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University of Dayton, Ohio (url: http://www.udayton.edu/index.php)

Research Showcase

02.11.2011 | Students

Ten University of Dayton undergraduates will present their research at the Ohio Statehouse during a showcase of high-quality research opportunities at Ohio's independent colleges and universities.

The Ohio Foundation of Independent Colleges (OFIC) Undergraduate Research Symposium will be held 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 16, in the Ohio Statehouse Atrium. It features presentations by 119 students from the OFIC's 34 member colleges.

"University of Dayton students have remarkable opportunities to learn by conducting research in their chosen discipline," said Don Polzella, associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences. "They take on complex topics, apply state-of-the-art methods and often add to the body of knowledge in some of the most exciting fields today."

As a music therapy major, senior Megan Brewer is familiar with the many physical, cognitive and social health benefits of singing. She investigated whether engaging elderly residents with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) in singing just before a meal would improve mealtime consumption and combat malnutrition often associated with mid- to late-stage dementia.

"Music has a balancing effect," Brewer said. "It can raise people's energy levels, or it can help them relax if they're feeling agitated."

In a pilot study, she engaged eight patients with ADRD in singing just prior to lunch. The results did not show significant improvements in consumption, but Brewer suggests limitations in the size of the treatment group and in data collection may have skewed the results.

"Six of the eight did show improvements, and I believe the singing did have an effect," Brewer said. "I would like to follow up with a larger group and control some of the other variables we discovered."

The University of Dayton's group will be the largest contingent of student researchers from one school at the symposium. They will present nine research studies including:

• A sociology student surveyed area residents about whether their use of local rivers created a greater bond to the Dayton region.
• An economics study examining differences in market behavior between public and private firms.
• An electrical and computer engineering student explored ways to create a three-dimensional image that could be printed.
• An engineering student explored the thermoelectrical properties of certain organic crystals.
• A computer science study of how artificial intelligence might be used in music composition.

The symposium will showcase the high-quality research being carried out by the students at Ohio's independent colleges and universities and the significant research opportunities available at these institutions.

"OFIC, our member institutions, and our students are deeply appreciative of the support provided by the American Cancer Society East Central Division, Battelle, The Columbus Foundation, and the Foundation for Independent Higher Education that made this event possible," said Gordon R. Brollier, OFIC president.

The University of Dayton is a top-tier, national Catholic research university and Ohio's largest private university. The University is approaching $100 million in sponsored research annually and offers undergraduates considerable opportunities to engage in meaningful research.

Student research is an annual focus of the University's Brother Joseph W. Stander Symposium, showcasing faculty-mentored student research and scholarship at all degree levels.

The Stander Symposium kicks off at 8 p.m. Tuesday, April 5, with the Celebration of the Arts at the Schuster Center in Dayton.
It's a free evening of inspiring and entertaining music, theatre, dance and visual art by University students.

Throughout the day on Wednesday, April 13, students will present their scholarship and research in poster sessions and presentations that include oral reports, visual arts displays, panel discussions or live performances.

For more on the Celebration of the Arts and the Stander Symposium, visit http://stander.udayton.edu/aboutus.php.

For more information, contact Cilla Shindell, director of media relations, at 937-229-3257 or shindell@udayton.edu.