It has been quite a year. The pandemic has forced all of us to be flexible and innovative as we reimagine university life in meaningful ways. And while the Mellon Initiative has had to make significant adjustments these past several months, being innovative with teaching and research is something we were doing even before the pandemic. Not only have we continued our innovative approaches to undergraduate research in the arts and humanities throughout this highly unusual year, we have also made progress with our goal of making undergraduate research in the arts and humanities part of the culture at Trinity University.

Two significant ways we improved access to undergraduate research this past year was through the creation of several Humanities Labs and CUREs in lower-division courses. The Early Book and Manuscript Lab took place both semesters last year, The Healthy Relationships Lab launched in the spring, and with the forthcoming Story Lab for the Public Humanities there are now four humanities labs at Trinity University! As for CUREs, the Mellon Initiative's first CURE was taught in the fall of 2019 and six new CURE development grants were awarded for lower division courses in History, Religion, Communications, Classics, and Anthropology, four of which were taught in the spring. With seven CUREs...
2020 SUMMER PROJECTS

CREATING A DIGITAL GALLERY OF THE COATES LIBRARY MURAL
PEYTON TVRDY ('21) WITH ELIZABETH POFF, M.A.

CREATING A MODEL OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES
GLORIA GATCHEL ('21) WITH DR. CHAD SPIGEL

EMMA TENAYUCA AND THE LANGUAGE OF PROTEST IN SOUTH TEXAS
MAYA ALARCÓN ('22) WITH DR. JENNIFER HENDERSON

A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF RELATIONAL RECONNECTION ON SOCIAL NETWORK SITES
LEVI ROSS ('22) WITH DR. ERIN SUMNER

FOUR-COLOR CLOSET: CHARTING LGBTQ+ REPRESENTATION IN AMERICAN COMIC BOOKS
STEPHEN FORD ('21) WITH DR. AARON DELWICHE

TRANS-ETHNIC PERFORMANCE AND PAN-ASIAN-NESS IN TEXAS FOOD WAYS
TRYNE VANDER STRATEN ('21) WITH DR. GINA TAM

ANDROIDS, CLONES, NONHUMAN ANIMALS, AND HOPE: NEVER LET ME GO AND DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP?
ELENA NUSLOCH ('21) WITH DR. DAVID RANDO

CLICK HERE to read more about these projects.
MORE THAN A BEER: A PRIMARY SOURCE STUDY OF ADOLPHUS BUSH'S BUSINESS CAREER

ANTHONY TRESCA ('21) WITH DR. TODD BARNETT

STRENGTHENING COLORS OF PRIDE SUMMER RESEARCH ON SOUTH TEXAS LGBTQ+ HEALTH AND RESILIENCY

NOELLE BARRERA ('21) WITH DR. AMY STONE

INTERLOCKING HISTORIES IN THIRD-GENERATION HOLOCAUST GRAPHIC NOVELS

JESSICA METCALF ('21) WITH DR. VICTORIA AARONS

PAWNS AT PLAY: REFUGEES AND THE GAME OF FOREIGN POLICY

BEN FALCON ('22) WITH DR. SUSSAN SIAVOSHI

THE PREACHING OF PETER: INTERPRETATION, TRANSLATION, AND NOTES

KATHLEEN ARBOGAST ('21) WITH DR. RUBÉN DUPERTUIS

MONUMENT AND RUIN IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF LINA BO BARDI

HENRY KNEIDEL ('21) WITH DR. KATHRYN O’ROURKE

CONCUBINES AND CHANGE: HONG KONG MARRIAGE UNDER BRITISH RULE (1841-1953)

CAMILLE GILVAR ('22) WITH DR. ANENE EJIKEME
2020 SUMMER PROJECTS

THEATRE-MAKING IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

RACHEL MORRIS ('21) & ARIA GASTON-PANTHAKI ('21) WITH DR. NATHAN STITH

MUSIC IN THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST: SAN ANTONIO’S ORQUESTA TÍPICA ENSAMBLE (1936-43)

