

Meredith takes a day to "Celebrate Student Achievement"

College-wide research presentations, celebrations and award ceremonies deemed an overall success.

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Editor in Chief

Meredith held its first annual Celebrating Student Achievement Day on April 24.

The specific idea for this daylong celebration began to be discussed last summer by Dr. Rosalind Reichard, vice president for academic affairs, and Dr. Jean Jackson, vice president for student development. However, the seeds for this day were planted several years ago.

"Four years ago, I organized a committee to work on the Academic Awards program, and at that time, we discussed the merits of having College-wide and departmental awards programs on the same day," Jackson said. "So, with the cooperation of many committees and advisory groups, departments and student organizations, we were able, this year, to

bring together a number of events including the April Arts Celebration in addition to the undergraduate research conference and awards programs, for a full day showcasing student achievement."

The day began with a "fun run and ramble," as members of the Meredith community were invited to walk or run on a course set up around the campus.

Dr. Michael Novak, head of the history and politics department, helped to publicize the ramble through a bet with students that faculty participation in the event would be higher than that of the students.

"I pushed hard to promote it because I thought it would be a nice way to get the day moving and because I knew we'd win

the bet," Novak said. The faculty did win the bet, and Novak won the right to toss SGA President Lora Tillman, SGA President-elect Erin Hege and Jackson into the pool at the end of the day.

After the ramble got the campus going, events kicked into high gear. One of the largest portions of the celebration involved student research presentations through the Undergraduate Research Program (URP), which began at 8:30 a.m. and continued throughout the day.

Dr. Rhonda Zingraff, director of the program, said 90 research submis-

sions were received this year, and 78 of these were accepted for the conference. These 78 posters and presentations represented the work of 95 students, a 50 percent increase from the 62 students represented last year.

According to Zingraff, decisions on whether or not a submission was accepted for the conference were made on the basis of the abstract submitted by the student with her application.

Zingraff said the change in the format of the conference had a positive impact on conference attendance.

"The struggle to attend sessions last year while classes were going on during the entire conference made it difficult for everyone and reduced the size

of the audience for all of the presenters," she said. "This year the students who were presenting had significantly more people learning about their research."

Novak attended several research presentations and said, "On the whole I thought that the presentations were very good. A few that I attended were absolutely amazing." Novak said one had even caused him to rethink the French Revolution.

Zingraff also noted, although some departments focus less on research and therefore were less well-represented at the conference, the day included "presentations that reflect a broadly comprehensive range of studies at Meredith."

One area of study that was focused on more strongly this year was women's studies. According to Dr. Sherry Shapiro, director of women's studies, the program this year honored those students who presented research focused on women with a certificate

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Senior Renn Baker explains her poster to Dr. Charles Davis.
Photo by Julie Stansbury

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