In carrying out undergraduate research, a student conducts an inquiry that makes an original intellectual, creative contribution to an academic discipline. While the student receives guidance and mentorship from faculty, the research project is the student’s own work in an important sense. The student designs the inquiry and interprets what transpires along the way. Such projects thus help students to develop critical thinking, creativity, information literacy, and communication skills as well as intellectual independence, all of which represent the core of FGCU’s Quality Enhancement Plan (FGCUScholars: Think ~ Discover ~ Write).

The ability and motivation to undertake such projects stems naturally from the student’s experiences in the classroom where students acquire and refine knowledge and skills needed to conduct individual inquiry. Indeed, in every program at FGCU, students encounter courses that require them to conduct their own scholarly projects as part of the regular course curriculum. FGCUScholars has ensured the integration of scholarly activities through the designation of “scholarly-enriched” and “scholarly-focused” courses, which engaged 7,701 students in 294 sections of major-specific courses across all colleges in 2015-2016. While not all universities attempt to make research part of the educational experience of every undergraduate student, at FGCU, we consider this one of the hallmarks of our undergraduate programs.

The Honors Program expanded on these efforts significantly last year with the creation of two research courses created and designed for first-year students, Planet Hunters and Animal History Symposium. Each course was unique and did not have an equivalent at any other university in the United States. The courses gave students the opportunity to contribute to emerging bodies of scholarship by conducting their own original research, while engaging students with the leading edges of their respective fields. Students had opportunities to learn about and conduct original research in the fields of exoplanet exploration and animal history, respectively. These efforts produced significant results. For example, students in the Planet Hunters course presented the following poster at the American Astronomical Society in January 2016:
In the Animal History class, students had the opportunity to host and present scholarly papers at the inaugural Animal History Symposium on campus, where they presented on a range of thematic topics including “Dog Histories,” “Historical Perspectives on Animal Cruelty and Welfare,” and “The Conservation, Preservation, and Science of Animals.”

Given the value of these scholarly experiences, students had the opportunity to extend these research experiences beyond the classroom. Instead of just gleaning knowledge from a text or lecture, undergraduate researchers discover their major by applying course principles and concepts to novel situations. In doing so, students conduct inquiries that make intellectual, creative contributions to their academic disciplines. While students typically receive guidance and mentorship from faculty, the research project is the student’s own work in an important sense. Students design the investigation and interpret what transpires along the way. In this way, student scholarship bridges the core goals of FGCU so that student-scholars learn about their disciplines while working to contribute unique insights to the field.

The Office of Undergraduate Studies (UGS), primarily through the Honors Program and Office of Undergraduate Scholarship, provided multiple opportunities for students across campus to develop and disseminate research projects beyond the classroom. In collaboration with the Office of Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS), Undergraduate Student Scholarship Support Awards (USSSA) mini-grants were awarded to promote student-faculty research partnerships. In 2015-16, 78 students received funds to purchase supplies and/or present results of their research findings at regional, national, or international conferences. Sample projects representing each academic unit included the following:

- Arts and Sciences
  - Visual and Performing Arts: Historic Oriented Performance Research on the Baroque Violin Solo Performance
These efforts were enhanced through the Honor’s Program Professional Development Grant, which supported an additional 13 students who pursued opportunities such as conducting research in Hawaii and presenting their research in Italy. This was also the first year that the university sent a contingent of 8 students and 2 faculty-mentors to the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR), the premier student symposium at which over 4,000 undergraduate scholars from around the country share their research findings. Together, these efforts represented a 184% increase in the number of students supported through the Office of Undergraduate Studies (32 students were supported between 2014-2015 & 91 students were support in 2015-2016).

The university hosted multiple events that allowed students to share their research projects in scholarly venues beyond the classroom. For example, UGS collaborated to host and help sponsor 12 different research symposia in 2015-2016, such as the previously mentioned Animal History Symposium and the annual FGCU Research Day. These symposia, supported by UGS in one manner or another, included the following (with the organizing unit in parentheses):

1. Humanities Student Symposium (CAS & UGS)
2. Fall Senior Art Project Exhibition (CAS)
3. STEM Undergraduate Research and Internship Symposium (CAS & UGS)
4. EagleBiz Awards: Marketing and Engineering Student Research (LCOB)
5. Philosophy and Communication Symposium (CAS & UGS)
6. Community-Engaged Scholarship Symposium (UGS)
7. Social Science Symposium (CAS)
8. Animal History Symposium (CAS & UGS)
9. FGCU Research Day (ORGS)
10. Writing Awards Celebration (UGS)
11. Spring Senior Art Project Exhibition (CAS)
12. Life Science Student Symposium (CAS & UGS)