ELISA BARRERA ('22) WITH DR. CARL LEAFSTEDT

TRINITY UNIVERSITY ROOTS COMMISSION: TRINITY’S FOUNDING AND FOUNDERS

CECELIA TURKEWITZ ('21) WITH DR. SARAH BETH KAUFMAN

PERFORMING HUMAN RIGHTS

KALEY LOPEZ ('21), KATIE MALOAN ('22)
RACHEL ANN POOVATHOOR ('22) & BRADLEY SYKES ('22) WITH DR. ROSA ALOISI, ROBERTO PRESTIGIACOMO, M.F.A., AND DR. ROBERT HUESCA
in lower division courses and several humanities labs running each semester, we are now able to offer high-impact research experiences in the arts and humanities to hundreds of Trinity students each academic year!

This summer’s undergraduate research program was also extremely successful, despite the limits created by the pandemic (e.g. no travel, no access to campus). All of the Mellon research teams came up with innovative ways to complete their summer research projects, we continued our tradition of weekly Mellon lunches (virtually on Zoom), and the end-of-summer research symposium was a triumph of reimaging presentations creatively for a virtual context! We are proud of all of the 2020 Mellon Initiative summer research teams, but as our university works to fight systemic racism I want to highlight the Trinity University Roots Commission team, which is a great example of how undergraduate research, social justice, and self-reflection can intersect to make our university a better place.

Once again several Mellon students had proposals accepted to present at academic conferences this past year, most of which took place prior to the pandemic. Unfortunately, a few conferences were forced to cancel or to go virtual. One student whose presentation shifted from in-person to virtual was Sara Heridia (Mellon ’19; Trinity ’20), who was the first Mellon SURF ever accepted to the prestigious Posters on the Hill Conference! While Sara didn’t get to have the typical experience of presenting her research to members of Congress on Capitol Hill, she did a wonderful job with her virtual presentation. I continue to be impressed with what our students accomplish regardless of what the world throws at them.

Finally, I want to mention three important leadership changes at the Mellon Initiative. First, please join me in congratulating Martina Mauldin, who was recently promoted to Assistant Director of the Mellon Initiative! Second, please join me in thanking Kyle Gillette, Carl Leafstedt and Willis Salomon, who have stepped down after serving nearly eight years on our Steering Committee. In their places we welcome Nathan Stith (Theatre), Kimberlyn Montford (Music) and Vicki Aarons (English) to the team! Third, this semester we welcome Lauren Turek as Co-Director of the Mellon Initiative and at the end of 2020 I will step down and Lauren will take over as Director.

It has been a pleasure directing the Mellon Initiative these past four years and while I will no longer be serving in that role in a few months, you can be certain that I will continue to promote undergraduate research in the arts and humanities at Trinity University!

-Chad Spigel

WELCOME, LAUREN!

The Mellon Initiative is excited to announce that Dr. Lauren Turek (History) will become the next Director starting in January 2021. Please congratulate Lauren next time you see her!
CALL FOR PROPOSALS WILL RESUME IN EARLY 2021 AND APPLICATIONS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE AT THE START OF THE SPRING SEMESTER.

PLEASE CHECK THE MELLON INITIATIVE WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION!

2021 SURF INFO

SUMMER RESEARCH INFORMATION SESSIONS FOR STUDENTS AND FACULTY WILL BE OFFERED IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER.

2019/20 FACULTY AWARDS

CURE GRANTS

CUREs (Course-based Undergraduate Research Experience) provide opportunities for first or second year students to learn about arts and humanities research by working directly on a relevant and unfinished research project that might even be new to the faculty. These are last year’s grant recipients and the CURE courses they created and taught:

Spring 2020
Aaron Delwiche (Communications): “Media Texts” (COMM 2302)
Angela Tarango (Religion): “Religion in the U.S” (RELI 1360)
Erin Kramer (History): “U.S. History Through Reconstruction” (HIST 1360)
Anene Ejikeme (History): “The African Experience” (HIST 1301)

Fall 2020
Alfred Montoya (Anthropology): “Introduction to Anthropology” (ANTH 1301)
Benjamin Stevens (Classical Studies): “Afterlives of Antiquity” (CLAS 1315)

“I...the CURE was a fantastic way of integrating my own research interests with undergraduate research and my course preparation.”

