



## What is URCA?

URCA is a program designed to get undergraduate students more involved in research and creative activities. There are two ways in which students can participate in URCA: as Associates and as Assistants.

## Associates:

These are year-long positions in which a student designs his or her own research or creative activity project and then works with a mentor to see it through.

Associates are required to attend monthly meetings and to present their scholarly work at the Spring Symposium. Associates earn a stipend and can also receive money for project-related equipment and travel. Only a maximum of 10 students are accepted into this very competitive program each year.

## Assistants:

These are semester-long positions in which students assist with faculty-led research or creative activities. Up to 80 students each semester receive a stipend for being Assistants; however, each semester several students also participate as unpaid Assistants. It is also possible for Assistants to earn course credit for their participation.

## Thank you, Ms. Emily Colton!

URCA would like to acknowledge the generosity of Ms. Emily Colton (University Bookstore). Her generous donations have allowed us to purchase t-shirts for our student ambassadors (who speak about URCA on and off campus) and updated promotional fliers for prospective students. When asked what inspires her to give, Emily stated, "I majored in History at Cornell University. At the end of my freshman year, my advisor hired me to do research for a book he was writing and I worked for him until I graduated. It was a wonderful experience, both educationally and personally. I give to URCA so that SIUE students can have that same opportunity."



**Ms. Emily Colton**



**Dr. Gunes Ercal**

## Excellent Mentorship!

URCA Assistant **Joseph Myers** wanted to acknowledge his mentor, **Dr. Gunes Ercal**. Joseph stated that Dr. Ercal was one of the hardest working professors he's had the opportunity to work with. He said, "her passion for the subject of Graph Theory has emblazoned in me a desire to learn more!" Joseph has been her URCA Assistant for two semesters and is thankful for the opportunity he has received to learn more about research.

## URCA Students in Action





## Featured Associate: Gabrielle Borders

**Mentor:** Dr. Jessica DeSpain

**Project:** Making Queer Space in Nineteenth-Century Book History and the Digital Humanities



Gabrielle is studying the publication of novels and periodicals in the 1890s to examine how publishers and editors used print culture to express queer identity. She will compare versions of Susan Warner's 1851 transatlantic bestseller *The Wide, Wide World*, which was reprinted for the next one hundred years and the controversial periodical, *The Yellow Book*, which became associated with gay culture in the 1890s. The end goal is to have a digital exhibit that will highlight key differences and comparisons between the two different texts. When asked what she liked about URCA, Gabrielle stated, "Being an URCA Assistant and now Associate has opened up a lot of opportunities for me as an undergraduate. I have gained a lot of valuable information and practical skills for the fields that I am studying which will only help further my career as I go on to graduate school. URCA lets students foster relationships with their mentors and other students so that they can have opportunities to collaborate and do the things they love." After graduation, Gabrielle plans to pursue a Ph.D. in English. Gabrielle will be presenting her paper next month at the annual South Atlantic Modern Language Association Conference in Atlanta, Georgia.



## Featured Assistant: Austin Tuttle

**Mentor:** Dr. Ayse Evrensel



Austin is exploring how technological innovations may cause economic downturns and is currently focused on reading several related research articles. Austin became interested in URCA because he "wanted to learn the thought process of researching and analyzing complex problems/issues." He states that his experience with URCA has been great so far. His favorite part of the project is to meet with Dr. Evrensel and collaborate ideas and perspectives about research papers. Austin stated, "URCA is helping me learn how to look and think about things in new/different ways." He believes this URCA experience will leave him more prepared to take on challenging projects in the future. After graduation, Austin plans on working in banking or government. Dr. Evrensel commented on Austin's work by stating, "My URCA Assistant Austin Tuttle is an incredible sounding board on a highly elusive macroeconomic subject, namely the Real Business Cycle theory. It is amazing to see how much he reads as well as how he reflects on the readings and proposes viable approaches to the subject." When asked what she liked about URCA, Dr. Evrensel stated, "URCA is a gem at SIUE. Where else can an educator have the opportunity to mentor a highly-motivated undergraduate student one-on-one for a semester on a research project?"



## Recent Outcomes



- Congratulations to URCA Associate **Angel Nihells** for receiving a National Preservation Institute Scholarship! Her work is mentored by Dr. Corey Ragsdale of the Anthropology Department.
- Congratulations to Dr. Ron Worthington of the Pharmacy Department and his URCA Assistants, **Brentsen Wolfe** and **Elijah Ball**, on their publication entitled, "Method to identify silent codon mutations that may alter peptide elongation kinetics and co-translational protein folding."