



13th Annual

FALL FRONTIERS

**UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH
POSTER EXHIBITION**

October 23, 2025

5:00 - 7:00 p.m

Student Union Ballroom

**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 thirteenth fall event sponsored by the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR). This year's exhibition includes 92 students presenting posters for 82 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. 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 \$650,000 in 2024-2025 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.

13th Annual Fall Frontiers Poster Exhibition

Poster Exhibition

Thursday, October 23, 2025

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Micah Heumann

Director, Office of Undergraduate Research

Keynote Speaker

Virginia Hettinger

Alan R. Bennett Honors Professor, and Associate
Professor, Department of Political Science

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. Honor our House: Reframing the Stories of the Mansfield Training School

Hannah Dang, English

Gabriella DiSalvo, Individualized Major: Disability Studies in Media and Food Culture

Advisor: Brenda Brueggemann, Professor, English

2. Composition for Audio Drama: Using Music to Amplify Emotion, Setting, and Character

Grace Wentland, Music

Advisor: Jennifer Scapetis-Tyler, Associate Professor, Dramatic Arts

3. Quinn and the Quantum Team - Graphic Novel Project

Zhiyu Liu, Digital Media and Design

Marisa Savino, Art - Illustration/Animation

Advisor: Vincent Tyler, Assistant Professor in Residence, Dramatic Arts

4. Unauthorized Subcontracting and Labor Rights in Collegiate Apparel Supply Chains

Noor Abbasi, Analytics and Information Management & Human Rights

Advisor: Kyle Muncy, Director, Brand Partnerships and Trademark Management, University Communications

5. The Intersection of Anti-Chinese and Labor Movements in Early West Coast Cities

Andrei Abarientos, Pathobiology & Sociology

Advisor: Simon Yamawaki Shachter, Assistant Professor, Sociology

6. South Asian Displacement through Literature and Ethics of AI Visualization

Ada Yeung, Individualized Major: Justice through Law and the Arts

Advisor: Qazi Arka Rahman, Visiting Assistant Professor, Social and Critical Inquiry

7. Measuring Territorial Control of Non-State Actors

Alyssa Boggis, Political Science

Toriana Grooms, Political Science & English

Advisor: Michael Rubin, Assistant Professor, Political Science & Human Rights

8. AirPods & the Illusion of Choice: Capitalism in Your Ears

Julianne Katz, Political Science

Advisor: Jennifer Sterling-Folker, Professor, Political Science

9. How Workplace Democracy Predicts Turnover Intention: A Hierarchical Regression and Parallel Mediation Approach

Ross Elliott, Psychological Sciences

Advisor: Steven Mellor, Associate Professor, Psychological Sciences

10. The Impact of Social Media on Social Inclusion: A Case Study on Gun Violence

Ruolin Xu, Communication & Statistics

Advisor: Anne Oeldorf-Hirsch, Associate Professor, Communication

11. Paid Family Leave Policy Around the United States

Kendall DeCook, Economics of Sustainable Development and Management

Maryam Izzat, Economics

Advisor: Tatiana Andreyeva, Associate Professor, Agricultural and Resource Economics

12. Addressing Inequities for Immigrant Families: Social Policies & Immigrant Family Well-being

Carolline Camilo, Psychological Sciences

Advisor: Kevin Ferreira van Leer, Assistant Professor, Human Development and Family Sciences

13. Migrant Stress Project

Iryna Pazos, Psychological Sciences

Advisor: Sarah Rendon Garcia, Assistant Professor, Human Development and Family Sciences

14. Food Insecurity as a Moderator of Rural Disparities in Mental Health

Neha Shanavas, Molecular and Cell Biology

Eashwar Krishna, Sociology & Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Ryan Talbert, Assistant Professor, Sociology

15. Local Sociostructural Drivers of Food Insecurity in Connecticut: A Quantitative Analysis

Ahan Kothapeta, Physiology and Neurobiology & Molecular and Cell Biology

Eashwar Krishna, Sociology & Molecular and Cell Biology

Eshita Mathur, Molecular and Cell Biology

Noha Myreen, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Ryan Talbert, Assistant Professor, Sociology

