

**Call for Participants:****Ninth Annual Undergraduate Research Workshop**

Sponsored by the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania

Application Deadline: Friday, February 2, 2018

Program Dates: February 23 and April 20-21, 2018

**Overview:**

Each Spring semester, a select group of undergraduates is invited to become a part of the McNeil Center's intellectual community and participate in one of the leading forums for undergraduate research on Early American and Atlantic topics. Participants receive a unique opportunity to experience the pleasures of scholarly life: they tour archives, attend the McNeil Center's prestigious Friday Seminars, present their work at a conference at the University of Pennsylvania, and are supported along the way by their peers, graduate student mentors, and faculty from participants' colleges. The experiences of traveling to Philadelphia, meeting like-minded young scholars, working with their graduate mentors, attending scholarly seminars, and giving a presentation at an Ivy League university often combine to make participation in the Workshop a highlight of their college careers. While admission to the Workshop may be competitive, the atmosphere of the Workshop is one of mutual support, collaboration, and celebration.

**About:**

The MCEAS Undergraduate Research Workshop was established in 2008 to extend the benefits of the Center to undergraduate students enrolled at member institutions, by holding a workshop for advanced undergraduates writing an honors thesis or research paper in early American studies. The Workshop provides a structured environment in which students come together with undergraduates from other institutions, as well as graduate students and faculty, to discuss the ideas, source materials, and methods of their own research. A highlight of the program is the mentoring given each undergraduate by a MCEAS graduate or postdoctoral fellow. The Workshop meetings are held in conjunction with the Center's regular Friday Seminar so that undergraduates can experience these scholarly seminars first hand. The Workshop has exceeded our expectations, allowing undergraduates to join the exceptionally supportive and successful community of scholars at the McNeil Center. Undergraduate Research Workshop participants are now enrolled in PhD programs in History, attending law school, and working in public history. Undergraduates from the following institutions have thus far participated in the workshop: Franklin and Marshall College, Temple University, Stockton College, the University of Maryland at College Park, Lehigh University, Millersville University, Brigham Young University, Providence College, Rider University, Gettysburg College, The College of New Jersey, Johns Hopkins University, New York University, University of Pennsylvania, Ursinus College, Fordham University, Seton Hall University, SUNY Stony Brook, and Swarthmore College.

**Eligibility:**

The Workshop is open only to undergraduates at the senior—or in certain circumstances, junior—level who attend McNeil Center Consortium institutions. If your institution is not yet a Consortium member, please contact the MCEAS Coordinator of Scholarly Programs, Dr. Laura Keenan Spero, at [lakeenan@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:lakeenan@sas.upenn.edu), to find out how to join.

Applicants should be pursuing independent research that includes the use of primary sources. Applicants must be available on all of the program dates, and their faculty sponsors must be

available to attend the Seminar and Conference on April 20-21, 2018. A maximum of two students will be accepted from any one institution per year, and preference will be given to applicants from Consortium institutions who have not recently participated.

### **Workshop Events:**

Attendance at Workshop events is mandatory for all participants including undergrads, grad mentors, and (for the April event) faculty sponsors.

### **Works-in-Progress, February 23, 2018:**

This meeting takes place on Friday, February 23 from 9:30 am to 2:30 pm. It focuses on research and gives undergraduates the chance to meet one another and with their graduate student mentors. Student project abstracts will be circulated in advance. In the morning, students will deliver five-minute presentations on their research. Lunch will give undergrad mentees and grad mentors one-on-one time. In the afternoon, students will have the opportunity to tour archives and gain hands-on experience with primary sources.

### **Conference, April 20-21, 2018:**

The second event is a 1 ½ day meeting culminating in a professional-style conference with 10- minute formal paper presentations by undergraduates, and comments by graduate student mentors. Past undergraduate participants have used a 10-page section or chapter of their project that works well as a discrete topic for the conference paper. In addition, for the first time, the April meeting will include opportunities for students to present in one of two ways: either by giving a traditional formal paper OR by participating in a less formal roundtable presentation of students' work in progress that focuses on research topics and tactics. This option is offered to accommodate Consortium institutions whose academic schedules do not readily align with a student being able to present a formal paper by April. Students should note for which of the two option they are applying in their application materials. Please note that the less formal option will be limited to two to three students only, with the majority of spaces still reserved for traditional, formal papers. In both cases, students meet informally with the MCEAS Friday Seminar speaker and then attend the seminar, followed by dinner. Participants then spend the night in Philadelphia. The conference takes place the following Saturday. Breakfast and lunch will be provided on Saturday.

### **Accommodations & Travel:**

Participants should make their own arrangements for travel to the workshop meetings. The McNeil Center will reimburse round-trip transportation expenses up to \$100. Please note the Center does not reimburse incidental expenses, such as parking, room service, meals, or local transportation costs. The Center will also provide participants (faculty and undergraduates) one night's lodging at a local hotel for the April conference. Paperwork/instructions for obtaining reimbursement will be provided at the workshop meetings. Original receipts and a W-9 form are required for reimbursement. You can email your travel receipts to Barbara Natello [bnatello@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:bnatello@sas.upenn.edu) after you have finalized your reservations.

When making your arrangements, please keep in mind that the University of Pennsylvania's policy for reimbursement states that travelers who choose to use their own automobiles on a trip where air or rail travel is more appropriate will be reimbursed an amount not to exceed the lowest logical air or rail fare to the destination.

**Application Procedure:**

Applicants must submit the following to their faculty advisor: 1) a cover sheet with applicant's name, advisor's name, and project title, 2) a brief description of the proposed research project (500 words maximum), and 3) a one-page resume highlighting academic experiences. Please also note whether the application is for a traditional formal paper OR participation in the less formal roundtable presentation of work in progress (for the April event). The project description must include: a title, the name(s) of sponsoring faculty (probably but not necessarily including the student's advisor), the type of project (thesis, capstone, research seminar paper, etc.), research question, significance of project, approach and/or method, and key primary sources to be used. Applicants must also request that their faculty advisor write a one page (max) letter of recommendation addressing the faculty member's knowledge of the student's qualifications, stage of the project, the faculty member's relationship to the student, and impact of participation to the student's learning. Application materials should be submitted by the faculty advisor as a single PDF document electronically through e-mail addressed to:

Professor Zara Anishanslin, MCEAS/URW Coordinator at [zma@udel.edu](mailto:zma@udel.edu).