

**Student Research Council ballot**

**One-page letters of interest from candidates included at the end of this ballot list**

*[Please choose ONE candidate]*

1. Mark Baum
2. Michael Carini
3. Krisstal D. Clayton
4. Margaret E. Cook-Newell
5. Teresa Stidham
6. Marilyn Gardner
7. Amber Schroeder
8. Jennifer Wright
9. Helen Zhu
10. Leyla Zhuhadar

**Candidate #1 – Mark Baum:**

Please accept this letter as my application to serve on the WKU Student Research Council. My resume and WKU references are available upon request.

My interest in becoming an SRC committee stems from my desire to promote students' scholarly professional activities and development that takes student research from the closed confines of in-house academic research to the community as laboratory setting supporting creative and innovative new projects with measurable results.

As an instructor and Assistant Professor in the Paralegal Studies Department, I have been responsible for developing the various face-to-face and online courses contained in my resume. I use a predictive legal analysis teaching approach that facilitates students' critical thinking development by challenging while supporting student involvement. My classes highlight substantive law and procedure in a public policy context using current technologies and drafting of supportive position memoranda. I incorporate student-centered teaching methods with client-centered problem recognition and resolution techniques and strategies. Students collaboratively conduct research and engage in peer assignment review that increases their involvement while receiving individual and Group validation for their efforts.

I look forward to the opportunity to discuss my credentials with you.

Sincerely,

Mark F Baum

## **Candidate #2 – Michael Carini:**

I would like to express my interest in serving on the Student Research Council.

Engagement in scholarly activity is a key element of the undergraduate experience at WKU. It provides undergraduate students the bridge between the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the classroom and the application of that knowledge and skills in their post-graduate career. Scholarly activity provides the student the ability to begin to immediately apply their new knowledge, rather than wait until they have graduated and moved onto graduate study or professional careers.

Scholarly activity teaches students more than just how to apply their knowledge, it also teaches them how to communicate that knowledge. Scholarly work by its nature needs to be communicated to a larger audience, whether that audience is a community of fellow scholars or the general public. While all students participate in some sort of class on communication as part of their general education requirements, scholarly activity allows them to put in practice what they have learned in those communication classes, while learning the specific methods of communication unique to each individual scholarly area.

Another important life skill that students learn from engagement in scholarly activity is teamwork. Whether the student is part of a large group, or even working one on one with a mentor, they become part of a team of scholars. They learn how to interact with other team members, and how to accomplish a goal together with their scholarly teammates.

An organization like the student research council is critical to WKU's academic environment. If we are to continue to pursue a goal of raising WKU's research profile, we must do so not by being lone scholars in a laboratory, library or studio, but rather as a community of scholars that involves all our students, undergraduate and graduate as integral parts of our scholarly activity. Having an organization that is dedicated to the promotion and fostering of student participation in scholarly activity provides support and resources for faculty and students engaged in these activities.

In my seventeen years here at WKU, I have mentored many students in scholarly activity and I have seen first hand the positive effect it has had on their WKU experience and their experience and success post WKU. I would be honored to serve on the Student Research Council.

Michael Carini

**Candidate #3 - Krisstal D. Clayton:**

The intent of this letter is to express my interest in becoming a Student Research Council member. My interest in this committee centers on my devotion to engaging students in research. This devotion began before my career at WKU. As a doctoral student and Associated Students of New Mexico State University graduate student senator, I volunteered several hours for projects focused on student engagement in research. My efforts as a student senator guaranteed the Graduate School \$15,000 annually for the purpose of funding the Graduate Student Research Symposium. In addition, I assisted in planning and served as a judge for presentations in the social sciences. This funding and student research symposium is still going strong even though my career at New Mexico State University has ended. I am proud to say that my legacy at New Mexico State University is centered on what I accomplished for student engagement in research.

My passion for student engagement in research continues at WKU. I have been a full-time faculty member of the Department of Psychology since August, 2009. As an academic, I engage students in the research process through the classroom and my personal research projects. In the classroom, I implement the importance of research in several of my courses which include Research Methods, Statistics in the Behavioral Sciences, Cross-Cultural Psychology, Social Psychology, and Independent Research. Being an active researcher makes me a better professor because I am able to provide real-world examples of data collection methods, common mistakes, ethical issues, and the publication process. In each of these courses, students complete a research project that requires group collaboration on a psychological topic. This ensures that my students learn how to approach, create, and effectively communicate their research. Furthermore, assigning research projects and articles in the classroom provides me with the opportunity to stimulate student interest in research outside of the classroom.

