

## Call for Proposals: Special Issue of *Pedagogy*

Undergraduate Research as a Future of English Studies

Guest Editors: Kristine Johnson and J. Michael Rifenburg

Founded in 1978, the Council on Undergraduate Research defines undergraduate research (UR) as “an inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline.” The American Association of Colleges and Universities offers a similar definition of UR, as that which “involve[s] students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions.” Beyond these shared definitions, CUR and AAC&U share similar hopes about the potential of UR for undergraduate students, faculty, and administrators. CUR points to the link between UR and increased enrollment and retention numbers, increased student learning driven by mentoring relationships with faculty, and an increased culture of innovation and scholarship on campus. The AAC&U identifies UR a high-impact practice with the potential to increase enrollment and retention numbers and contribute to overall student learning and engagement.

UR has established a strong presence in STEM disciplines, and scholars of teaching and learning have outlined best practices for course-based and independent research models, mentoring relationships, and institutional support. English Studies, however, has been slower to embrace UR as an expected part of the undergraduate experience. Writing to faculty across English Studies—especially those in writing studies and literary studies—Joyce Kinkead and Laurie Grobman (2010) and Laura Behling (2009) called for more attention to UR, outlining methods for incorporating UR in the classroom and throughout the disciplines. Within writing studies, UR has gained scholarly attention (Janetta and Fitzgerald 2012; Hayden 2015; Ervin 2016; Allan 2018) and support from professional organizations. The Conference on College Composition and Communication (2017) issued a position statement on UR and hosts an undergraduate poster session at its annual convention; undergraduates can attend the Naylor Workshop on Undergraduate Research in Writing Studies at York College, and they can publish their work in journals including *Young Scholars in Writing* and *JUMP*.

In this special issue of *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture*, we envision UR as a future of English Studies. UR in English studies exists as the disciplines and as higher education experience significant change, and it is this kairotic moment that prompts us to undertake this envisioning. The Association of Departments of English (2018) reports that departments are responding to declining numbers of undergraduate majors by revising curricula, loosening historical coverage requirements, increasing attention to digital media, and adding tracks in creative writing, professional writing, and rhetoric. Beyond English Studies, higher education demographics are also changing. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2015), college students today are more likely to attend part-time, to attend online, to work full time, and to be parents; over half of college students today have at least one marker of being non-traditional, such as being over twenty-four years old, a veteran, or a parent. Much scholarship on UR assumes traditional and even ideal settings: full-time students and full-time faculty mentors with long-term relationships, sufficient institutional support, and venues for circulating the research. Yet it is these new students who may benefit most from undergraduate research (Carpi et al. 2017; Crowe 2006; Jones, Barlow, and Villarejo 2010; Mendoza and Louis 2018; O'Donnell et al. 2015), and undergraduate research may be one of the practices that strengthens our evolving disciplines into the future.

For this special issue, the guest editors first seek research articles of 7000 words that address the questions outlined below. The editors also seek short articles of 1200 words, co-authored by faculty and undergraduate students, describing a specific research experience. In this issue, we hope to showcase the range of possibilities for undergraduate research across English Studies and across institutional contexts.

#### Undergraduate Research and English Studies

- What are the challenges and opportunities for UR in the context of changing English departments and related disciplines?
- What are the challenges and opportunities for UR in independent writing departments?
- How does UR complicate traditional disciplinary values about authorship and research?
- What does it mean for an undergraduate to make an *original* contribution to disciplines in English Studies, and what are the ethics of authoring with students?

#### Undergraduate Research and Student Populations

- What are the possibilities for UR at community colleges?
- How can UR be available to nontraditional students, particularly those for whom college is one responsibility among many?
- What are the benefits of UR in English Studies for students with diverse professional goals?
- What is the role of UR in the humanities in the context of pre-professional education?

#### Undergraduate Research and Higher Education

- How does UR fit into the professionalization of graduate students, and how can graduate students be prepared for this work?
- How should UR be categorized and valued in the tenure and promotion process?
- How can UR be sustainable in the face of fewer full-time faculty and thus less institutional support for faculty research?
- How can the positive outcomes of UR be communicated to university administrators?

#### Submissions

Please submit 750-word proposals (for research articles) and 300-word proposals (for short articles) via email to Kristine Johnson (kjohns14@calvin.edu) and Michael Rifenburg (Michael.Rifenburg@ung.edu) by August 15, 2019. If space allows, it is helpful for the editors if you include a brief list of references.

The publication schedule for this special issue includes these deadlines:

- September 15, 2019: Authors notified of proposal status
- January 15, 2020: Full drafts due to guest editors
- October 2020: After external peer review, revised drafts due to guest editors

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