistant Professor, Physiology and Neurobiology

33. The Role of C1QL1 in the Maturation of Oligodendrocytes

Aubrey Surian, Molecular and Cell Biology & Psychological Sciences

Advisor: David Martinelli, Assistant Professor, Neuroscience

34. Identifying Genes with a Role in the Reproductive Lifespan of *C. elegans*

Shannon Hangodo, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Bojun Chen, Assistant Professor, Neuroscience

35. Investigating the Role of ULK-1 in Zika Virus Replication

Veollette Hanna, Physiology and Neurobiology

Advisor: Penghua Wang, Assistant Professor, Immunology

36. PAD4: A Potential Biomarker for Gliosis in Age-Related Macular Degeneration

Humza Zaidi, Molecular and Cell Biology & Health Care Management

Advisor: Royce Mohan, Professor, Neuroscience

37. Evaluation of a Dietary Sphingosine on Gut Barrier Markers of Caco-2 Cells

Julia Colliton, Biological Sciences & Finance

Advisor: Christopher Blesso, Associate Professor, Nutritional Sciences

38. Effect of c-MYC inhibition on the MCF7 Luminal A Breast Cancer Cell Line

Sarah Chen, Physiology and Neurobiology

Advisor: Jeannine McCune, Professor, Population Sciences & Hematology and Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation, City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center

Advisor: Victoria Seewaldt, Professor, Population Sciences, City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center

39. Phenotypic Analysis of Lgr6 Null Periosteal Cells

Matthew Wan, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Archana Sanjay, Assistant Professor, Orthopaedic Surgery

40. Rare Variants in the MC4R Gene are Associated with an Increased Risk of Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD) and Insulin Resistance in Children and Adolescents with Obesity
Prabhath Mannam, Physiology and Neurobiology & Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Nicola Santoro, Assistant Professor, Pediatric Endocrinology, Yale School of Medicine

41. Mechanism of CD13 Mediated Tunneling Nanotube Formation in Endothelial Cells

Reileigh Fleeher, Physiology and Neurobiology

Advisor: Mallika Ghosh, Assistant Professor, Cell Biology & Center for Vascular Biology

42. Who Let the DoGs Out? An Analysis of RNA Transcription Readthrough and Termination

Roshni Mehta, Molecular and Cell Biology & French and Francophone Studies

Advisor: Leighton Core, Assistant Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology

43. The Genes in Frog Skin and Their Role in Evolutionary Innovation

Chenghong Deng, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Rachel O'Neill, Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: John Malone, Assistant Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology

44. Analyzing Senescence Cells and Their Ability to Cause Insulin Resistance in Obese Mice

Lauren Barber, Allied Health Sciences

Advisor: Ming Xu, Assistant Professor, Genetics and Genome Sciences & Center on Aging

45. Characterization of Early Pre-mRNA Splicing Complexes in *Trypanosoma brucei*

Khaleel Rahman, Biological Sciences

Advisor: Arthur Günzl, Professor, Genetics and Genome Sciences

46. A Novel Biodegradable Piezoelectric Scaffold for Muscular Tissue Regeneration

Pooja Prasad, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Thanh Nguyen, Assistant Professor, Mechanical Engineering

47. Bioresorbable Bone Fixation Devices for Load Bearing Fractures Utilizing Silk and Hydroxyapatite

Caroline Thompson, Biomedical Engineering

Advisor: Mei Wei, Dean, Russ College of Engineering and Technology, Ohio University

48. A User-Friendly Interface to Wirelessly Control Neuroprostheses

Helen Phu, Biomedical Engineering & Computer Science

Advisor: Martin Han, Associate Professor, Biomedical Engineering

49. Optimization of Immunohistochemical Staining Methods in Rat Spinal Cord Tissue

Rohit Makol, Biomedical Engineering

Advisor: Martin Han, Associate Professor, Biomedical Engineering

50. Crosstalk Detection Circuit for Microelectrode Arrays

Morgan McNamara, Biomedical Engineering

Advisor: Martin Han, Associate Professor, Biomedical Engineering

51. Changes in the Gut Mycobiome of Multiple Sclerosis Patients

Saumya Shah, Computer Science

Advisor: Yanjiao Zhou, Assistant Professor, Medicine

52. Synthesis of Tethered Bichromophoric Voltage Sensitive Dye
Daniel Fairchild, Structural Biology and Biophysics & Molecular and Cell
Biology