Outside of the classroom, I have taken advantage of the RCAP internal grant program. The RCAP has allowed me to begin two diverse research projects. Throughout the course of these internal grant projects, I have mentored eight WKU students and one Gatton Academy student from the beginning to the end of the research process. These students have helped me develop data collection materials, run participants, enter data into an analysis program, and create poster presentations for REACH Week. REACH Week is where my students get real experience with the process of research dissemination and exposure to in-depth questions from a range of academics. This is much different than writing a paper or presenting to a classroom of peers. Because of REACH Week and working in my lab, many of my students have developed a deeper appreciation for the research process and an interest in graduate school. In fact, without some form of research experience, many students are not competitive when applying to graduate schools. REACH Week and the opportunities at WKU for student engagement in research greatly help me with preparing my students for graduate school. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to give back to the WKU community that has done so much for my students, my research projects, and my passion for student engagement. I hope you will seriously consider me as a possible member of the Student Research Council.

Sincerely,

Krisstal D. Clayton, PhD  
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology

## **Candidate #4 - Margaret E. Cook-Newell:**

As new faculty at WKU, I, Maggie Cook-Newell, am interested in being considered for the opening on the WKU Student Research Council. My experience in research and student involvement is current and evolving, mainly as a focus of my teaching responsibilities. Prior to teaching at WKU, I conducted research with colleagues on nutrition-related behavioral issues and lifestyle change as well as with dietetic interns as they completed the research requirement of the accredited dietetic internship. One of the last research projects at my previous place of employment was with a high school student in the science field as she prepared for the rigors of college life.

Upon reviewing the SRC five primary responsibilities, I am excited to find that all are in line with my professional goals of enhancing the research component among dietetic professionals from the undergraduate to graduate to professional. It is in the professional scope of dietetics practice regarding research to 1) encourage student involvement in scholarly activities, 2) provide students with resources and information for scholarly engagement, and 3) encourage faculty mentoring of students. These common goals are a primary reason I am excited to be at WKU.

As for the other responsibilities of the SRC to organize REACH Week activities and the annual WKU Student Research Conference the thought of being involved with excellent research venues as well as experts and resources at WKU positions me to become an expert researcher, instructor and mentor. As a person who is proficient in research the opportunities and collaboration afforded from this committee role bode well for me as I strive for the expert level.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the valuable contribution this committee position affords me on the path to tenure and promotion. However, if given the opportunity to serve on the SRC I would invest time and energy to position both the students and myself soundly in the field of research. .

Research responsibilities at WKU include:

Instructor for HMD 461 SP13                      Application of Nutrition Theory and Research

This course entails the application of classic and contemporary theory in the identification and analysis of problems in the practice of nutrition. It also provides the student with a research knowledge base specific to dietetic practice. In F12 there were 30 students in the course from which 10 research proposals and literature reviews emerged.

Instructor for HMD 587 F 2012 – SP 2013    Seminar in Concepts and Methods of Dietetic Practice

Dietetic Interns upon admission to the Dietetic Practice Graduate Certificate complete a capstone seminar including discussions, didactic practice, and presentations in the field of dietetics. All 10 dietetic interns completed a research project during the internship which culminated in a poster presentation at the Kentucky Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Food & Nutrition Conference and Exhibition in March 2013.

The Dietetic Internship Class of 2014 will also conduct, present, and if feasible publish the outcomes this year.

Honors Program      Primary Advisor for two students; one in 2012-13, and the other 2013-14.

Collaborated with WKU faculty to submit an IRCAP grant in SP13. Not funded but formed partnerships outside of and in my college.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my letter of interest for the position on the Student Research Council. If it does not work out at this time, I sincerely hope there will be a position or service I can provide to the SRC in the future.

Sincerely,

Margaret E. Cook-Newell, PhD, RDN, LD, CDE, CN  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Family and Consumer Sciences  
410A AC

**Candidate #5 - Teresa Stidham:**

It would be an honor to be considered as a candidate to serve on the Student Research Council. I feel this would be an excellent opportunity for me to assist with my knowledge base in nursing and medicine. I know The WKU Student Research Council encourages student involvement in scholarly activities and coordinates the Research Conference.

