2026-27 URG Winners

College of Engineering

Interim Dean Samuel Jator, Ph.D.

19
Carmen Flores | Mechanical Engineering |
Mentor: **Dr. Ebrahim Seidi**
Department of Mechanical Engineering
"PPA-CF Fatigue Response to Raster Angle and Layer Height."

20
William McConnell | Mechanical Engineering |
Mentor: **Dr. Ebrahim Seidi**
Department of Mechanical Engineering
"Environmental Performance of 3D-Printed Glass Fiber-Reinforced PPA."

21
Todd Vaughn | Civil & Industrial Engineering |
Mentor: **Dr. Dreyton Lott**
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
"Baseline-Referenced ORP Recovery in Vertical-Flow Treatment Media."

22
Carina Wyman * | Biochemistry |
Mentor: **Dr. Renata Starostka**
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
"Southeast Texas Household Water Quality: A Foundation for AD Research."

College of Nursing and Health Professions

Dean Joseph W. Tacy, Ph.D., RN, CNE

23
Sibelle Olivia Folepe Taguimdjeu | Biology |
Mentor: **Dr. Shannon Jordan**
Department of Health and Kinesiology
"Effects of energy drink consumption during college students' study sessions."

24
Logan Minter and **Chris John** | Nursing |
Mentor: **Dr. Judson LaGrone**
JoAnne Gay Dishman School of Nursing
"Healthcare Employment Characteristics and Clinical Judgment in Licensure Nursing Students."

25
Morgan Pontious | Speech & Hearing Sciences |
Mentor: **Dr. Stefanie Becerril**
Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences
"Bibliotherapy for Stuttering: Knowledge, Use, and Readiness Among SLPs."

$ **Reaud Honors College Student** * **Texas Academy Student**

OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH
LAMAR UNIVERSITY

URG Awards Ceremony

November 13, 2026 **— The 13th Annual O.U.R. Fall Conference**

This year, Lamar's U.R.G. program recognizes 25 winning projects selected from 42 proposals received from all academic colleges. The winning proposals have been reviewed and scored by over 70 faculty with expertise in the research areas connected to these projects. The winning projects received scores ranging between 80% and 93%, with an acceptance rate of 60%, making this U.R.G. program to be the most competitive ever. This year, we have 20 STEM and 5 HASBSEB winning projects, which are listed in this brochure. Each U.R.G. winner receives an $800 stipend, up to $1,000 in research support, and $500 in travel support from university funds. The research findings and results of these U.R.G. projects will be presented at EXPO 2027, on April 22-23rd, the annual showcase of all student-driven research offered every year during the nationally celebrated week of undergraduate research. President Jaime Taylor, Provost Brett Welch, Senior Associate Provost and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Dr. Samuel Jator, Associate Provost for Academic and Research Administration, Dr. Gene Theodori, the Advisory Board members of the O.U.R., as well as reviewers of this year's U.R.G. proposals heartily congratulate all U.R.G. winners and their mentors for this exceptional achievement!

-Dr. Cristian Bahrim, Director of the O.U.R.

College of Business

Dean Joby John, Ph.D.

1
Humza Arfeen $ | Finance |
Mentor: **Dr. Don Warren**
School of Accounting, Finance and Economics
"True Synergy in the Classroom: A Firsthand Look."

2
Nissan Martinez | Construction Management |
Mentor: **Dr. Seokyon Hwang**
Reese Department of Construction Management
"Adapting Sustainable Flood-Control Strategies for Belize through Comparative International Benchmarking."

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2026-27 URG Winners

College of Arts and Sciences

Interim Dean Xiangyang (Sunny) Lei, Ph.D.

3
Gabriel Bonin | Physics and Mathematics |
Mentor: **Dr. Ivan Ojeda-Ruiz**
Department of Mathematics
"*Impossible Nonograms*"

4
Haley Brewer | Biology, Pre-med |
Mentor: **Dr. Binod Nainabasti**
Department of Physics
"*Finding Physics in Their Careers: Student Selection of Physics Concepts.*"

5
Kowen Ducote | Physics | and **Jace Turner** | Electrical Engineering and Physics |
Mentors: **Dr. Rafael de la Madrid** and **Dr. Zhaozhong Shi**
Department of Physics
"*Measurements and Analysis of Cosmic-Ray Muons Using Two Compact Muon Detectors.*"

6
Leslie Garcia | Biochemistry |
Mentor: **Dr. Sylvestre Twagirayezu**
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
"*Rotational Dynamics of Heated Small Polar Organic Pollutants in Petroleum Mixtures.*"

7
Darrel Gotherman | Geology |
Mentor: **Dr. Jonas D. Takodjou Wambo**
Department of Earth and Space Sciences
"*Lithological Control and Fault Propagation at Hoover Point.*"

8
Bryan Guizar [$] | Mechanical Engineering |
Mentor: **Dr. Bogdana Bahrim**
Department of Physics
"*H- collisions with Au(III) metal surfaces, covered by K adsorbates.*"

9
Afifa Islam [$] | Biology |
Mentor: **Dr. Ashwini Kucknoor**
Department of Biology
"*Functional Characterization of Leishmania Parasite-Derived IncRNAs in Amastigote Differentiation.*"

10
Sneha Jobby [$] | Biology |
Mentor: **Dr. Ashwini Kucknoor**
Department of Biology
"*Characterization of lnc-TMEM121-26 in Leishmania amazonensis-infected Macrophage Responses.*"

[$] **Reaud Honors College Student** [*] **Texas Academy Student**

2026-27 URG Winners

11
Thais Jones [*] **| Biochemistry |**
Mentor: **Dr. Iqbal Mahmud**
Department of Biology
"*Multi-omics Study of Chemerin in Obesity-driven Esophageal Carcinoma (ESCA).*"

12
Gabriel Kalala | Computer Science & Mathematics |
Mentor: **Dr. Ivan Ojeda-Ruiz**
Department of Mathematics
"*Error Minimization in Low-Rank Dynamic Mode Decomposition for Stock Market Analysis.*"

13
Mary O'Malley [$] | Biology |
Mentor: **Dr. Ashwini Kucknoor**
Department of Biology
"*ABC Transporters and Cell Death in Leishmania Drug Resistance.*"

14
Amy Schwartz | Forensic Chemistry & Criminal Justice |
Mentor: **Dr. Kirstie Boyett**
Department of Criminal Justice
"*Framing Substance Abuse Among Health Care Professionals.*"

15
Karim Shaaban [$] | Chemistry |
Mentor: **Dr. Chandru P. Chandrasekaran**
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
"*Systematic Evaluation of Near-Infrared Absorption Properties in Asymmetrical Nickel-bis (dithiolene) Complexes.*"

16
Adam Tsan [$] | Computer Science |
Mentor: **Dr. Tauhidul Alam**
Department of Computer Science
"*Comparative Evaluation of Grounded Language Planning Models for Safe Robot Navigation.*"

17
Zachary Wolff | Electrical Engineering and Physics |
Mentor: **Dr. Zhifo Guo**
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
"*Analysis of Structural Effects on Phenothiazine as an Electrolyte.*"

College of Education and Human Development

Dean Johnny O'Connor, Ph.D.

18
Lynn Boswell | General ASL Studies |
Mentor: **Dr. Millicent M. Musyoka**
Department Deaf Studies and Deaf Education
"*Resilience of Deaf people incarcerated: Lived Experience and meaning making.*"

[$] **Reaud Honors College Student** [*] **Texas Academy Student**