16. Landscapes of Inequality: Structural Racial Disparities in the Rural Built and Natural Environment

Eashwar Krishna, Sociology & Molecular and Cell Biology

Theja Suresh Nagan, Physiology and Neurobiology & Human Rights

Pranav Yerra, Biomedical Engineering

Advisor: Ryan Talbert, Assistant Professor, Sociology

17. Agroecology and Urban Wellness: Cultivating Healthy Communities

Safiya Crockett, Environmental Science

Brenny Alcantara, Environmental Sciences

Advisor: Phil Birge-Liberman, Associate Professor in Residence, Geography, Sustainability, Community, and Urban Studies

18. Analyzing Perceptions of Nutrition in a Food Desert

Rafe Kimball, Sociology

Advisor: Phil Birge-Liberman, Associate Professor in Residence, Geography, Sustainability, Community, and Urban Studies

19. Transfer to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit in Patients with Elevated Pediatric Early Warning System Scores

Calvin Scheiber, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Sharon Smith, Professor, Pediatrics

20. Assessing Knowledge and Decision-Making in Basic Genomics among Adolescents and Adults

Sidharth Masarur, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Sharon Smith, Professor, Pediatrics

Advisor: Elizabeth Kline, Associate Professor in Residence, Molecular and Cell Biology

21. Information Seeking Behavior of Pediatric Parents

Irena Komninakas, Molecular and Cell Biology & Spanish

Advisor: Sharon Smith, Professor, Pediatrics

22. Effect of CBD on Participants with Social Anxiety

Rushil Bist, Physiology and Neurobiology

Mia Tzikas, Psychological Sciences

Advisor: Robert Astur, Associate Professor, Psychological Sciences

23. Insights into Early Childhood Immune Response: Decoding the Link Between Sleep and Cytokine Activity

Arohi Bhowmik, Physiology and Neurobiology

Advisor: Eileen Condon, Assistant Professor, Nursing

24. Which is a Better Predictor of Premature Infant Neurodevelopment: Secondary Analysis of SNAPPE II and NISS Scores on the Bayley Scale Neurodevelopment Data

Krysteen Burke, Nursing

Advisor: Sharon Casavant, Assistant Professor, Nursing

25. Trends in High-Risk Obesity, Diabetes, Blood Pressure, and Cholesterol Among U.S. Children and Adolescents: A NHANES Analysis

Julia Viveiros, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Elizabeth Kline, Associate Professor in Residence, Molecular and Cell Biology

26. Understanding Risk: Studying the Relationship between Flood Perception Factors in Connecticut

Anna Woelk, Environmental and Natural Resource Economics

Advisor: Hanlin Zhou, Assistant Professor, Geography, Sustainability, Community, and Urban Studies

27. Blight Ordinances, Vacant Lots & Biodiversity: An Analysis of Connecticut Blight Ordinances' Impact on Biodiversity-Positive Landscapes

Anna Hilary, Environmental Science

Amber Hwang, Environmental Studies

Advisor: Sohyun Park, Associate Professor, Plant Science and Landscape Architecture

28. Analysis of Street View Imagery in Flood Risk Areas

Nora Lombardo, Environmental and Natural Resource Economics & Geographic Information Science

Advisor: Hanlin Zhou, Assistant Professor, Geography, Sustainability, Community, and Urban Studies

29. Fabrication of Three-Dimensional Seaweed-Based Scaffolds and Evaluation of Cell Attachment and Viability for Cultured Meat Applications

Srishti Tandon, Molecular and Cell Biology & Nutritional Sciences

Advisor: Mingyu Qiao, Assistant Professor, Nutritional Sciences

30. Aging and Senescence-Induced Changes in Zn Absorption in Intestinal Cells and Live Mice Models

Karina Huang, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Sangyong Choi, Assistant Professor, Nutritional Sciences

31. Impact of Cellular Senescence on Flu-induced Muscle Dysfunction

Rakshit Raj Bisoi, Physiology and Neurobiology

Advisor: Jenna Bartley, Associate Professor, Center on Aging and Department of Immunology

32. Video-Based Analysis of Upper Extremity Use for Children with Hemiplegic Cerebral Palsy During a Joystick Operated Ride-on Toy-Based Training Program

Abhigna Reddy, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Sudha Srinivasan, Assistant Professor, Kinesiology

33. In Humans, Alpha, Beta, and Evoked Responses Measured with Electroencephalogram (EEG) Recordings Vary with Background Sound Type and Performance on a Speech-in-Noise Task

