

THE Current

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Eileen Conrad

UCSB Students, Faculty Member Receive Chancellor's Research Awards

Three graduating seniors, two graduate students, and a faculty member have been recognized for their outstanding contributions to undergraduate research at UC Santa Barbara.

The Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research for 2010 has been awarded to three students in the College of Letters and Science: Duc Trong Duong, a chemistry major from Santa Barbara; Mark Myslín, a linguistics and Spanish major from Eureka; and Mackenzie Weinger, a history major from Marina del Rey.

Duong is described by UCSB faculty members as a brilliant student with an aptitude for research that combines "superlative academic preparation, intellectual prowess, and exceptional inventiveness and laboratory skill."

Already, he is making important scientific contributions in both nanoscience and in the development of high-performance flexible solar cells.

His collaborative research with UCSB faculty members has been published in the journal *Chemical Physics Letters*. In addition, Duong has been awarded a full scholarship to attend the graduate program in Materials Science and Engineering at Stanford University.

Myslín's extraordinary abilities as a linguist are evident in his senior thesis, a groundbreaking research paper on Czech-English code-switching – the use of more than one language in a single interaction.

His work is described in nomination letters as "meticulous and insightful," and "astonishing."

A gifted and devoted tutor both at UCSB and in local schools, Myslín has also co-authored a study of Spanish orthography with UCSB linguist Stefan Gries.

In her research, Weinger discovered how America's first journalists both reported about the Mexican-American War and helped fashion American nationalism by stressing expansionism, unity, and progress.

Her senior thesis, titled "'Have You Any News?' How America's First Embedded Journalists Envisioned the United States, 1846-48," makes original contributions to the history of the war, the history of journalism, and the Civil War Era.

Loren Merrill and Christopher von Rueden have each received a Fiona Goodchild Award for Excellence as a Graduate Student Mentor of Undergraduate Research.

Merrill is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Marine Biology, and von Rueden is completing his doctoral dissertation in anthropology.

Victor Rios, professor of sociology, has been given the Chancellor's Award for Undergraduate Research, which is bestowed annually upon a faculty member with a distinguished record of mentoring undergraduate students in their research projects.

Rios received the award in recognition of his outstanding teaching and research contributions and for providing cutting-edge research experiences by fully integrating undergraduates into his research activities.

Single-handedly, he has more than doubled the number of undergraduate sociology majors now participating in externally funded research as part of his ongoing research on youth violence, juvenile delinquency, and gang involvement. Over the past four years, he has mentored more than 60 undergraduate research assistants and trained them in sociological research methods.

With his support, encouragement, and mentoring, his students have been admitted to prestigious graduate programs across the country.

More than half of all UCSB undergraduates are now involved in original research with graduate students and faculty members. Students compete for grant funding to support their mentored research each year. Research, conducted under the supervision of professors who are eminent in their fields, fosters critical thinking skills and helps prepare students for future careers and advanced study.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.