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Morris students to present work at Undergraduate Research Symposium

Summary: Schedule included in story

(April 15, 2011)-On Saturday, April 16 2011, Morris students will have the opportunity to present work that has been months—in some cases years—in the making at the 11th annual Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS). The public is invited to attend the free event that celebrates the variety and quality of student scholarly achievement by providing a venue for students to present research and creative work to and perform art for an audience of peers, faculty, family, and community members.

Having a symposium at the undergraduate level is an unusual and important event. “I am always impressed by the breadth and depth of UMM student scholarly activities,” says Gordon McIntosh, professor of physics and URS coordinator. “In my opinion, independent student research represents one of the highest achievements of our students. It requires the development of an internal authority on a subject that is not possible through coursework. Developing such authority indicates the maturation of the scholar. The URS presents and celebrates the intellectual development of UMM students.”

Two students presenting at the URS, Dugan Flanders '11, Paynesville, and Manjari Govada '12, Shakopee, are eager to return to the symposium with new material.

Economics and art history double major Flanders entered the URS last year with his project “Mycenaean Tholos Tombs: Construction and Significance.” The project examined construction techniques used in Late Bronze Age Greek tholos tomb structures. The result was the discovery of fairly sophisticated mathematical calculations that were known nearly a millennium before any of the Classical Greek philosophers.

This year, Flanders has a new project titled “Gearbox Reliability: the Case for an Alternative Technology in Wind Turbines,” which studies the reliability rates and costs associated with gearbox failure. Flanders has served as a research assistant on the study since last year. “The project examines the economic viability of replacing mechanical gearboxes with continuously variable hydrostatic transmissions after accounting for varying efficiencies and production statistics,” says Flanders. “In the end, I would like my audience to understand the changing technology in wind turbines, and its relevance to everyday life.”

Govada, a triple major in math, economics, and financial management, has had equally impressive research to bring to the URS. She is continuing her Truckers and Turnover Project from last year’s symposium. The project focused on identifying and analyzing different factors such as credit score, age, and job type that contributed to truck driver accident risk.

“This year, I am now examining the risks of crashes associated with obstructive sleep apnea by identifying the impact of screening, diagnosis, and treatment,” says Govada.

This year, the symposium will be comprised of performances, oral presentations, and poster presentations. A larger audience turnout than previous years is expected due to the symposium's new spot on a Saturday.

"For the last few years, the URS has been held on Friday afternoons and evenings. Classes were held on that Friday afternoon, and it was a staff work day," says McIntosh. "We hope that having the URS on a Saturday will increase the attendance of students, faculty, family, and friends at the presentations."

Eager to share the fruits of their labor, presenting students welcome all who are interested.

"By presenting at the URS, I get a unique opportunity to show my friends and peers what I have been working on for the last year, while also learning more about their projects," says Govada. "It's also a great way for me to practice presenting the work that I do in a form that everyone can understand, which I believe is a very important skill to possess."

Adds Flanders, "I have put a lot of time and effort into completing my research project, and I would like to share what I have learned. I want to tell people what I've been doing, what I've been working on, and how it could actually affect them. The URS gives me the opportunity to do just that."

Schedule

Saturday, April 16, 2011

10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Registration, Science Atrium and John Q. Imholte Hall

10 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Poster/Visual Display, Science Atrium

10:30 a.m. – 10:35 a.m. Opening Welcome-Jeffrey Ratliff-Crain,
assistant dean

12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. Lunch, Oyate Hall

12:30 p.m. – 12:40 p.m. Welcome-Jacqueline Johnson,
chancellor

1:30 p.m. Introduction of Featured Presentation-Cheryl Contant,
vice chancellor for academic affairs and dean

1:30 p.m. – 2 p.m. Featured Presentation, John Q. Imholte Hall #109
Elizabeth Grave - Hands On!

2 p.m. – 5 p.m. Oral presentations: John Q. Imholte Hall, Room #s:
101, 109, 111, 112

3:45 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. Performances, HFA #170

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