



The [Office for Undergraduate Research](#) newsletter is published bi-weekly to share news about undergraduate research at UNC, relevant events, accomplishments of our students and faculty, and more. For additional information, please visit our website at

www.unc.edu/depts/our or email us at our@unc.edu.

February 21, 2013

OUR News and Events

OUR Blog:

- Read about [Mollie McNeil's](#) research on reality TV and the Kardashians.
- Learn more about the [Carolina Research Scholar Program](#).

GRC Blog:

- Watch for new [GRC Blog](#) posts in our next newsletter.

OUR News:

- Participate in our new [Research Madness Bracket](#) contest. You might win the prize basket.
- The deadline for [Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships](#) is February 28, 2013.
- The deadline for [HHMI Future Scientists and Clinicians](#) program applications is February 28, 2013.
- The deadline for [Science and Math Achievement and Resourcefulness Track Program](#) (SMART) applications is March 18, 2013.
- If you are an undergraduate with substantial research experience, consider applying to serve as an [OUR Ambassador](#). The application deadline: March 19, 2013.

OUR People:

- Meet SURF Alumna [Laura Andrews](#).
- Meet a Tar Heel: undergraduate researcher and Carolina Research Scholar Program participant [Piya Kerdlap](#) investigates solar water technologies.

Other Events and News:

- The Program in Sexuality Studies announces [special SURFs in LGBTQ studies](#).
- Learn more about the IRB process and at the February 25 [Basic Introductory Session for Online IRB Submissions](#).

OUR Events

- The [Celebration of Undergraduate Research](#) is April 15, 2013. Submit your [abstract](#) to share your research with the campus community; deadline for submission is March 25, 2013.

Pictures from previous Celebrations:



- Getting Involved in [Undergraduate Research in Biology](#). Discover the research opportunities inside and outside the Biology department. Open to first years, sophomores and juniors. Speaker: Dr. Gidi Shemer; Thursday, March 7, 2013, 6:00-7:30 PM in Coker Hall Room 201.

Research Madness Bracket Contest:

Are you planning to present at the [Celebration of Undergraduate Research](#) symposium this spring? If you have research, scholarship or creative performance that you'd like to share with the campus, this is your chance. In addition, this year all symposium presenters are eligible to participate in the new Research Madness Bracket contest!

To enter Research Madness, submit a blog post about your research experience in 250 words or less to Chelsey (cabentle@live.unc.edu) by Friday, March 1, 2013. Please include your name, major(s) and academic year in the post.

Blog posts will be uploaded to the OUR Blog and voting will begin on March 5. Encourage your friends and family to vote on your post to advance to the next round. Three rounds of elimination voting will end on April 9, when the winner will be announced. The winner will be presented with an overflowing prize package at the Celebration.

Take advantage of this opportunity to showcase your research on the [OUR Blog](#) and don't forget to [sign up to present](#) at the Celebration. You might win the Research Madness Bracket contest!

The [UNC Program in Sexuality Studies](#) is pleased to announce that for the first time ever there will be funds available for undergraduate summer academic enrichment experiences in LGBTQ studies. The Program expects to be able to support up to three students this summer with grants of up to \$4,000.

[Summer undergraduate research fellowships in LGBTQ studies](#) will be administered by the Office of Undergraduate Research. Application deadline is February 28, 2013. See the SURF web site for more details.

Depending on fund availability and student need and eligibility, there may also be limited funds available for academically enriching internships in



Meet SURF Alumna Laura Andrews:

Laura Andrews, MS, NCC '09

SURF Project 2008: Attentional Abnormalities in Alcoholics: A window into new treatments?

Faculty Mentor: Charlotte Boettiger

Current Position: Assistant Dean of Students, UNC-Greensboro

How did you become interested in conducting research as an undergraduate?

My decision to conduct research was largely influenced by my interest in assisting and advocating for people. My research interest while at UNC was substance abuse, and I believe that conducting research is one way that we can help populations that suffer from addiction.



How/why did you decide to apply for a SURF?

Dr. Charlotte Boettiger, my supervisor and faculty mentor at the time, encouraged me to apply for the SURF so I could take on my own part of a research study in her Cognition and Addiction Biopsychology Laboratory (affectionately called the CABLAB) in the Department of Psychology. The guidance of my faculty mentor and the CABLAB staff was very helpful during the entire research process!

How did you find your mentor, what was your relationship like, how did it develop and why it was

LGBTQ studies. For more details about internships, contact the UNC Program in Sexuality Studies.

Basic Introductory Session for [Online IRB Submissions](#). These general orientation sessions are geared toward first-time users, new researchers and staff. The next session is February 25, 2013, 9:00-11:00 am, Room G-100 Bondurant Hall (School of Medicine). Registration is not required. Note that all sessions are open to the entire campus; schools are identified for location purposes only and not to identify a limited audience.

so valuable?

The most significant aspect of my SURF experience was getting to know my faculty mentor and doing graduate level work in her lab. I went looking for research experience toward the middle of my sophomore year. I narrowed my research interests to substance abuse by matching my interests in biological catalysts for addiction and working the college student population. I was particularly interested in the CABLAB because of its focus on both neuroscience and addiction. For these reasons I contacted Dr. Boettiger to see if I could volunteer in her lab and attend laboratory meetings. I am very lucky that she welcomed me into the lab! She supported and challenged me, and treated me like a graduate student. She really helped me build my confidence as a researcher. It was her guidance and high standards that really prepared me for my graduate school experience.

What was the biggest challenge you faced in conducting your research and how did you overcome it?

My biggest challenge during my research project was working with assessment programs like EPRIME and SPSS and writing computer scripts. However, this experience prepared me to conduct research and work with these programs during my graduate work, as well as in my current professional role when I am assessing data we collect from students.

What was the most satisfying moment of your research and why?

The most satisfying moment of my research was actually interacting with our study participants. I believe these interactions led me into the field of college counseling. I also served as a SURF mentor to other students that were considering applying for a fellowship. It was very satisfying to help other people that were excited about their research projects.

In what ways (if any) has your SURF experience impacted your current career/career decisions/career success?

After graduating from UNC in 2009, I worked for a small research company where I educated physicians on substance abuse-related issues through online continuing education. My data assessment skills that I

gained from my SURF experience were vital in this position. Because of my SURF experience that included working with college students that were abusing alcohol, I decided to pursue graduate work in college counseling in the Counseling and Educational Development Program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Some people do not consider counseling as a data-driven field, however, clinical counselors are trained as researchers, scientists, and practitioners. My SURF experience allowed me to feel comfortable conducting literature reviews, writing articles, and presenting at national conferences like NASPA Mental Health as a graduate student. I finished my clinical training in 2012 and accepted a position as Assistant Dean of Students and Case Manager in the Dean of Students Office at UNCG. Part of my role is to help students with mental health diagnoses navigate their college experience. My SURF experience and time spent in the CABLAB helped foster the critical thinking skills that I use every day when advocating for and assisting these students at UNCG.

What advice would you share with current undergraduate researchers?

Really try to integrate yourself into the lab. Talk to graduate students and see what they are doing. Build those relationships because they will always be helpful down the road. Networking is incredibly important!

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Where will your curiosity lead you?

The Office for Undergraduate Research
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