

# Research Matters

*A Monthly Publication of RAE*

## May 2020

*Notes from Beneath the Blue Awning*

### **Hello UWF Faculty and Staff-**

Congratulations on making it to Summer 2020! We've never had a semester quite like the recently completed Spring 2020 term. Sincere thanks to all of you who changed your curriculum to meet the needs of an online semester, and best wishes of you who are planning for, or have already embarked upon, summer teaching and research activities. The RAE staff remain busy supporting proposal submission, grant setup, and program administration for funded awards, while working remotely from our work-home under the blue awning.



On May 7 and 8, RAE ran a working session titled Developing and Improving Proposals for 16 UWF faculty and staff. These folks were treated to an informative session on reading and responding to a request for proposals from Dr. Jill Singer, professor at SUNY Buffalo State College. If you're interested in hearing some of what we talked about (or seeing Dr. Singer's informative slide deck), let me know and be on the lookout for a similar session to come in the late summer.

The University administration is turning its attention to how to accomplish a campus "reopening" (though we've not really closed), and this includes exploring how to safely re-enter the campus research spaces. RAE will be working closely with leadership from the colleges and the provost's office on how to do this. While the process is being worked out, please start thinking about what a risk-mitigation plan would look like for your research operations: how can you ensure social distancing, how to limit the number of people in the lab, how you will ensure that appropriate social distancing will

be maintained, the use of personal protective equipment in the lab to ensure the safety of all personnel. An overarching goal to the phased return to campus will be to ensure the health of faculty, staff, and students.

One last pandemic item: the University's subscription to **GrantForward** now includes a special link to grant opportunities related to the international response to COVID-19. If you are interested in looking for ways to align your research efforts with the continuing need to ensure a return to physical, community, and economic health, look for COVID-19 under the Grants dropdown menu on GrantForward.

Best wishes to you and yours for a healthy and productive summer,

Regards and best wishes,

Matthew Schwartz

**Professor and AVP of Research Administration**

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## OUR finds success with online symposium

By **JEFFREY CASSADY**

*RAE Staff Writer*

[jcassady@uwf.edu](mailto:jcassady@uwf.edu)

Each spring, the **University of West Florida Office of Undergraduate Research Student Scholars Symposium and Faculty Research Showcase** provides hundreds

of student and faculty researchers with the chance to exchange ideas and show off their work.

The symposium, held annually in April, is an important part of the undergraduate research experience at UWF, said **Dr. Allison Schwartz**, director of OUR.

“The students work so hard throughout the year,” Schwartz said. “(The symposium) gives them and the faculty a way to celebrate together.” So, when COVID-19 threatened to close the Pensacola Campus and derail plans for **this year's symposium**, Schwartz knew her team would have to get creative to make sure the researchers could still get their time in the spotlight.

OUR staff decided to use social media to take the symposium online.

“That way, even if COVID canceled research, the students could still talk



about what they learned,” Schwartz said. “They could still talk about the skills they developed.”

On April 16, the date the symposium was originally planned to be held in person at the Pensacola Campus, students and faculty tweeted and posted about their research on Twitter and Instagram. OUR staff developed hashtags, #UWFSympoGoesVirtual and #UWFScholars20, researchers and others could use to find symposium projects and join the conversation.

Students could post anything from a simple statement about what they learned from the research process to full posters and synopses of their projects, Schwartz said. Some even streamed musical performances through social media.

“We ... by design didn’t put restrictions on how students could present their research,” Schwartz said. “We gave them a chance to shine. That was really fun.”

Schwartz said the online symposium featured 200 projects – more than half the number of submissions the office received before the shutdown.

“I couldn’t believe it,” Schwartz said. “It was overwhelming, the number of students who participated.”

Of course, going online presented challenges. But it also broadened the symposium’s audience by giving relatives, friends, and others who might not have attended the symposium in person a chance to check out the presentations, Schwartz said.

The event also resulted in some good publicity for OUR. Schwartz said OUR’s official **Twitter account** generated more than 13,000 impressions (the number of times tweets appear in users’ feeds) during the event.

The symposium got OUR staff thinking about how they might better serve online students and how they might maximize social media when the University hosts NCUR 2022, a national undergraduate research conference set to be held at UWF during the 2022 Spring Semester, Schwartz said.

Those who missed the online symposium can tour the exhibits virtually through an online **gallery set up by OUR**.

“UWF faculty and students blow me away,” Schwartz said. “We were faced with a challenging situation, and we could have just canceled (the symposium). But we didn’t, and everybody came out to support us. It was amazing.”

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**Received a Grant or Have Some  
Good News About a Research  
Project?**



We'd love to share your accomplishments!  
Please feel free to [contact us](#).

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***In the NEWS!***

# **Haas Center releases survey results on statewide economic impact of COVID-19**



An economic impacts study by the Haas Center at the University of West Florida reveals an overwhelming percentage of Florida residents have postponed travel plans and reduced spending during the COVID-19 global pandemic. The UWF Haas Center...

**[Read more](#)**  
**[news.uwf.edu](https://news.uwf.edu)**



# Funding Opportunities

Watch this space! RAE is currently re-working how we share funding opportunities to our faculty and staff.

In the meantime, feel free to access **GrantForward**—UWF faculty and staff can sign up with their UWF account to create a free profile with this funding search tool! For a step-by-step guide, please refer to our **GrantForward Handout**.

## Grant Forward *Quick Tip*



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Subscribe to the [CASSH](#) and [CEPS](#) newsletters.



**GrantForward**: Sign up with your UWF account to search funding opportunities and receive personalized recommendations.



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