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Undergraduate researchers featured at MOM

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

Nearly 200 students representing some of the best undergraduate researchers from Oakland University, the University of Michigan-Dearborn and University of Michigan-Flint presented their scholarship on OU's campus at the tenth annual **Meeting of the Minds** (MOM) on May 10. Oral and poster presentations were given in morning and afternoon sessions in the Oakland Center. And for the first time, performing arts presentations were incorporated into MOM during an early afternoon session held at Varner Recital Hall.

"The quality of the research by the undergraduates is impressive," said Mary Eberly, assistant professor of psychology at OU. "For many of the students MOM is a great foundation for graduate school. It teaches them something about presentation, professionalism and how to communicate with someone outside of your particular field. Something like that is invaluable wherever your career takes you."

MOM attendees had over 100 presentations to choose from in sessions that ran concurrently and across the curriculum, including art history, biology, chemistry, psychology, literature, linguistics and women's studies. It was required that the scholarship come from an undergraduate course or independent study and be sponsored by a faculty member.

In his oral presentation, "Revictimization in Combat Veterans," OU psychology major Ian Kierpaul focused on American Vietnam War veterans and the social context they found when they returned home. His research indicated that rejection matters in the development of post-traumatic stress syndrome. Conversely, a positive homecoming buffers against the development of PTSD, no matter how high the level of conflict. Vietnam War veterans, in particular, received a negative homecoming, experienced isolation and were left to deal with that stress without a support system. Kierpaul's research showed that a negative homecoming experience contributes just as much to the development of PTSD as does heavy combat.

Among the performing arts presenters were OU students Travis Walter and Carrie Laferle, who presented a scene from the Ann Noble play "And Neither Have I Wings to Fly." The play, set in Ireland in the early 1950s, gave the students the opportunity to study Irish dialects and various cultural differences.

MOM attendees also had the opportunity to hear a Student Success Story from each of the three participating universities. OU was represented by Caitlin Burke, a vocal performance graduate who is now working toward a master's degree in vocal performance at the University of Indiana. After completing her graduate studies, she said she plans to pursue a career in opera.

"Oakland's department of Music, Theatre and Dance feels like home to me," Burke said. "When I first entered Oakland, I had no idea what I had stumbled upon. I formed many friendships among the faculty, staff and students. But beyond that, I was encouraged to explore my interests. Variety is what the Music, Theatre and Dance Department offered to me, something I would not have been able to pursue at Indiana. I found all the teachers I studied with were extremely generous with their time and encouraged students to reach their full potential. The more time I spend at Indiana University, the more grateful I become for my educational experience at OU."

OU senior psychology major Amanda Henderson attended MOM and said the inclusion of the performing arts was a "wonderful idea."

"Being a psychology student, I've been heavily involved with the sciences – and that's very important," Henderson said. "But I'm incredibly interested in the humanities as well. I think it makes MOM a well-rounded experience to include the performing arts so people can see more than just statistics and charts."

The day closed with a reception in the **Meadow Brook Art Gallery** where visitors could view the current student/faculty exhibition "Illusions & Illuminations." Next year's **Meeting of the Minds** will be held at UM-Dearborn.

SUMMARY

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