

# Consortium Connections

*Connecting campuses to promote excellence in science and mathematics*

## UPCOMING EVENTS IN FALL 2024

- Sept. 27. Application deadline for the Undergraduate Research Symposia
  - *University of Chicago students have until Oct. 5 to apply*
- Nov. 1-2. Biological Sciences and Psychology Undergraduate Research Symposium at the University of Chicago
- Nov. 15-16. Physical Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science Undergraduate Research Symposium at Washington University in St. Louis

## FROM THE (NEW) DIRECTOR AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT



My name is Pamela Kittelson. As the new director, I spent August climbing a steep learning curve. First, many thanks to Ed Hansen and Ann Schutt for their effective stewardship of the Consortium, especially during and after COVID-19. Ed and Ann have spent many hours helping me and our new program assistant, Tiffany Swehla, transition into our new roles. We also are grateful for Hope College's support of the Consortium. Gustavus Adolphus College now will provide this structure. For those who I have yet to meet - I started in the Gustavus Biology Department in 1999 and retired from teaching ecology, plant physiology and evolution this past spring. I will remain at Gustavus as an academic advisor and for students applying to nationally competitive scholarships. I look forward to being the Director of the Midstates Consortium. I enjoy helping undergraduates grow, especially through research, and promoting ongoing professional development for faculty.



My name is Tiffany Swehla, and I am looking forward to working with you as the new Administrative Assistant. I live in Wells, MN, with my two boys, Dylan (14) and Luke (11). In my free time, I enjoy camping, baking, or cooking new recipes, and watching my boys play sports. I will help with travel, lodging, and room arrangements for the undergraduate research seminars and faculty development programs as well as take care of day-to-day activities.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Undergraduate Research Symposia:

The URS [online applications](#) have been available on the Consortium website since July. Applications are **due September 27** except for University of Chicago students who have until Oct. 5. Please encourage applications and faculty attendance.

**Biological Sciences and Psychology Symposium (Nov. 1-2):** The symposium will be hosted by the University of Chicago. The [2024 Janet Andersen Award Lecture](#) will be given by Shane Heschel, Chair of Organismal Biology and Ecology at Colorado College. Shane is a plant ecophysiologicalist who has maintained an active undergraduate research program since starting at C.C. in 2005; he has published 12 research papers with undergraduate co-authors involving a total of 35 students and accompanied many students to the Midstates' URS. His nomination letter contained numerous enthusiastic comments from students about the quality of his courses at C.C.



**Physical Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science Symposium (Nov. 15-16):** The symposium will be hosted by Washington University in St. Louis. The [2024 Janet Andersen Award Lecture](#) will be given by Ken Brown, Professor of Chemistry at Hope College. Ken is an analytical chemist with a research program that has resulted in 19 papers with 40 undergraduate co-authors. His mentoring extends beyond Hope College. He has led a six-year project, funded by NSF, which provided summer research experiences for students from the City Colleges of Chicago. Ken's students appreciate his unwavering support for their personal development.



## RECENT EVENTS

The Executive Board Meeting met near the Minneapolis-St Paul Airport on April 27. Thirteen campus representatives attended the hybrid meeting as well as the Director, Ed Hansen, and Administrative Assistant, Ann Schutt. Full minutes are available on request. Here are key points.

In 2023, the Physical Sciences, Math and Computer Science symposium at the University of Chicago had 120 student presenters and 15 campus representatives in attendance. The Biological Sciences and Psychology symposium at Washington University in St. Louis had 129 student presenters and 17 faculty attendees. The board decided that the Consortium will fund **student participation** at the following rate:

- 8 students to each URS for the liberal arts colleges; re-balancing between the institution's URS attendance is subject to the discretion of the director
- 12 traveling and 12 non-traveling students from the R1 institutions
- Depending on availability, the Midstates Director may allow additional student participants, but with the incremental cost to be borne by the home institution

Midstates will continue to offer \$200 stipends to support **faculty representatives** who help arrange travel and accompany students to a symposium (up to two attendees per school). The Consortium will offer the choice of a stipend or a paid single room for up to two faculty members from each institution who attend an Undergraduate Research Symposium. This can be a good option for those who cannot accept the stipend. Opportunities for faculty members to meet and talk with one another at meals on Friday night and Saturday lunch were popular.

The Consortium ended the **2023-2024 fiscal year** with a surplus of \$2,844 despite projecting a loss at the board meeting, which was based on third-quarter data. The surplus is explained mostly by income from higher interest rates. The costs for hotels, travel and food have increased. The Board approved a **2024-2025 fiscal year budget** which anticipates expenditures of \$173,050 against an income of \$154,000. A new member school would help close this projected shortfall and prevent excessive use of carry-over funds. Invitations to a new member institution are being explored. Other budget-relieving measures included moving the midcareer faculty development workshop to fiscal year 2025-26 and reducing the short-term consultation line to \$1,000.

### **2024 Early Career Workshop**



The 2024 Early Career Workshop was held at Gustavus Adolphus College July 12-14. The workshop had eleven participants from six member schools and was facilitated by Gustavus professors, Scott Bur and Jeff Dahlseid. Participants used a combination of values discernment, deep listening, and vocational reflection

activities plus peer coaching to develop an individualized strategic action plan. Participants were grateful for the experiences and all assessment responses indicated that they would recommend the workshop to a colleague. Attendees particularly appreciated the workshop design, which included chances for reflection, peer feedback and revision of their longer-term action plan intended to guide meaningful and rewarding careers, and their professional development. The 2025 Early Career Workshop is tentatively planned for July 11-13.

## SHORT-TERM COLLABORATIONS AND SPEAKER SERIES

Look no further for **money** to support a seminar speaker or your collaborative work with someone at a Midstates Consortium institution!

**Short-Term Collaborations** support collaborations involving two or more individuals at different consortium campuses. The STC grants fund faculty and student travel to a member campus to share information, instrumentation, facilities, or expertise. Funds are available for activities including, but not limited to curriculum consultation, research project collaboration, outside senior thesis participants, learning a new technique, project assessment, or the use of instrumentation. See the request form [here](#).

**Speakers Series:** The Speakers Series facilitates the exchange of ideas between members of the consortium. Funds are available to pay for travel, lodging and some meals for people visiting other consortium campuses to give a talk. Search for potential speakers by visiting member campus department and faculty websites; see links for each member institution at the top of the [Consortium website](#). The website is in the process of adding links to each department, but this will not be complete until after the 2025 URS.

### 2025 JANET ANDERSEN LECTURE AWARD NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the 2025 Janet Andersen Lecture Award are due March 31, 2025. A nomination should include the nominee's CV and a letter outlining the nominee's achievements in mentoring research students and in teaching. Winners are selected at the board meeting. Awardees present the lecture at their respective fall Undergraduate Research Symposia. Nomination materials should be sent to Midstates Director Pamela Kittelson ([midstatesdirector@gmail.com](mailto:midstatesdirector@gmail.com)).

Professor Janet Andersen was a faculty member in the Hope College Mathematics Department and served as the Midstates Consortium Director for five years before her life ended tragically in an automobile accident. To honor her dedication, the Janet Andersen Lecture Award was established in 2008. Each year, the Consortium chooses two faculty members from member institutions who are exceptional mentors for undergraduate research students and are engaged and skilled teachers.



We hope to see you at one of the Undergraduate Research Symposia in November. May your new 2024-2025 academic year go well! **For all things Midstates Consortium of Math and Science** please use this QR code.

