Research Symposium ‘15
Register now to hear best practices from the experts and get hands-on experience

An opening session for both students and faculty/staff on "Writing for Publication with Students" will kick off the Best Practices in Research Symposium at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, October 13, in the Guillot University Center Loft. After the opening session, topics for faculty and staff include "Understanding Mentoring Students" and "Distributed Leadership," and faculty will also hear from a panel of their peers. Students will get hands-on experience in a Presentation Creator Lab, Literature Review, and 3-Minute Thesis. Both tracks will be exposed to available research tools at the university, including sociological data sets, mapping software, and SPSS. For a complete schedule of the day’s events, see Page 4, and register at https://una.edu/qep/best-practices-undergraduate-research-symposium.html.

Creating a student culture around research

By Andrea Hunt
Assistant Professor, Sociology and Family Studies
College of Arts and Sciences

In 2014, the Department of Sociology held its first research symposium which was co-sponsored by Alpha Kappa Delta Sociology Honor Society. Over the last two years, 40 students have presented at the symposium and nearly 80 other students, faculty, and staff have attended. The symposium is a time for students to showcase scholarship in the social sciences. Through the symposium, students learn how to articulate appropriate research questions; describe the results of analysis to others; formulate future research questions; develop skills in

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Working with student researchers brings rewards for faculty too

By Gary Padgett

Assistant Professor, Secondary Education
College of Education and Human Sciences

As I take time to write this article, I have just finished meeting with one group of undergraduate researchers and will soon meet with a second group. I truly enjoy working with undergraduate researchers, and would like to encourage others to do so as well. While the words “undergraduate” and “researcher” are not often mentioned in the same sentence, that is something I am working to change. In many fields, undergraduate programs tend to focus on the practitioner and not the researcher. However, now is the time to change the paradigm and begin engaging undergraduate students in policy and curricular research.

When I am teaching my courses, my undergraduate students tend to be passionate about education and wanting to impact their students. This passion is a great thing, but often needs direction and focus. I believe that part of my job is being a mentor, and this also offers me a chance to share my passion for qualitative research.

I have had the pleasure to work with Mr. Seth Armstrong, Ms. Sarah-Jane Davis, and Ms. Jessica Rikard as a mentor and co-investigator. Working with these undergraduate students has been very rewarding for both sides of this partnership. While they gain experience and assistance with research methods, I have gained new insights and benefit from their youth and passion. As they continue in their careers, I am confident I will see their names attached to more research articles.

Another example of a successful COEHS undergraduate researcher is Mrs. Sarah Swafford. I worked with Sarah on a research project titled A Critical Case Study of Teacher Education Student Created Memes. Sarah was incorporated as a full research partner and worked through the entire process, from IRB to data analysis. She presented this research at UNA’s Research Day and was awarded second place for her division. Sarah then went on to present this research at the Eleventh International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. As a researcher and a practitioner, Sarah used her research to develop a professional development course on memes that we presented for professors at UNA and for teachers throughout Alabama as part of their in-service. We also have an article pending publication, which is something that she is looking forward to including on her resume. Sarah epitomizes my goals for developing undergraduate researchers.

Over the last two years, I have worked with seven undergraduate students who have successfully conducted research and presented at regional, state, or international conferences. I have worked with them on writing their articles and working toward publication. Their hard work and subsequent success has continued to inspire me to seek out undergraduate research projects.
information communication and dissemination; and most importantly, develop an identity as a researcher and connect with other students.

We send out a call for presentations in February. Students submit their research questions and summary of the analysis prior to the symposium. Presentations include empirical research, theoretical explorations, and research in progress. Students are encouraged to present papers written for their classes. Since its inception, we have used a roundtable format with three to four student presenters at a table. Faculty in the Department of Sociology and Family Studies rotate through the roundtables and serve as presiders.

This is often the first time our students have presented their research. They are nervous about the research process and the symposium offers them a supportive space to begin their journey. Students have expressed that by participating in the symposium they begin to see themselves as sociologists and have greater enthusiasm for research. This has led to an increase in student research in our department and student presentations at university level events and conferences. This spring we will sponsor our third annual research symposium in conjunction with Research Day activities and anticipate even more participation this year.
Best Practices in Research Symposium:  
Tuesday, October 13, 2015

Student/Faculty Combined Session  
9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Loft, GUC

**Writing for Publication with Students**

Jessie Moore, Associate Director,  
Center for Engaged Learning;  
Associate Professor of Professional Writing and Rhetoric, Elon University

Dr. Moore will share strategies for faculty and students who are writing collaboratively for undergraduate research and students-as-partners projects. Participants also will consider their goals for publication and ethical considerations that can guide their collaboration.