Including numerous inaugural efforts from programs that did not fit into other symposia increased the number of ways that students could share the results of their work. For example, students and faculty from Philosophy, English, Communication, and History sponsored the first Humanities Symposium. This event enabled 7 students to read papers, expanding the number of ways that students could disseminate their research since most student symposia favor poster sessions over oral presentations. In addition, the FGCU Writing Center organized the first Writing Awards. This university-wide competition celebrated the different genres of undergraduate writing while providing students with professional
development opportunities to build their résumés and CVs. Ten awards were offered in the areas of Fiction, Nonfiction, Creative Nonfiction, Composition, Service-Learning Reflection, Literary/Art Analysis, Qualitative Research, Quantitative Research, Most Improved, and Sustainability. Over 100 submissions were received, and winners were celebrated at the end of the spring semester during an awards reception.

Undergraduate students also had the opportunity to publish their work in one of two scholarly journals, Mangrove Review (which disseminates creative scholarly works) and Aquila: The FGCU Student Research Journal (which publishes humanities, sciences, professional, and community-based scholarly articles). This was the first year that Aquila was published both online and in print, creating a physical record of student work. Written articles represented a broad range of interests, including the following:

- Biases Trump Evidence in Beliefs About Animal Welfare
- Comparative Gait Rehabilitation with Virtual Reality Headset

Importantly, students produce the content and share responsibility for the publication of each journal with faculty advisors. See Appendix A for the table of contents for each journal.

The support of undergraduate research throughout the Office of Undergraduate Studies is critical to the continued and enhanced successes of FGCU students. For example, the university celebrated its first two Fulbright Scholars in 2015-16: Lori Boegershausen and Emilio Feijoo. In both cases, these students participated in significant scholarly projects, which provided them with the necessary expertise to secure this most prestigious award. In 2015-2016, Boegershausen prepared and presented “Resisting Persecution: A Case Study on Father Lichtenburg” at the History Honors Research Symposium in Philadelphia, while Feijoo delivered “The Rhetoric of Catachresis and Postcolonial Thought” at the What is Postcolonial Thought? Conference in Fort-de-France, Martinique. Examples such as FGCU Scholars (FGCU’s QEP) and the individual accomplishments of students such as Boegershausen and Feijoo demonstrate that the scholarly activity of undergraduate students is embedded into the very fabric of FGCU. Student-scholars learn about their disciplines in ways that take experiences beyond the classroom. These opportunities ensure that students can reach their full potential – and yes, maybe produce a Fulbright or two.
Appendix A
Aquila: The FGCU Student Research Journal
Volume 2

Articles

- Jessica Baker, *Biases Trump Evidence in Beliefs About Animal Welfare*
- Mary-Cecile Gayoso, *Assassins Do Not Wear Battle Bikinis: The Case Against Gender Inequality and Female Specific Hypersexualization in Video Games*
- Alexander Sell, *The Function and Efficacy of Civil Disobedience*
- Noah Anderson, *Rise of Papal Administration: Apostolic Authority in the Context of Crusading*
- Susan Rojas, *Malory’s Gawain: Characterizing Fragmentation and Unification*
- Marshall Nathanson, *Dropping Acid: Global Warming’s Equally Evil Twin Ocean Acidification in Estero Bay, Florida*

Short Communications

- Gabriella Giliberti, Ardit Dervishaj, Rishabh Rawal, Christian Bokrand, Joseph Simmons, Ph.D., Joseph Cuiffi, Ph.D., *Improving an e-Bike: Riding with “Christina”*
- Josiah Keime, Kristin Ladia, Jay Shah, Derek Lura, Ph.D., *Comparative Gait Rehabilitation with Virtual Reality Headset*

Mangrove Review
Volume 13

- Shannon Riley, *Fine Persian Rug*
- Shannon Riley, *Fragments of My Mind*
- Kate Moran, *Jean Jackets and Marlboro Reds*
- Kate Moran, *Nights in the Koi Pond*
- Kate Moran, *Americana*
- Kayla Byrn, *Sir*
- Kayla Byrn, *Themes of Suspended Hysteria*
- Caitlin Rosolen, *Cold-Blooded But Not Cold-Hearted*
- Caitlin Rosolen, *Modern Day Dinosaur*
- Caitlin Rosolen, *VGE One*