Nikhil Kikanamada, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Heather Read, Professor, Psychological Sciences

34. Distinct Effects of Bacteroidota-derived Glycine Lipids L654 and L1256 on Skeletal Muscle Mitochondrial Respiration and Quality Control

Tomas Vence, Physiology and Neurobiology

Advisor: Oh Sung Kwon, Assistant Professor, Kinesiology

35. Changes in Meningeal Cytoarchitecture following Experimental Diffuse Traumatic Brain Injury

Sharanya Chatterjee, Molecular and Cell Biology & Human Rights

Advisor: Brian Kelley, Assistant Professor, Neurosurgery

36. Anatomical Characterization of Prefrontal Corticothalamic Neurons Targeting the Reuniens and the Mediodorsal Thalamus

Ademide Ogunsina, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Timothy Spellman, Assistant Professor, Neuroscience

37. The Role of the Prefrontal Cortex in Cognitive Flexibility: An Optogenetic Study

Katarina Kalajzic, Psychological Sciences

Advisor: Timothy Spellman, Assistant Professor, Department of Neuroscience

38. Exploring Urinary Cell Profiles to Identify Biomarkers for Endometriosis: A Step Toward Noninvasive Detection

Natasha Khetan, Allied Health Sciences & IMJR: Disability Studies

Advisor: Elise Courtois, Director, Single Cell Biology Lab and Senior Research Scientist, The Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine

39. High-fat Diet Enhances Negative Affective Behaviors and Dysregulates Stress-responsive Activity of Locus Coeruleus and Other Medullary Catecholaminergic Neurons

Malak Nechnach, Physiology and Neurobiology

Advisor: Natale Sciolino, Assistant Professor, Physiology and Neurobiology

40. Deep Corneal Damage and Loss of Sensation: A Myelination Study

Mary Katherine Eddy, Physiology and Neurobiology

Advisor: Royce Mohan, Professor, Neuroscience

Advisor: Paola Bargagna-Mohan, Assistant Professor, Neuroscience

41. Norepinephrine Signaling Throughout the Hippocampus and Cortical Structures in Relation to Latent Learning

Quinn Fong, Physiology and Neurobiology

Advisor: Andres Grosmark, Assistant Professor, Neuroscience

42. Extended Chronic Stress Disrupts Context Discrimination in a Sex-dependent Manner and Potentially Alters Neurotransmitter Expression

Sarah McCarthy, Cognitive Science & Actuarial Science

Aidan McKinley, Biological Sciences, Clemson University

Advisor: Elif Tunc-Ozcan, Assistant Professor, Neurosciences, University of New Mexico School of Medicine

43. Neuronal Membrane Excitability and Spontaneous Synaptic Inputs in Mouse Model of Alzheimer's Disease Prior to Formation of Amyloid Plaques

Gowri Chandran, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Srdjan Antic, Professor, Neuroscience

44. Psychiatric Severity and Sex As Predictors of HIV Risk Behaviors Among People Living with HIV (PLWH)

Pam Win, Psychological Sciences

Advisor: Carla Rash, Associate Professor, Medicine, Calhoun Cardiology Center

45. Piezo2 Density Distribution in Enteroendocrine Cells

NaShyla McQuirter, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Arthur Beyder, Associate Professor, Physiology and Biomedical Engineering, Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science

46. VEGF-A Signaling has Opposite Effects on Blood and Lymphatic Endothelial Cell Junctions Through Distinct Cell Surface Protein Trafficking

Chevintha Edirisinghe, Physiology and Neurobiology

Advisor: Georgia Zarkada, Assistant Professor, Physiology and Neurobiology

47. ATPase Subunit ATP6v0c Promotes CNS Axon Regeneration and Neuronal Survival

Anja Kearney, Physiology and Neurobiology

Advisor: Feliks Trakhtenberg, Associate Professor, Neuroscience

48. The Interplay of Repetitive Elements With Nuclear Compartments and Gene Transcription

Anna Johnson, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Jelena Erceg, Assistant Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology

49. Investigating Oxidative Stress Induced Readthrough Transcription in the Retinal Pigment Epithelium

Nora Lippai, Molecular and Cell Biology

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

50. Monitoring Maintenance and Hallmarks of Cell-stage Transitions During Long-term Induction of Senescence and Quiescence