**Lunch**

11:30 a.m.  
*Students pick up lunch in Room 200, GUC; Faculty and Staff pick up lunch in Loft, GUC*  
(Reservations Required for Boxed Lunches)

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**Save the date!**

APRIL 19-21, 2016

RESEARCH DAY 2016

For more information, visit our website at [https://una.edu/ug-research/research-day-2016.html](https://una.edu/ug-research/research-day-2016.html), call the office at 256-765-4640, or e-mail qep@una.edu.
Best Practices in Research Symposium:  
Tuesday, October 13, 2015 (Continued)

Student Track
Noon to 1:50 p.m., Room 200, GUC

Presentation Creator Lab
Matthew Little, Director,  
First-Year Experience Program, UNA  
Matt Price, Learning Support Coordinator, UNA  
Derek Malone, Assistant Professor, Librarian,  
Instructional Services, UNA

In this session students will be introduced to poster presentations and the options available for presenting research. Students who currently have completed research or have research in progress should bring their work to help create a presentation for future use. Different presentation options will be explored and samples of quality poster presentations will be provided. Students should bring their own devices to work with in this session.

2:00 p.m. to 2:50 p.m., Room 200, GUC

Literature Review
Leigh Thompson, Associate Professor, Librarian,  
Instructional Services, UNA

Most research projects require a literature review of some kind. This workshop will cover identifying relevant resources to search for studies, searching techniques to assist in locating research literature, and evaluating what you find. Bring your own device and a research topic for hands-on practice.

3:00 p.m. to 3:50 p.m., Room 200, GUC

Interactive Workshop - Preparing your  
Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Talk
Cynthia Stenger, Department Chair, Professor  
Mathematics, UNA  
James Jerkins, Assistant Professor,  
Computer Science, UNA

Each participant should bring a research project that is a work in progress or completed. Participants will review the presentation format, guidelines, rules, and scoring. A selection of video presentations from UNA’s past 3MT competitions will be viewed. At the workshop, each participant will develop a draft 3MT talk, present the talk in small groups, and receive feedback from prior year judges and participants. The 50-minute workshop will conclude with a mock 3MT competition complete with prizes.

4:00 p.m. to 4:50 p.m.,  
Classroom, Collier Library

Available Research Tools
Craig Robertson, Director,  
Division of Professional,  
Interdisciplinary and Continuing  
Education, UNA  
Yaschica Williams, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Sociology  
and Family Studies, UNA  
Robby Thompson, Graduate Student,  
Geospatial Science, UNA

Data, Data, Data … Everywhere
Dr. Yaschica Williams, chair and faculty member in the Department of Sociology and Family Studies and the director of the Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Center (SBSRC) will introduce attendees to the newest database collection to which UNA has acquired membership, the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). ICPSR maintains a data archive of more than 8,000 research studies that are available to faculty and students for research and instruction.

Sane People for Simple Statistics
Whether you’re dipping a toe into applied statistics or comfortable swimming in data, SPSS is a great resource to use. Dr. Craig T. Robertson (Chair, Department of Interdisciplinary and Professional Studies) will guide attendees through an introduction to this software package using a data set obtained from ICPSR. From his presentation, you’ll understand both the power and ease associated with using this UNA networked software.

Visualizing and Leveraging the Power of ‘Big Data’  
with a Web GIS
Department of Geography graduate student Robby Thompson will demonstrate the utility of ArcGIS Online—a web geographic information system—in a wide range of academic disciplines. Attendees will be briefed on the various datasets available on ArcGIS Online, the user-friendly interface for visualizing and analyzing data, and publishing a web map and web application.
Best Practices in Research Symposium:
Tuesday, October 13, 2015 (Continued)

Faculty Track

Noon to 12:50 p.m., The Loft, GUC
Understanding Mentoring Students
Jessie Moore, Associate Director
Center for Engaged Learning
Associate Professor of Professional
Writing and Rhetoric, Elon University

Drawing from published literature, in-progress research from the Center for Engaged Learning’s multi-institutional research seminar on Excellence in Mentoring Undergraduate Research, and interviews with undergraduate researchers, Dr. Moore will share best practices for mentoring research students. Attendees will have an opportunity to reflect on how to adapt the identified strategies for different disciplinary contexts and research projects.

1:00 p.m. to 1:50 p.m., Room 200, GUC
Distributed Leadership
Jessie Moore

In this interactive session, attendees will map their research networks and identify strategies for sustaining research within small departments and with high teaching loads.

2:00 p.m. to 2:50 p.m., Room 200, GUC
Panel Discussion
Lisa Keys-Mathews, QEP Director
Cynthia Stenger, Department Chair
Professor, Mathematics, UNA
Mel Blake, Assistant Professor
Physics and Astronomy
Planetarium Director, UNA
Eric O’Neal, Assistant Professor
HPER, UNA
Isaac Sleadd, Assistant Professor
Biology, UNA
Gabriel Carrasco, Assistant Professor
Psychology, UNA

A panel discussion with examples and ideas from faculty who are involved with student research at the university.

3:00 p.m. to 3:50 p.m.,
Classroom, Collier Library
Available Research Tools
Craig Robertson, Director,
Division of Professional,
Interdisciplinary and Continuing
Education, UNA
Yaschica Williams, Associate Professor
and Chair, Department of Sociology
and Family Studies, UNA
Robbie Thompson, Graduate Student,
Geospatial Science, UNA

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Register today for the Best Practices in Research Symposium!

Discover is a publication of the Office of the Quality Enhancement Plan. For more information: www.una.edu/qep; 256-765-4640; qep@una.edu.