Four UCSD Students Recognized For Their Stellar Library Research Skills

Winners cite participation in research as major benefit for undergrads studying at UCSD

October 29, 2010 – Four undergraduate students at the University of California, San Diego have received the 2010 Undergraduate Library Research Prize in recognition of their stellar research skills. The prize, which is co-sponsored by the UC San Diego Libraries, the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, and the Alumni Association, is awarded annually to students who demonstrate outstanding use of library resources and services in support of their research. Two students in the Arts/Humanities/Social Sciences and Life/Physical Sciences are selected by a panel of judges to receive cash awards of $1000 (first place) and $500 (second place).

"We are very pleased to pay tribute to this year's Library Research Prize award-winners," said Brian E. C. Schottlaender, the Audrey Geisel University Librarian at UCSD. "Learning to conduct effective research is a critical part of our undergraduates' academic experience. This year's winners clearly demonstrated the superior research skills needed to succeed academically, and their strategic use of various library resources-from specialized databases and library bibliographic tools to electronic journals and manuscript collections- was impressive."

The prize-winners (all seniors) for 2010 are: Shelley Guyton, Revelle (1st prize) and Claire Halbrook, Eleanor Roosevelt (2nd prize) in the Arts/Humanities/Social Sciences; and Stephanie Cham, Muir (1st prize) and J.R. Bachman, Eleanor Roosevelt (2nd prize) in the Life Sciences/Physical Sciences.

"The winners of this year's Undergraduate Library Research Prize reflect the high level of intellectual rigor and achievement that has become synonymous with UC San Diego," said Penny Rue, UCSD's Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. "Students come here to learn from the best and brightest faculty and, at a research powerhouse like UCSD, that goes way beyond the classroom. It's gratifying to see how skillfully students are using the substantial knowledge and information resources available at the UCSD Libraries."

To be considered for the Undergraduate Library Research Prize, students must be nominated by their research advisor and are required to submit documentation and an essay on their work. Students must also present their research at the annual UCSD Undergraduate Research Conference held in the spring. The conference, sponsored by Academic Enrichment Programs (AEP), a unit of Student Educational Advancement under Student Affairs, is one of three major undergraduate scholarly meetings that AEP coordinates each year that provides a venue for students from all academic disciplines to present research projects conducted under the guidance of UCSD faculty members.

"The Libraries are the essential foundation for serious research at a university like UCSD," said Armin Afsahi, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Alumni Affairs at UCSD. "Our students' ability to harvest and apply that knowledge bodes well for their current and future success, both in and beyond the academy. Our students go on to apply knowledge and give back in often unpredictable and amazing ways. We are glad we can play a role, with the Libraries and Student Affairs, in recognizing and awarding exemplary research prowess among our student body."

Shelley Guyton, an anthropology major, was honored for her research on "The Filipino Author in English," an examination of English literature in the Philippines, and the influence of Western culture on colonialism and the Filipino national consciousness. Guyton was nominated by Suzanne Brenner, a professor in the UCSD Department of Anthropology, who, in her nomination of Guyton, noted that she "was impressed by how well written, interesting, and coherent her thesis was and by how well she was able to integrate sophisticated arguments with empirical evidence from both primary and secondary sources."

"The amount I learned during the research process was so fulfilling for me," said Guyton. "The library is no longer simply a catalogue of books to me. It is a starting point that can take me far outside the building itself, giving access to other campus or local libraries and digital libraries. Finding scholarly sources at such an efficient pace made me feel like I was involved in a 'web of knowledge' in which I could productively learn and then combine everything I learned from all the diverse sources."

Claire Halbrook, whose studies focus on political science and theatre, was nominated by UCSD Political Science professor Philip Roeder. Halbrook was recognized for her honors thesis, "Participation of Women in Parliaments and Political Corruption," in which she utilized a wide variety of library resources and research methods to demonstrate an exceptional ability at locating, applying, and analyzing extensive primary and secondary resources.

"Claire sought to untangle the causal links that would reveal whether it is the presence of women that leads to lower corruption or some other cause that explains both participation of women and lower corruption in some countries," said Roeder, who described Halbrook as an "intrepid researcher" and called her paper "a masterful study."
Each day, more than 7,300 patrons visit one of the UCSD libraries and more than 87,000 people access library resources through the UCSD Libraries main Web site. The nine university libraries provide access to more than 7 million digital and print volumes, journals, and multimedia materials to meet the knowledge and information needs of faculty, students, and members of the public.

Ranked among the nation’s top 20 public academic research libraries, the UC San Diego Libraries play an integral role in advancing and supporting the university’s research, teaching, and public service missions. As the intellectual heart of the UC San Diego campus, the nine university libraries provide access to more than 7 million digital and print volumes, journals, and multimedia materials to meet the knowledge and information needs of faculty, students, and members of the public.

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