Charley Damico, Molecular and Cell Biology

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

51. Investigating IGF-1 Signaling in Senescent Cells Lacking the Arp2/3 Complex

Rose Notch, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Kenneth Campellone, Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology

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

52. Loss of MFAP2 Alleviates Kidney Fibrosis

Nicolas Tippner, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Yuan Gui, Instructor, Medicine, Nephrology

Advisor: Dong Zhou, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Nephrology

53. Matrix Microenvironment and AKI: MFAP2 in Renal Injury and Repair

Anshul Patel, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Dong Zhou, Assistant Professor, Medicine, Nephrology

Advisor: Yuan Gui, Instructor, Medicine, Nephrology

54. Investigating the Presence of R-loops at the Centromeres of *Drosophila melanogaster*

Daniel D'Souza, Molecular and Cell Biology & Applied Mathematics

Advisor: Barbara Mellone, Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology

55. Investigating the Connection Between LINE1 Transposable Elements and Neocentromere Formation and Stability

Mackenzie Robillard, Molecular and Cell Biology

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

56. Shedding Light on Calcium Signaling: Photoswitchable Modulation of SOCE through CRAC Channels

José Matute Gálvez, Molecular and Cell Biology, Allied Health Sciences, and Individualized Major: Biochemical Systems in Health and Disease

Advisor: Michael Kienzler, Assistant Professor, Chemistry

57. Size-regulated Sustained Release of Azoheteroarenes from Semipermeable Polymer Nanocapsules

Luke Pratley, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Eugene Pinkhassik, Associate Professor, Chemistry

58. Impact of Active Galactic Nucleus on Molecular Gas Properties in Galaxy Centers

Lia Gilmore, Physics

Advisor: Christopher Faesi, Assistant Professor, Physics

59. Phase Diagrams for Optimization of Pharmaceutical Lyophilization

Ashley Klancko, Pharmacy

Advisor: Robin Bogner, Professor, Pharmaceutical Sciences

60. Towards Streamlined Dataflow in the Parameterization Pipeline of an *E. Coli* Whole-cell Model

Christopher Rauch, Computer Science & Jazz Studies

Advisor: Eran Agmon, Assistant Professor, Center for Cell Analysis and Modeling

61. A Computational Model of Tropomyosin Receptor Kinase Dimerization and Trafficking

Hudson Hu, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Sarvenaz Sarabipour, Assistant Professor, Center for Cell Analysis and Modeling

62. Use of Zinc and Copper to Remove Cadmium from Bone-like Mineral

Lauren McCarroll, Biomedical Engineering

Advisor: Alix Deymier, Associate Professor, Biomedical Engineering

63. Lipid Peroxidation Product 4-hydroxy-2-nonenal Attachment to LYS152 of Tropoelastin Monomer

Sarah Bradley, Biomedical Engineering

Advisor: Anna Tarakanova, Associate Professor, School of Mechanical, Aerospace, and Manufacturing Engineering

64. Cartilage Regenerative Approach for TMJ-Osteoarthritis in an *In Vitro* Model

Abigail Messina, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Caroline Dealy, Professor, Orthodontics, Biomedical Engineering, Orthopedic Surgery & Cell Biology

65. Modeling Industrial Air Leaks with an M/M/ ∞ Queueing Framework
Nicholas Bailey, Management and Engineering for Manufacturing & Applied Mathematics

Advisor: Liang Zhang, Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering

66. Nonlinear Input-output Analysis of Transitional Shear Flows Using Small-signal Finite-gain Lp stability

Zhengyang Wei, Mechanical Engineering

Advisor: Chang Liu, Assistant Professor, School of Mechanical, Aerospace, and Manufacturing Engineering

67. Technical Debt from Code Architecture in AI/ML Systems

Alejandro Reilly, Computer Science and Engineering

Advisor: Lina Kloub, Assistant Professor in Residence, School of Computing

68. Size-Dependent Interactions Between Graphene Quantum Dots and Multidrug Resistance Protein (MDR-1)

Mishaël Gill, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Isaac Macwan, Associate Professor, Electrical and Biomedical Engineering, Fairfield University

