



HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY SPOTLIGHT

The Official Newsletter for Undergraduate Research and Creative Works

April 2025



In This Issue

High-PURCS

Research Grants

Student Registry

Student Profile

Summer Research



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April Showers Bring May Flowers

Just as April showers bring May flowers, the hard work and dedication we poured into research this year is already beginning to bloom into new opportunities and insights. Although the semester is ending, URCW offers countless summer opportunities for its students. Thank you to all the students and staff who made these events possible. Until next semester!

Our Mission

The Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Works' mission is to bring together undergraduate students and faculty members for the purpose of creating unique and collaborative projects. By fostering an imaginative research experience, we hope to promote the development of new competencies, encourage critical thinking skills, inspire students to add to the global sum of human knowledge, and help students develop the skills to be competitive in the marketplace.



www.highpoint.edu/urcw/

URCW

Designed by Elsie Clinkenbeard 2026

High-PURCS 2025

On April 15th, 2025, we had the biggest turn out in the history of High-PURCS. Starting in 2012, this program has provided undergraduate students the opportunity to present their creative and scholarship. We had a grand total of 428 students and 241 presentations. We are so proud of all of the presenters and performers, as well as the mentors that aided them in their research. Thanks to all who helped organize and host this fabulous event and made it a fantastic experience for all.



Photo taken by Benita VanWinkle



Thank you Dr. Qubein for attending High-PURCS and encouraging HPU students!



Photo taken by Benita VanWinkle

Thank you to **Dr. Joanne Altman, Britani Yearick Edge, Elsie Clinkenbeard, Mia Pepitone, Abby Fort,** and all of our volunteers to make this event run smoothly.



High-PURCS 2025

Posters, oral presentations and performances, oh my! Here is an inside look into some of the highlights at High-PURCS!



It was a pleasure to see HPU dancers perform several dances, which attracted the attention of everyone in the audience. You just had to be there!



HPU's amazing Acappella groups (the Toccatonones, Petal Points, and the Offbeats) performed a magical mash-up of Disney songs.



Photo taken by Benita VanWinkle



Photo taken by Benita VanWinkle

152 Poster presentations!



High-PURCS 2025

Oral presentations were popular!



Photo taken by Benita VanWinkle



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High-PURCS Presentation Awards

Best Oral Presentation
Kara Bense



*Regurgitation Unraveled: Plant
Microstructures and Hairball Formation
in Cats*

Best Visual Presentation
Lauren Vossen



*Small Molecule Antibiotic Adjuvants
on VRSA: A Transcription-wide
Analysis*



Students Participating in Summer Research

Congratulations to...



Jade Alston, Gia Cicero, Heather Duensing, James Fitzpatrick, Abby Fort, Paris Glover, Trent Golini, Kathryn Jacobs, Liza Key, Cott Marion, Jane Rainwater, Mathew Robson, Kiara Smith, Denzel Sowa

Brooke Banazek, Justin Benton, Samuel Castelan, Katelyn Combs, Madison Danser, Devon Derrenbacher, Charity Franklin, Gavin Frey, Natalie Hinson, Lily Houston, Jak Kilzi, Alexa Klein, Mia Lozada, Derek McGannon, Kennady Milligan, Charli Montalvo, Amelia Moreland, Yelizaveta Nikitsenka, Noah Rauch, Gracie Ritchie, Brady Thomas, Kip Travis, Jessie Vozar, Phoenix Ward, Westyn Woodard, J.M. Zimmerman



James Brewer, Kal Hyun Burgess-Hicks, Julia Crenshaw, Harlie Culbreth, Sarah Czuba, Joshua Elbertson, Aubrey Fessler, Isabella Frankovic, Garland Greene, Bryce Grier, Sara Hamidpour, Jordan Havert, Tyler Janick, Claire Klein, Vladimir Lagutin, Kaley LeFevre, Lauren Marra, Megan Mueller, Rebekah Olls, Gabriella Orecchio, Zachary Ready, Lauren Rumble, Jack Schoultz, Alexandra Shuttters, David Simin, Shauna Skow, Hannah Stewart, Catherine Summerrow, Lexi Topping, Gianni Travaglini, Sierra Werner, Caitlyn Wingart



Grants



Nick Maloziec collaborated with **Dr Douglas Isenberg** on a presented work titled “Transfer Function Identification for Small DC Gear Motors using only Angular Position.” They traveled to the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers Southeast Conference (IEEE SoutheastCon) on March 27th, 2025 in Concord, NC.