Advisor: Ping Yan, Assistant Professor, Center for Cell Analysis &
Modeling

53. Toxicity Analysis of DNA Adduct Deoxyguanosine-*N*²-6-
Aminopyrene in *Escherichia coli*

Emily Janeiro, Biological Sciences

Advisor: Ashis Basu, Professor, Chemistry

54. Less is More: Streamlining Glycosphingolipid Synthesis

Hao Xu, Chemistry

Advisor: Amy Howell, Professor, Chemistry

55. Synthesizing Polymer Nanocapsules Using Lipid Scaffolds for
Enzyme Encapsulation

Victoria Bozhulich, Chemistry

Advisor: Eugene Pinkhassik, Associate Professor, Chemistry

56. Radiation Damage Recovery of PbWO₄ Crystals with Optical
Bleaching

Sean Oh, Physics

Advisor: Kyungseon Joo, Professor, Physics

57. Exploring Thermal Conductivity of Heat Treated Niobium at
Cryogenic Temperatures to Produce More Efficient SRF Cavities

Donovan Davino, Physics

Advisor: Kyungseon Joo, Professor, Physics

58. Efficiency Measurements for HPGe Detectors

Megan Sturm, Physics

Advisor: Kyungseon Joo, Professor, Physics

59. Phase Field Modeling with Applications to Corrosion

Victoria Reichelderfer, Materials Science and Engineering

Advisor: Serge Nakhmanson, Associate Professor, Materials Science
and Engineering

60. W-Band Dielectric Property Characterization of Yttria-Stabilized Zirconia at High Temperature

Lucas Enright, Materials Science and Engineering

Advisor: Brad Hoff, Senior Research Physicist, Air Force Research Laboratory

61. Possible Antimicrobial Properties of ERG 240 in Bacterial Sphingolipid Synthesis

Eric Mohan, Chemistry

Advisor: Nicholas Leadbeater, Associate Professor, Chemistry

Advisor: Dominic Campopiano, Professor, Chemistry and Chair of Industrial Biocatalysis, University of Edinburgh

62. Iterative Machine Learning Method for Pore-Back Artifact Mitigation in High Porosity FIB-SEM Image Segmentation

Joseph Tracey, Materials Science and Engineering

Advisor: Jasna Jankovic, Assistant Professor, Materials Science and Engineering

63. Functional Classification of Known and Novel SNPs Associated with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia Predisposition

Helen Bian, Molecular and Cell Biology & Spanish

Advisor: Leighton Core, Assistant Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology

64. Development of a Smartphone-Based Mobile DNA Diagnostic Device for Point-of-Care Diagnostics

Katrina Cirilli, Biomedical Engineering

Advisor: Changchun Liu, Associate Professor, Biomedical Engineering

65. Engineering Intensiometric Sensors for Small Metabolites

Sarah Kricheff, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Yi Wu, Associate Professor, Genetics and Genome Sciences

66. Investigations of Abiotic Drivers of Microbial Community Dynamics in a Restored Freshwater Tidal Marsh

Paulina Frutos, Biological Sciences & Environmental Sciences

Advisor: Beth Lawrence, Assistant Professor, Natural Resources and the Environment

67. Data Curation and Integration of Georeferenced Forest Population Studies in the TreeGenes Database
Charles Demurjian, Biological Sciences
Advisor: Jill Wegrzyn, Assistant Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

68. Development of an Open-Source, Web-Based Database Module for the Tripal Framework to Improve Eukaryotic Genome Annotation
Alyssa Ferreira, Molecular and Cell Biology & Pathobiology
Advisor: Jill Wegrzyn, Assistant Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