69. Rules Railroad: A Tool to Visualize Site-Specific Molecular Interactions

Reesha Patel, Statistical Data Science

Advisor: Michael Blinov, Associate Professor, Center for Cell Analysis and Modeling

70. Validation of a Genotyping Method for *Leptospira* Species from Animal Clinical Samples

Anayah Fanfan, Animal Science

Advisor: Elsie Wunder, Assistant Professor, Pathobiology and Veterinary Science

Advisor: Camila Hamond, Assistant Research Professor, Pathobiology and Veterinary Science

71. The Impact of Forest Fires on the *T. septentrionalis* Microbiome

Samantha Andersen, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Jonathan Klassen, Associate Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology

72. Comparing Antimicrobial Resistance Genes (ARGs) in Oral and Feather Samples of Wild Mallards

Mayee Mavillapalli, Molecular and Cell Biology & Anthropology

Advisor: Sarah Hird, Associate Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology

73. Dual Role of Cyanobacteria in Calcium Carbonate Precipitation

Evelyn Lewis, Marine Sciences

Advisor: Pieter Visscher, Professor, Marine Sciences

74. Mechanical Behavior of a Unique B2 Cu-based Medium-Entropy Alloy

Wyeth Haddock, Materials Science and Engineering

Advisor: Seok-Woo Lee, Associate Professor, Materials Science and Engineering

75. Understanding the Foraging Ecology of Bats in Minute Man National Historical Park

Annalise Cormier, Natural Resources

Advisor: Tracy Rittenhouse, Associate Professor, Natural Resources and the Environment

76. Fine Woody Debris Response to Ice Storm Disturbance

Tobey Russell, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology & Classics and Ancient Mediterranean Studies

Advisor: Robert Fahey, Associate Professor, Natural Resources and the Environment

77. Evaluating the Effect of Different BSA Formulations on the Growth and Isolation of Pathogenic Leptospira

Vivianne Lee, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Elsie Wunder, Assistant Professor, Pathobiology and Veterinary Science

Advisor: Camila Hamond, Assistant Research Professor, Pathobiology and Veterinary Science

78. Development and Optimization of a New 23S-based qPCR Assay to Detect Saprophytic Leptospira Species on Environmental Samples

Noah Sinclair, Pathobiology & General Studies

Advisor: Elsie Wunder, Professor, Pathobiology and Veterinary Science

Advisor: Camila Hamond, Assistant Research Professor, Pathobiology and Veterinary Science

79. Detection and Characterization of Pathogenic *Leptospira* from Environmental Sources in Connecticut, US: A One Health Approach

Ellie Borton, Animal Science

Advisor: Elsie Wunder, Assistant Professor, Pathobiology and Veterinary Science

Advisor: Camila Hamond, Assistant Research Professor, Pathobiology and Veterinary Science

80. Evaluation of Immune Epitopes as Diagnostic Targets for Human Leptospirosis

Lucca Rivera-Vazquez, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Elsie Wunder, Assistant Professor, Pathobiology and Veterinary Science

81. Pathogenic *Leptospira* Adherence to Endothelial Cells: A Comparison between Different Hosts Based on Outcome of Disease

Imaan Masood, Molecular and Cell Biology

Advisor: Elsie Wunder, Assistant Professor, Pathobiology and Veterinary Science

Advisor: Camila Hamond, Assistant Research Professor, Pathobiology and Veterinary Science

82. Development and Validation of a MALDI-TOF Library for *Leptospira* Cultured in EMEM, a Host-like Environment Medium

Suri Nguyen, Pathobiology

Advisor: Elsie Wunder, Assistant Professor, Pathobiology and Veterinary Science

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.

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Gladis Kersaint, *Vice Provost for Academic Affairs*

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

Student Volunteers for the Fall Frontiers Poster Exhibition

Office of Undergraduate Research

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Micah Heumann, *Director, Office of Undergraduate Research*

Melissa Berkey, *Assistant Director*

Jodi Eskin, *Program Administrator and Advisor*

Emily Schwab, *BOLD Program Director and Advisor*

Peer Research Ambassadors

Andrei Abarientos '26 (CAHNR & CLAS)

Julia Armington '27 (ENG)

Breanna Bonner '26 (CLAS)

Hansuja Chaurasia '26 (CAHNR)

Hailey DeWalt '26 (CLAS)