Ella Marron, Madeleine Rubinio, and Hailey White performed under the mentorship of **Ken Davis** and **Jaclyn Surso** at the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Mid-Atlantic Regional (MAR-NATS). They traveled to the University of North Carolina School of the Arts on March 7th, 2025 in Winston Salem, NC.

The National Conference of Undergraduate Research (NCUR)



Photo includes Dr Sarah Vaala, Serene Alshalabi, and Rachel Smith

Serene Alshalabi, Rachel Smith, & Leah Quill traveled to present their research at the 2025 National Conference of Undergraduate Research in Pittsburgh, PA. Serene and Rachel collaborated with mentor, **Melike Kahya**. Leah collaborated with mentor, **Dr Sarah Vaala**. Serene presented her work titled: “The Impact of Executive Dysfunction on Brain Activity During Postural Control in Older Adults”. Rachel presented her work titled: “The Impact of Fear of Falling on Brain Activity and Cognitive Performance in Older Adults.” Leah presented her work titled: "Climate Anxiety and Contempt Among Gen-Z: Relationships with Efficacy and Policy Support."

Serene and Rachel also traveled to present this research at the 2025 National Undergraduate Research Conference at Brown University in Providence, RI





Student Profile: Miranda Gough



"URCW has been an immense source of support throughout my undergraduate research experiences, and I am so thankful for the skills and opportunities I have gained through this organization. URCW granted me the resources to find my passion for presenting my scientific work, and for that I will be forever grateful!"

This month's student profile features Miranda Gough, a senior biology major with a molecular/cellular and biotechnology concentration and forensic science and public and professional writing minors. She first discovered URCW when she applied to come to HPU! That's one of the reasons she chose this university: it has a strong research program! She began her journey with the Research Rookies program, finishing the program in one semester, and becoming a Research Apprentice, she began her research in labs her second semester of freshman year. She presented her work at High-PURCS this year, her third consecutive year presenting at this event. One of her favorite opportunities about URCW is the summer research programs. She has spent all three summers in the program for both the Summer Research Institute (SuRI) and the Summer Research Program in the Sciences (SuRPS). She has also been provided research grants to attend several conferences within her field of study, such as the American Chemical Society (ACS), the Association of Southeastern Biologists (ASB), and the Cellular Biology of Eukaryotic Pathogens (CBEP).

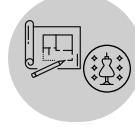
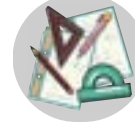
Currently, she is conducting research in understanding a microscopic parasite called *Toxoplasma gondii*. Using this knowledge of the parasite, she is working on identifying the gene targets that allow a specific class of anti-cancer compounds to act as anti-parasitics against *Toxoplasma gondii*. In this project, her mentor is **Dr. Charvat** in the Wanek School of Natural Sciences. Her past projects include developing a penicillin enhancer to combat MRSA, which is an antibiotic-resistant bacteria under the mentorship of **Dr. Sarkar, Pharmacy**. She also performed research on developing a treatment for the cognitive manifestations of a childhood cancer called Neurofibromatosis Type 1 with **Dr. Coover, Pharmacy**. All of her mentors have supported her to pursue her goals in life and equipped her with the skills to follow her passions.

After she graduates HPU, she is going to reward herself with a few months of relaxation and travel before attending the American Society of Parasitologist conference in Winston Salem in early July. Here, she will begin her search for a job and eventually pursue a master's or PhD in microbiology and/or infectious diseases. Miranda, you are truly a URCW superstar. Good luck on your journey outside of HPU!



Students in Research

From the URCW Registry
Students who have connected with mentors

1  Art & Graphic Design	2  Athletic Training	5  Basic Pharmaceutical Science	71  Biology	79  Chemistry WINNER	2  Communication & Business	10  Computer Science
2  Criminal Justice	1  Economics	3  Educator Preparation	2  Electrical & Computer Engineering	26  English	39  Event & Hospitality Management	9  Game Design
5  Health & Human Performance	7  History	3  Interior Design, Furnishing & Fashion Merchandising	21  Marketing	7  Mathematical Sciences	10  Media Production	1  Medical Science
69  Music	5  Neuroscience	2  Nursing	16  Physical Therapy	7  Physics & Astronomy	1  Political Science	51  Psychology
18  Religion & Philosophy	7  Sociology & Anthropology	24  Theater & Dance	19  World Languages Literatures & Cultures	Total 532		