I am currently working on my DNP degree, and have a strong interest in expanding my research practice for my own project. I feel there are many of our students at WKU that would be more involved in research and collection of data with some guidance and support. Please consider me as a candidate for this council.

Sincerely,

Teresa Stidham MSN, ARNP  
Assistant Professor/ Associate Nursing  
Western Kentucky University

**Candidate #6 - Marilyn Gardner:**

It would be a great honor to serve as the senate-appointed faculty representative for the Student Research Council, and to that end, I submit this letter of interest.

I am an enthusiastic supporter of student research. Although the MPH degree does not require a thesis, I have directed six masters theses, as well as seven masters-level capstone projects. I have directed and/or served as a committee member for numerous undergraduate honor's theses, interdisciplinary senior capstone projects, and independent research projects. I've co-authored several national presentations and publications with students; two of my research mentees have won WKU research awards.

I have moderated and/or judged sessions in WKU's Student Research Conference most years since its inauguration. Additionally, I have served as a reviewer for the American Public Health Association's (APHA) Student Research Contest, and served on WKU's Faculty Scholarship Committee from 2003 – 2007.

I also have substantial experience with conference planning, having served as the program chair for four years for APHA's Public Health Education and Health Promotion section. As chair, I was responsible for all aspects of the scientific program for this 4000+ member section, including abstract submission, peer review, session paneling, scheduling, moderator assignments, conference proceedings, and invited sessions. During my tenure as chair, I streamlined the abstract submission and review process, increased member involvement by more than 125%, and facilitated cross-disciplinary sessions. I received a national award for my contributions in 2012.

Thank you for your consideration.

Marilyn Gardner  
Associate Professor of Public Health  
College of Health and Human Services

## **Candidate #7 - Amber Schroeder:**

It is with great interest that I submit my name for consideration for membership on the Student Research Council. I have been very impressed with WKU's annual REACH Week and Student Research Conference, and I would love to be involved with the planning of these and other student research-related events.

As an assistant professor in the psychology department, I manage an active research lab, which currently includes eight undergraduate and two graduate students. Recent accolades for the lab include a student first-authored international conference presentation (which also received the award for best session presentation at the 2013 REACH week conference), as well as five awarded FUSE grants. Please see below:

### *Conference presentation (all student co-authors):*

Seidler, T. S., Schroeder, A. N., & Lile, C. R. (2013, May). *Examining energy regulation as a predictor of gender discrimination responses*. Poster presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> international Work, Stress and Health conference, Los Angeles, CA.

### *Awarded 2012-2013 FUSE grants (all student co-authors):*

Barnes, L., & Schroeder, A. N. (2013). Personality analysis on Facebook: Examining the ability to "fake good" on social media profiles. (*FUSE Award #13-FA102*).

Day, R., & Schroeder, A. N. (2013). Social media and hiring practices. (*FUSE Award #13-SP171*).

Gatti, A., & Schroeder, A. N. (2013). Core self-evaluations as a predictor of workplace incivility. (*FUSE Award #13-SP166*).

Lengeman, K., & Schroeder, A. N. (2013). An examination of leader communication quality on subordinate performance outcomes. (*FUSE Award #13-FA125*).

Lewis, A., & Schroeder, A. N. (2013). The impact of rater self-referencing and social norms on performance appraisals. (*FUSE Award #13-FA126*).

In addition, I actively participate in publishing my research, and over the past two years, I have co-authored six peer-reviewed articles and book chapters. I have also presented eight conference papers and have served as a reviewer for two journals, a book publisher, and three national or international conferences since the beginning of 2012. I am also actively involved in mentoring student theses and am currently chairing two graduate and one undergraduate thesis research projects.

As I am a firm believer that students who get involved in research receive a more well-rounded education due to their ability to not only consume knowledge but to be involved in the process of producing it, I am highly motivated to serve on the Student Research Council. I believe that my experience mentoring students, as well as my strong research record speak to my qualifications for this committee. Thank you for considering me.

Sincerely,

Dr. Amber Schroeder  
Assistant Professor of Psychology

**Candidate #8 - Jennifer Wright:**

My name is Jennifer Wright, and I am a faculty member in the Department of Library Public Services, working at the Owensboro Campus. I am interested in serving on the Student Research Council for many reasons.