Ashly Gasior '27 (CLAS)

Olivia Joyce '27 (CLAS)

Ruupala Kalaivasu '27 (CLAS)

José Matute Gálvez '26 (CLAS & CAHNR)

Malak Nechnach '26 (CLAS)

Brielle Pierre Philippe '27 (CLAS)

Annette St. Jacques '26 (CLAS)

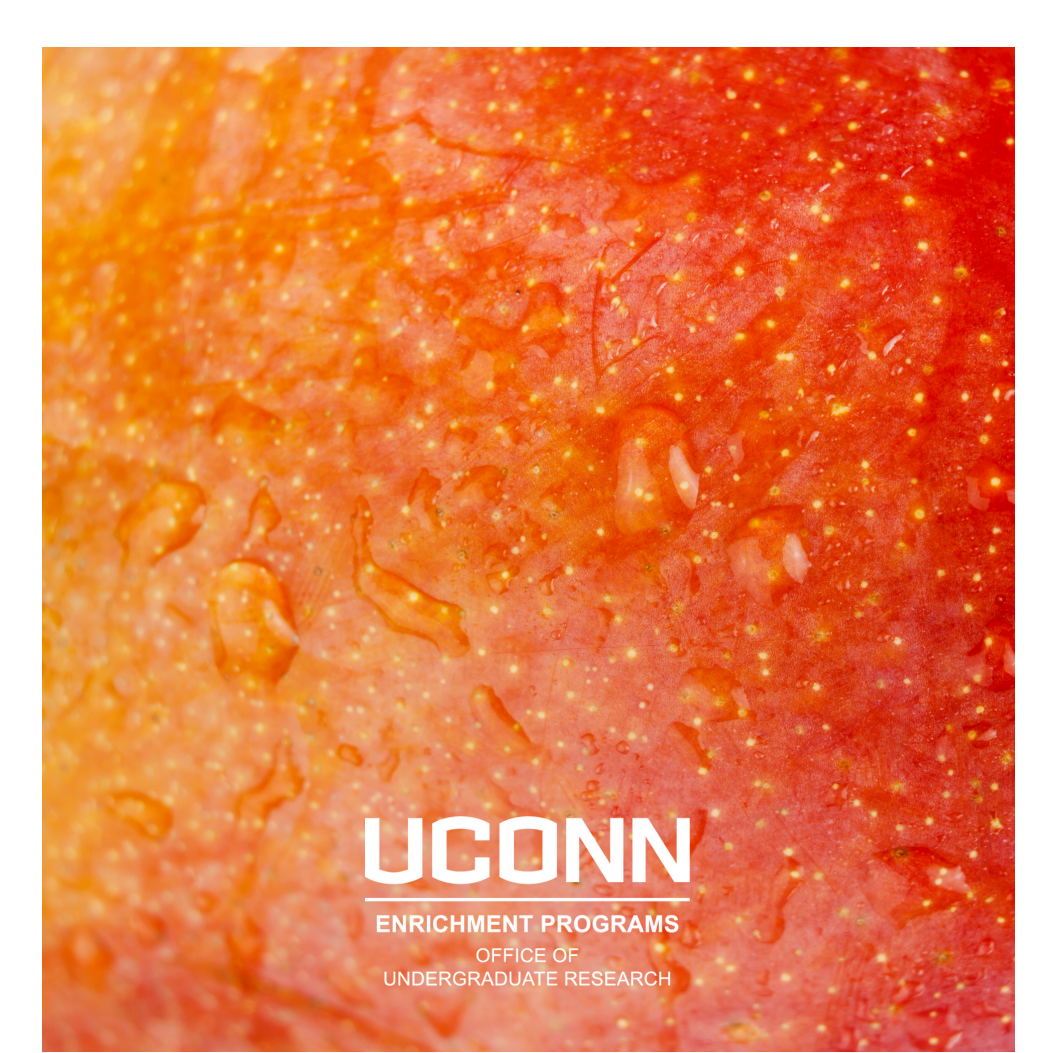
Alana Wolfson '27 (CAHNR)

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ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

OFFICE OF
UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Frontiers is a celebration of scholarship, innovation, creativity, and collaboration. Since its establishment in 1998, Frontiers has provided a venue for students to share their ideas and discoveries with the university community.