

2025-26 UR Grant Winners

19

Terry Osteen | Management and Marketing |

Mentor: **Dr. Ozge Gunaydin**

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

“Preparation and Characterization of Ammonia Borane Hydrogen Storage Composites.”

20

Amy Schwartz | Criminal Justice / Forensic Chemistry |

Mentor: **Dr. Kirstie M. Boyett**

Department of Criminal Justice

“Health vs. Criminal Framing of Substance Abuse:

An Experimental Test Among College-Aged Individuals.”

21

Abigayle Welch | Mechanical Engineering / Physics |

Mentor: **Dr. Binod Nainabasti**

Department of Physics

“Exploring Physics Retention Across Multiple Intelligence Types in Preparatory Physics.”

College of Education and Human Development

Dean Johnny O'Connor, Ph.D.

22

Laci Graham | Interdisciplinary Studies EC-6 |

Mentor: **Dr. Yan Yan**

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

“Comparing Pre-Service and In-Service Elementary Science Teachers Experience with Using ChatGPT for Lesson Planning, Activity Design and Assessment.”

23

Toni Johnson | Public Health in Healthcare Administration |

Mentor: **Dr. Janeal White**

Department of Nutrition, Hospitality, and Human Services

“The Link Between Childhood Homelessness and Long-term Adult Houselessness.”

College of Business

Dean Joby John, Ph.D.

24

Bilal Alani | Chemistry |

Mentor: **Dr. Gevorg Sargsyan**

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

“The Impact of AI on the Healthcare Industry.”

25

Michael Vu | Finances | and Reaud Honors Student

Mentor: **Dr. Jamie Kurash**

School of Accounting, Finance, and Economics

“Can We Exploit Abnormal Stock Returns from Effective Date Delays?”



OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH
LAMAR UNIVERSITY

URG Awards Ceremony

November 14, 2025 — At the 12th Annual O.U.R. Fall Conference

This year the URG program recognizes 25 projects from all academic colleges. Thirty-four proposals have been reviewed and scored by 60 faculty with expertise in research areas connected to these projects. The winning projects received scores ranging between 75% and 94%. This year we selected 18 STEM and 7 HASBSEB projects. Each U.R.G. winner receives \$800 stipend, up to \$1,000 in research support, and \$500 in travel support from university funds. The findings of the 2025 U.R.G. projects will be presented at EXPO 2026, on April 30—May 1. President Taylor, Provost Welch, Senior Associate Provost Jator, Associate Provost Theodori, the Advisory Board of O.U.R., and all reviewers heartily congratulate the U.R.G. winners and their mentors for this achievement, wishing everyone to enjoy a great research experience!

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



LAMAR UNIVERSITY
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College of Fine Arts and Communication

Dean Golden Wright, Ph.D.

1

Harvest Prater | Speech and Hearing Sciences |

Mentor: **Dr. Paul Prezas**

Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences

“Phonemic Clinical Video Assessment: Strategies in Undergraduate SLP Education.”

2

Sarah Short | Speech and Hearing Sciences |

Mentor: **Dr. Paul Prezas**

Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences

“Deaf Mentorship for Speech-Language Pathology Patients: Effectiveness and Availability.”

3

Mary Wernig | Speech and Hearing Sciences |

Mentor: **Dr. Karen Whisenhunt Saar**

Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences

“Supporting Roles: Perspectives of Neurotypical Peers' Parents in an Inclusive Theater Program.”

2025-26 UR Grant Winners

College of Engineering

Dean Tracy Benson, Ph.D.

4

Yingjie Gao | Chemical Engineering |

Mentor: **Dr. Sidney Lin**

Dan F. Smith Department of Chemical Engineering

“High-resolution Simulation of Energy Storage by Microencapsulated Phase Change Material.”

5

Alejandra Soledad Castro Huerta | Chemical Engineering |

Mentor: **Dr. Sidney Lin**

Dan F. Smith Department of Chemical Engineering

“Phase Change Material Packaging Inserts for Thermal Stability for Consumer and Industrial Applications.”

6

Anas Saleh | Electrical Engineering |

Mentor: **Dr. Cagatay Tokgoz**

Phillip M. Drayer Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

“Design and Simulation of a Phased Array Antenna for 5G Wireless Applications.”

College of Arts and Sciences

Dean Rebecca Ard Boone, Ph.D.

7

Layali Abusaleh | Chemical Engineering |

Mentor: **Dr. Sylvestre Twagirayezu**

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

“Temperature-Dependent Analysis of Petroleum Mixtures by Molecular Rotational Resonance Spectroscopy.”

8

Ayna Arif | Psychology |

Mentor: **Dr. Edythe Kirk**

Department of Psychology

“Narcissism and Forgiveness: Emotional and Physiological Responses to Prompts.”

9

Morgan Claxton | Chemical Engineering |

Mentor: **Dr. Ivan Ojeda-Ruiz**

Phillip M. Drayer Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

“Image Segmentation by Including Color in the Spectral Clustering Framework.”

10

Kelly Dougharty | Biochemistry |

Mentor: **Dr. Zhifo Guo**

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

“Rhodamine B-Amidothiourea Chemosensor for Selective Hg²⁺ Detection.”

2025-26 UR Grant Winners

11

Campbell Fuller | Biology |

Mentor: **Dr. Susantha Ganegamage**

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

“Design and Synthesis of a Novel Dual-Fluorescent Probe for Neural Oxidative Stress Detection.”

12

Zoe Hagar | Biology |

Mentor: **Dr. Ahmad H. Kabir**

Department of Biology

“Effect of *Trichoderma afroharzianum* in rice exposed to drought stress.”

13

Sneha Jobby | Biology |

Mentors: **Dr. Ashwini Kucknoor**

Department of Biology

“Role of lncRNAs in Modulating *Leishmania amazonensis* Infectivity in Macrophages.”

14

Veena Movva and Juliana Tran | Biology |

Mentor: **Dr. Remmy Kasili**

Department of Biology

“Screening Selected Kenyan Vegetables for Anti-cancer Properties.”

15

Mary O'Malley | Biology | and Texas Academy

Mentor: **Dr. Sylvestre Twagirayezu**

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

“Screening of Residual Solvents in Over the Counter (OTC) Analgesics by Molecular Rotational Resonance Spectroscopy.”

16

Shoniya Murphy | Mechanical Engineering / Physics |

Mentor: **Dr. Binod Nainabasti**

Department of Physics

“Analyzing complex physics concepts via performance and retention study.”

17

Nirbhik Neupane | Computer Science |

Mentor: **Dr. Md Rakibul Islam**

Department of Computer Science

“From User Reviews to Code:

A Large Language Model Approach to Automated Software Traceability.”

18

Ruben Blake Peña | Biochemistry and Biology |

Mentor: **Dr. Remmy Kasili**

Department of Biology

“Antibacterial Properties of Selected Kenyan Leafy Vegetables.”