First and foremost, I have served as a volunteer judge for the REACH week Student Conference for the past two years and would like to be more involved with those activities. I am also partial to helping those activities continue in any way I can, as I was a participant while attending WKU as an undergraduate. As a librarian, I want to encourage research in all disciplines and believe that there could be even more opportunities for undergraduates to do research within the context of their chosen discipline. I was fortunate enough to have a professor during my undergraduate experience who required research as part of her coursework, and even further encouraged me to pursue the research in a directed study to expand my findings. I am interested in engaging the faculty in this mentoring behavior as much as I am interested in encouraging the students to take advantage of the mentoring.

Secondly, I am a new faculty member and could provide the insight of a younger generation. I have written about my undergraduate experience in this letter because my participation in REACH week was only six years ago. I also received one of my two Master's degrees from WKU, making me familiar with the research processes and procedures at WKU at both the undergraduate and graduate level. My subject area of choice, sociology, can be an extremely research oriented discipline, and I would use my affiliation with that department to encourage more students in the social sciences to participate in research activities.

Third, with my affiliation with the Owensboro Campus, I can help bring REACH week activities and any other programs the Council would like to see implemented to that campus, which to my knowledge has not participated in years past. I would do what I could to encourage participation from my students both in activities that we organize here, such as poster board sessions, as well as their travel to the conference at the main campus in March.

Thank you for considering me for a position on the Student Research Council. I look forward to serving in any way that I can.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Wright

**Candidate #9 - Helen Zhu:**

I am a faculty member in the Department of Public Health, College of Health and Human Services. I am interested in serving as a Faculty Representative for Student Research Council because I am passionate about student involvement in scholarly activities. Without student involvement in research, research team is not complete. I was from a student to becoming an outstanding researcher under my advisors' great support and advices in the past. Students are our future researchers. I have 21-year experience doing research in the fields of public health and medicine and advising/teaching students to learn knowledge and skills in research through scholarly activities. I will be happy to serve as a Faculty Representative for Student Research Council. Thank you very much for your time and support. Appreciate it indeed.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Zhu  
Helen Zhu, MD, PhD  
Department of Public Health  
College of Health and Human Services

## **Candidate #10 - Leyla Zhuhadar:**

I am pleased to submit my letter of interest and I hope that after evaluating my application, you will find that my academic qualifications and professional career are a good foundation for this position.

Currently, I am a new faculty at WKU, an Assistant Professor on tenured track in the *Department of Computer Information Systems, Gordon Ford College of Business*. I am committed to provide our graduate students with the best support and leadership. My statement is based on a long experience I have had at *Western Kentucky University*.

Over the last ten years, I held a position as a *Research Scientist* in *WKU Office of Distance Learning*—leading, advising, and mentoring *Graduate Students* from different disciplines such as, *Computer Science, Sociology, Biology, Education, Chemistry*, etc.

Just to mention, last year, on Oct 25, 2012, my team was the only team whose research was accepted to represent WKU at the *Graduate Research at Columbus State University, GA*, for more details, please refer to: "[Transformative Technology Intervention](#)."

In addition, last year, on January, I was nominated as a guest speaker for *The NSF-sponsored Cyberlearning Research Summit* in Washington, D.C. On August, I was invited to represent WKU research at *LearnLab's Pittsburgh Science of Learning Center, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA* and finally, on December, I presented our research in *China (The 2012 IEEE/WIC/ACM International Conferences on Web Intelligence)*.

Over the last 10 years, I mentored around 50 *Graduate Students* in developing research applications and we published more than 40 scholarly articles from journals with high impact to peer-reviewed proceedings in national and international conferences; for more details, please refer to [publications](#). Most of this research was support by grants from NSF (awarded to my advisor *Prof. Olfa Nasraoui, University of Louisville*) and funding from the Office of Distance Learning at WKU.

Moreover, my experience with the *Annual REACH Week* is not new. I already volunteered as a committee member in the annual *REACH Week* (2011). It was a remarkable experience where I had the chance to evaluate presentations from the *Biology Dept*. For more information about my qualifications, please refer to WKU's website: <http://people.wku.edu/leyla.zhuhadar/>

Thank you very much for your consideration and looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Leyla Zhuhadar, PhD.