Undergraduate research as a best practice in higher education has its roots firmly in the STEM disciplines. Including undergraduate researchers in an established lab, especially one with a hierarchy of successful lead researchers and graduate students, is easy to wrap one’s head around. But that model simply does not translate to the fine arts, literature, history, or philosophy, which are typically more individualized in terms of research or creative production.

In the CFP for this special issue of *Perspectives on Undergraduate Research and Mentoring (PURM)* on UR in the arts and humanities, we asked

How can an undergraduate student complete a meaningful, archival research project in history or art history during her short undergraduate education? How can a literature student develop a textual project that builds on rather than replicates existing scholarship in that field? Does a theater student’s year-long endeavor to write and produce a new one-act play constitute undergraduate research? How exactly can faculty members include students in our research when our own projects are set up very differently than those in STEM and the social sciences?

The authors in this issue address these questions and many more in ways that not only raise awareness of the challenges of UR in these fields but also inspire others to trail blaze for the arts and humanities. In our invited introductory piece, Bernadette McNary-Zak and Rebecca Todd Peters, editors of the collection *Teaching Undergraduate Research in Religious Studies*, note that

Undergraduate research in humanities disciplines provides students with a unique opportunity to develop the art of interpreting human experience under the mentorship and guidance of scholars who have made this our life’s work.

What an exciting way to conceive the work we do regardless of the implicit challenges associated with the administration of this work.

Our two Dialogue pieces explore this positioning more deeply. William FitzGerald and Natalie Midiri share their experiences at their campus research presentation day and discuss how the UR poster genre may be inappropriate and restrictive for arts and humanities research students. In the second
Dialogue, Mitzi Lewis and her colleagues introduce us to an exciting undergraduate research program that joins fine arts and engineering students in collaborative research. Both of these articles encourage us to think about what appears to be “native” to undergraduate research practices and how to reclaim practices for students in arts and humanities disciplines.

In a new commentary section, faculty from dance, music, international languages, literature, and religious studies candidly discuss their own experiences with UR, strategies they have employed successfully and even unsuccessfully to work with student researchers, and questions they believe need addressed by the larger community. As we were editing the issue, we were impressed with their breadth of experiences as well as the common concerns and challenges that bound them as arts and humanities faculty. We hope their experiences will help to broaden and enliven the conversation about UR in non-STEM disciplines in meaningful ways, even if only to inspire you to discuss the pieces with colleagues.

This issue has exceeded our initial hopes in terms of depth and breadth. These articles will help you articulate the challenges of UR in the arts and humanities to various stakeholders and provide you with strategies and ideas for future projects. Please share these pieces with your students who can benefit from knowing how faculty conceive of research in these disciplines and the complexities we confront right along with them. Please comment on the articles to engage in dialogue with the community and authors. And as always, thank you for reading PURM.

Mat and Rebecca