Undergraduate Research and Travel Fund

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Undergraduate Research and Travel Fund

eUreKa! offers undergraduate students a limited amount of travel support. The purpose of these funds is to help students gain experience in showcasing their work at and participating in professional conferences on a national and international scale. Keep in mind that research takes place in many different forms and in all disciplines. The study of social problems, the creation of a piece of fiction or poetry, the study of a scientific theory or a historic period of time, and the solution of engineering and mathematical problems all qualify as research, among many other activities.

Students may apply for travel scholarships to attend national, international, and professional conferences or competitions within the United States and abroad. To be eligible, a student must:

• be a full-time undergraduate student at the University of Kentucky
• have a faculty sponsor
• be registered for the conference or competition
• present (i.e., paper, poster, research, performance) and/or participate (orally).

Two of the students whose travel was supported during 2005-2006 are highlighted here.

Lucca Music Festival, Lucca, Italy
Kristen Kline
Violin Performance Major

I participated in the Lucca Music Festival in Lucca, Italy from June 10 to July 16, 2006. I performed in Chamber Music, the concert orchestra, and the opera orchestra. I also took an advanced Italian language course. I was constantly surrounded by other musicians and teachers. My immersion in this intensive summer program helped me to grow musically and to develop better discipline habits.
Cast Iron Workshops  
March-April 2006  
Walter Early  

Art  
The Ironbridge Open Air Museum of Steel Sculpture invited me to take part in an iron-casting workshop in March of 2006 in preparation for the 5th International Conference on Contemporary Cast Iron Art held at the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, United Kingdom. The main object of this workshop was to complete seven large-scale sculptures to be placed in an outdoor exhibition in association with the Conference. Artists from four different countries were invited to produce works of art. This group of artists and their assistants was made up of professors, professional artists, one Masters candidate, and me.  

Each artist came to the workshop prepared with only a drawing or maquette. Within two weeks we had all seven pieces finished and installed at the exhibition site. All of the sculptures required multiple, complex iron castings, most mechanically fastened to other castings and/or fabricated steel superstructures. Each artist’s pattern was subjected to a multi-part resin-bonded sand mold being taken from it, and then cast. The final object was cleared of any remaining mold residue and flashing, attached to the appropriate sculpture and patinaed on the Museum grounds. All the steel fabrication was also done on site.  

During the workshop we installed two sculptures on the Museum’s grounds as part of its permanent collection. Some of the artists and their assistants produced sculpture on a smaller scale as part of another conference exhibition entitled Iron 2006 held at the Museum of Iron in Ironbridge, UK. I chose to include one of my works as part of this exhibition.  

This particular piece dove into the geological and social similarities between the Ironbridge Gorge and my birthplace in Southeastern Kentucky. Since my first visit to the area, I immediately understood why immigrants from that part of the world decided to settle in what I consider my part. My sculpture deals with the similarities of living in the landscape and being susceptible to its changes, in particular the rise and fall of the nearest body of water, more specifically when that body floods. At the time I made the sculpture, and fortunately while it was on display, the River Severn, which establishes the Gorge, had risen enough to illustrate my point in real life. My sculpture, entitled Grab the Baby, currently resides 50 kilometers away at Stanford Contemporary Arts in Stanford on the Vale, UK; part of England’s lake district.  

The Museum’s iron furnace was a featured part of the Conference. Throughout the Conference week, the Museum’s guests continued to make small-scale sculpture and we hosted two exhibition Iron Pours. For those artists working with limited means, the Museum also hosted a presentation of an alternative to a time consuming, laborious process. Instead of investing wax patterns in a luto mold and spending days wasting precious time and gas evacuating the wax and curing the mold; patterns are invested in resin-bonded sand along with electrical elements. Once the mold cures (this takes hours instead of days) the elements are plugged into a domestic outlet. They are left plugged in for 24 hours. This is enough time to properly evacuate the wax and sufficiently preheat the mold in preparation for casting. So, instead of a week-long process, the “Electromelt” does the job in a matter of hours.  

My participation in this event was thanks to a student travel grant through the eUreKa! program. I will be returning to the Museum of Steel Sculpture with three others this July to dismantle the outdoor exhibition and host four weeks of iron-casting workshops.