- AARON DELWICHE

HUMANITIES LAB GRANT

Arts/Humanities labs create opportunities for students with various levels of experience to earn course credit and develop research skills while working with faculty on long-term research projects. Labs also provide opportunities for more experienced students to mentor students who are just learning new research skills. Last year, a humanities lab grant was awarded to:

Spring 2021 (forthcoming)
Lauren Turek (History), Sarah Beth Kaufman (Sociology), Habiba Noor (FYE), and Norma Cantu (MLL): “Story Lab for the Public Humanities”

REGIONAL RESEARCH GRANT

This grant supports the development of a regionally focused research project that includes opportunities for undergraduate researchers. These three projects were awarded a regional research grant last year:

Jennifer Henderson (Communications) with Maya Alarcón (‘22): "Emma Tenayuca and the Language of Protest in South Texas"
Amy Stone (Sociology) with Noelle Barrera (‘21): "A Dynamic Understanding of Family and Mental Health for LGBTQ+ Youths"
Kathryn Santos (English): "Shakespeare in the Borderlands"
2019/20 STUDENT AWARDS

MINI-GRANTS

STUDENT-DIRECTED RESEARCH IN THE ARTS/HUMANITIES

During the 2019/20 academic year, the Mellon Initiative awarded 12 mini-grants to students seeking funding to complete their capstone project, do research for their senior thesis, or create their senior art show pieces. Students received an average of $380 for supplies, materials, and other project expenses, depending on their specific needs to carry out their projects. A new partnership with the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship provided funding for innovative projects, such as digital humanities projects, projects that build civic engagement in San Antonio, and those that attempt to solve a social need or problem. In the spring of 2020, four students were awarded the first-ever innovative mini-grants!

Fall 2019 Mini-Grant Recipients

Emily Bourgeois (20): "Minority Identity Formation in Autobiographical Graphic Memoir Forms"
Carlotta de Bellis (20): "The Correo Mayor: A Premonition of the Mexican Revolution"
Sara Heridia (20): "An Adapting Empire: Law-making, Roman Government, and Abortion Law from the Age of Augustus to Septimius Severus"
Tiffany Nguyen (20): "In Conversation with Horace"
Aubrey Parke (20): "Aqueducts and Water Management in Mexico City and San Antonio, TX"

Spring 2020 Mini-Grant Recipients

Ariel Del Vecchio (20): "Studies in Rituals of Intimacy Through Crochet"
Sarah Bastos (20): "Dionysus in Performance"
Gage Brown (20): "Pecan with Crown Gal/Dad"
Jordan Bruce (20): "The International Civil Aviation Organization and US Foreign Relations"
Layna Hayes (20): "Painting with Found Materials"
Mary-Margaret Herring (20): "Curbing the Spread of Disinformation through User Interface Design"
Kristina Reinis (20): "Playing House"

*indicates the mini-grant was awarded for an innovative project

STUDENT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Mini-Grants
Funding opportunities for student-directed projects guided by faculty mentors in independent study work or as a supplement to coursework.

Application Deadlines
Fall: October 9, 2020
Spring: March 5, 2021

Summer Undergraduate Research Fellows (SURF) Program
A 10 week paid summer program in which students work on a project directly related to their faculty mentor’s research.

Mellon Institute
A 10 week paid summer multidisciplinary research cluster for faculty-student research teams to carry out inter-related research projects pertaining to one central topic.

Application Deadline
February 2021
(applications available January 2021)

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO APPLY, PLEASE VISIT THE MELLON INITIATIVE WEBSITE!
MELLON INITIATIVE

The Mellon Initiative seeks to foster undergraduate research in the Arts and Humanities and promote the value of these disciplines at Trinity University in San Antonio.

Chad Spigel
Lauren Turek
Co-Directors
Martina Mauldin
Assistant Director

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STEERING COMMITTEE

Vicki Aarons, English
Rubén Dupertuis, Religion
Jessica Halonen, Fine Arts
Andrew Kania, Philosophy
Kimberlyn Montford, Music
Debra Ochoa, MLL
Elizabeth Poff, Library
Nathan Stith, Theatre
Peggy Sundermeyer, Academic Affairs