

SPRING 2024

VOLUME 2

SJSU

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM



CONNECT WITH US



@urop\_sjsu



sjsu.edu/urop



@sjsuurop



urop@sjsu.edu

# MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dr. Andrew Carter

Department of Public Health and Recreation



Walking back to my office after hosting UROP's end-of-year celebration at the Bell Garden last Tuesday, I had the chance to reflect on just how much growth we experienced as a program this year. From enrolling our largest student cohort ever, to receiving a record number 82 faculty projects during the open submission period last August and hiring our first official administrative team, we grew both in size and operating scope.

One thing I really enjoyed witnessing this year was the quality and authenticity of our faculty-student partnerships and the strong sense of community they fostered. Multiple times throughout the year, I received emails from different faculty mentors praising enthusiastically the commitment and overall character of their mentees—similarly, students would often light up during our pair-and-shares in EDLD 10 when discussing the scope of what they were working on with their mentors.

The strong synergy was palpable when seeing the excitement of our students present their research at the Celebration of Research last month. Several UROP students have already published research papers and presented abstracts at academic conferences with their mentors, others with work in various stages of completion. As students graduate from the program, many of them will continue working with their mentors in a research assistant capacity during their time at SJSU.

As we close the curtain on another successful UROP campaign, I want to shout out a member of the UROP family who has moved on to the next stage of their career. Dr. Patience Bryant, former Director of Black/African-American Equity, was a foundational member of the UROP leadership team, serving as our program coordinator to connect us with partners on campus and in the community. We want to wish Patience nothing but success as she takes her talents to Cal State Fullerton to serve as their inaugural executive director of Black student academic success.

We look forward to launching the next UROP cohort in the fall. Stay tuned as we have some exciting things in the pipeline!

Sincerely,

# MESSAGE FROM OUR PEER MENTOR

## Valeria Foxworthy-Gonzalez

As we come to the end of the third UROP cohort, I want to reflect on my year as a peer mentor and also share with those who are not familiar with the role a little bit about what we do.

I had the privilege of being a part of the second UROP cohort here at SJSU from 2022-2023. I was paired with faculty mentor Dr. Ali Mehran from the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. I will be graduating with a minor in Interdisciplinary Studies and working with scholars who are not directly involved in my Anthropology major was a goal I had in undergrad and one I wish to continue in the Applied Anthropology Master's here at SJSU in the coming fall semester. In our 2023-2024 cohort I got to see students also working outside of their direct major and bring their experiences and expertise to different fields that expanded how they understood their own academic work.



In class we focused on preparing the students for their matching process with the faculty mentors. We held in-class workshops where we discussed and shared what questions we wanted to ask the faculty mentors to ensure that a sustainable and realistic match was made that met the needs of the project and the needs of the students. Part of the peer mentors work is to help the students craft an email that professionally and clearly conveys their needs and aspirations. We encourage students to be prepared to ask questions that can give them more insight into the project as well as expectations of time and work load commitment. This is a two-way interview for the student and the mentor.

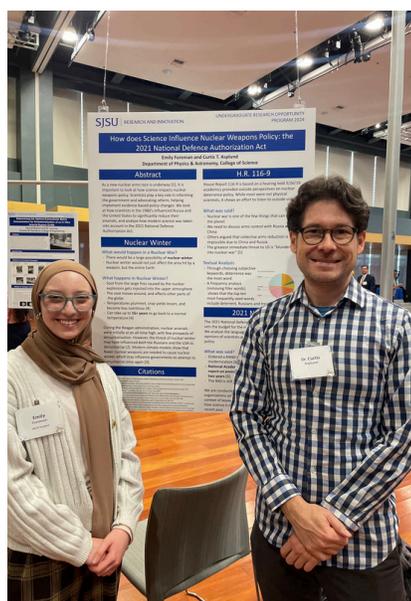
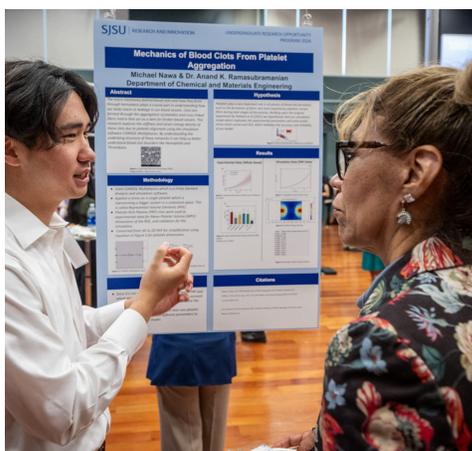
Once the pairing is made, we work in class to ready students with research tools that they will be able to apply to their work with the mentors. The peer mentor is in the class to work through questions and be another resource the students have regarding questions and navigation of a new learning environment. As a mentor who was in the same place a year before I like to think, "what would I have liked to have known as a new student to SJSU?" I share with them my experience as a first-generation and transfer student as well as resources that the school offers that is available to them via their tuition. A big part of peer mentoring for me is helping demystify the college-going and college culture experience. Many of our students are in a similar situation as the only person in their family to go to college. UROP is a great opportunity to ask questions and get clarification about college from faculty members and peers.

I've had the great privilege of working with people who strive to make college and research equitable and accessible for students who want to follow their curiosity of knowledge and education. I am so thankful to the students who took on this program in addition to their other classes. We really need more voices in research that can bring different perspectives and narratives to the work we do. Thank you to this cohort for allowing me to be a part of their class and trusting me to work through goals and questions with them. Academia is a better place with your voices in it.