69. EASEL: An Integrated and Accessible Framework for the Annotation of Eukaryotic Reference Genomes
Jeremy Bennett, Biomedical Engineering & Computer Science and Engineering
Advisor: Jill Wegrzyn, Assistant Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

70. The Effects of Poor Maternal Nutrition During Gestation on Ewe and Offspring Plasma Concentrations of Leptin and Ghrelin
Lauren Soranno, Animal Science
Advisor: Sarah Reed, Associate Professor, Animal Science
Advisor: Steven Zinn, Professor, Animal Science

71. Effects of Restricted Maternal Nutrition and Realimentation During Gestation on the Fetal Progenitor Cell Population in Semitendinosus Muscle of Sheep
Michaela Mitchell, Animal Science
Advisor: Sarah Reed, Associate Professor, Animal Science

72. Poor Maternal Nutrition During Gestation Alters Placental IGF-I, IGF-II, and IGFBP-3 mRNA Expression in Sheep
Caitlyn Splaine, Animal Science
Advisor: Sarah Reed, Associate Professor, Animal Science

73. The Evolution of Gut Patterning in Tardigrades

Ariana Rojas, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Frank Smith, Assistant Professor, Biology, University of North Florida

74. Genetic Divergence following Establishment of a Barrier to Movement in Parapatric Populations of Threespine Stickleback

Gillian McNeil, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Daniel Bolnick, Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

75. Watching Grass Grow: How Does Moisture Impact a Critical Plant-Fungal Symbiosis?

Laura Jones, Individualized Major: Biodiversity and Visual Media

Advisor: Robert Bagchi, Assistant Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Advisor: Cora Lynn Deibler, Professor, Art and Art History

76. Stoichiometry of Fear: Do Predators Affect the Balance of Carbon and Nitrogen in Their Prey?

Annalee Mears, Marine Sciences

Advisor: Catherine Matassa, Assistant Professor, Marine Sciences

77. Is Applying Lactic Acid Bacteria a Viable Approach for Increasing Female Cannabis Flower Terpene Content?

Evert McKee, Sustainable Plant and Soil Systems

Advisor: Gerald Berkowitz, Professor, Plant Science and Landscape Architecture

78. Symbiont Replacement by Pathogenic Fungus in North American Dog-Day Cicadas

Jason Vaillionis, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Advisor: Chris Simon, Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

79. How the Use of Various Feeder and Seed Types Affect Bird Activity

Piper Stepule, Mathematics

Advisor: Chris Elphick, Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

80. The Impact of Distance from a Stream on Color Morph Distributions of *Plethodon cinereus*, the Eastern Red-Backed Salamander

Sarah Baker, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Advisor: Elizabeth Jockusch, Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

81. Effect of Forest Fragmentation on the Abundance of Deer Ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*)

Robert Lepore, Biological Sciences

Advisor: Sarah Knutie, Assistant Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Advisor: Miranda Davis, Assistant Professor in Residence, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

82. Are Predators and Pollution a Problem for Freshwater Ecosystems?

Amanda Pastore, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Advisor: Mark Urban, Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

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Special Thanks

The Office of Undergraduate Research wishes to thank the deans of the represented schools and colleges, the Office of the Provost, the Office of the Vice President for Research, and the generous donors to Enrichment Programs and to the Honors Program for their support of undergraduate research. In addition, we thank the following individuals for their support:

Thomas C. Katsouleas, *President, University of Connecticut*

John A. Elliott, *Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs*

John Volin, *Vice Provost for Academic Affairs*

Jennifer Lease Butts, *Assistant Vice Provost, Enrichment Programs and Director, Honors Program*

Student Volunteers for the Fall Frontiers Poster Exhibition

Office of Undergraduate Research Staff

Caroline McGuire, *Executive Director, Enrichment Programs and Director, Office of Undergraduate Research*

Melissa Berkey, *Assistant Director*

Liza Boritz, *BOLD Program Director*

Jodi Eskin, *Program Coordinator*

Rowena Grainger, *Health Research Program Advisor*

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