- **Valeria**

# CELEBRATION OF RESEARCH

On April 18th, UROP students had the Student Union Ballroom buzzing as they presented their research posters at the third annual SJSU Celebration of Research. The event gave students a chance to showcase the research they have been working on with their faculty mentor over the past year. Each poster represented months of hard work, curiosity, and intellectual exploration —poster topics varied across disciplines and sub-fields to include inquiries such as how science influences nuclear weapons policy, the relationship between mortgage interest rates and county-level disaster declarations, the state of quantum computing, and leadership experiences among Black women K-12 school administrators, among others. Congratulations to our 2023-24 UROP student cohort for all their dedication and hard work over the past year! We are excited to see the endeavors they move on to both on campus and in their careers!



# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

## Dr. Marie Haverfield Department of Communication Studies

When the UROP founding team envisioned the possibilities of what faculty could contribute to a student research experience at SJSU, Dr. Marie Haverfield's approach to mentorship is an exemplar of what they had in mind. As a participating member in UROP's inaugural cohort and only faculty on campus to serve as a mentor in each of the program's three student cohorts, her passion and dedication to supporting undergraduate research embodies UROP's programmatic ethos.



Dr. Haverfield's research explores the intersection of interpersonal communication and health, particularly in the context of patient-provider clinical interactions. Each year in her role as faculty mentor, she has worked with undergraduates from different majors across campus, including those in molecular biology and public health, to engage in collaborative research and equip them with a level of interdisciplinary dexterity uncommon for student investigators at this stage of their career. Through one-on-one guidance and weekly check-ins, Dr. Haverfield ensures that students not only delve deep into research but also develop essential skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, and time management.

Her mentees have participated in a variety of research tasks under her tutelage, such as collating literature reviews, supporting study recruitment efforts, receiving Institutional Review Board training, and collecting, analyzing, and managing data. Collectively, this work has resulted in the penning of several co-authored research articles in various stages of publication.

Though UROP student mentees only partner with their faculty mentor for one academic year, Dr. Haverfield deems it essential to remain connected with students after their experience is over. "I think since mentorship is such an ingrained component of this role... it's kind of forever. If any of these students need to reach out or need letters of recommendation, we are so closely together that I feel like I want to do whatever I can to support them. And I can speak to their skills. It's nice to be able to do that."

Dr. Haverfield's valuable contributions as a faculty mentor have been instrumental in developing a solid foundation and culture of mentorship both in UROP and across campus. We look forward to her continued collaboration and mentorship with our future student cohorts.

# STUDENT PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, AND AWARDS

Congratulations to our students on their accomplishments

## Eliot Hall

Eliot co-authored a published article “Explaining misinformation detection using large language models” with his faculty mentor Dr. Vishnu Pendyala in the research journal *Electronics*

## Emily Foreman

Emily presented the abstract “Physics influence on nuclear weapons policy” at the American Physical Society Conference in April in Sacramento, CA. The presentation was based on her collaborative research with faculty mentor Dr. Curtis Asplund

## Kimberly Martinez

Kim presented the abstract “Working within and around anti-trans legislation: A mixed-methods investigation of gender-affirming healthcare providers’ strategies of resistance in Tennessee and Texas” at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research in April in Long Beach, CA. The presentation was based on her collaborative research with faculty mentor Dr. Robert Marx

## Arya Patel

Arya presented a case study at the MBAA International conference in April in Chicago, IL. The presentation is based on her collaborative research with faculty mentor Dr. Asbjorn Osland.

## Valeria Foxworthy-Gonzalez (UROP peer mentor)

Valeria participated in a panel presentation in April at the Southwest Anthropology Association conference in Garden Grove, CA

## Yadanar Khin

YK received the SJSU Global Spartan Scholarship for the 2024-25 academic year

## Piero Miranda

Piero was awarded the AS 55 Award—a recognition of distinction for student leaders who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to SJSU and continually give back to the community.

# OTHER PROGRAM UPDATES

## 2024-24 Student and Faculty Applications

Are you interested in participating in UROP as a student or faculty mentor? Applications for next year's cohort are now live. You can apply directly by clicking on the links below:

- Student application: <https://forms.gle/aaShCh1oWV7y9tsz5>
- Faculty application: <https://forms.gle/6idd8Qea8KQD3dTA8>

## UROP Information Sessions

During the summer and early fall, UROP will be hosting a number of information sessions for prospective students where we will provide a detailed overview of the program, discuss FAQs, and important deadline information. Follow our website and Instagram page for updated dates in the coming weeks. Our next information session will be on June 3rd.

## UROP @ the Summer Orientation Resource Fair Orientations

UROP will be attendance for all of the summer resource fair orientations. Transfer orientations will take place on select dates in June from 2:30-4:30p, and the frosh orientations will take place on select dates in July from 3-430p. See links for more details.

- Transfer orientations: <https://www.sjsu.edu/newspartans/transfer-orientation/>
- Frosh orientations: <https://www.sjsu.edu/newspartans/frosh-orientation/>

## Reach out/connect with us

Follow UROP on IG @urop\_sjsu

Email us at [urop@sjsu.edu](mailto:urop@sjsu.edu)

Learn more about our program at [sjsu.edu/urop](https://sjsu.edu/urop)

*UROP introduction video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8PPmEVzOBI>*