Metro State’s first research colloquium

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Are you tired of listening to your younger siblings one-up you at the dinner table with their inconsequential academic accomplishments? Or does your resume need a little padding? If so, consider proposing your papers, posters or other creative projects for presentation at Metropolitan State University’s first Student Research Colloquium.

Dr. Alex Layne, assistant professor of technical communication and professional writing at Metro State, is organizing the event. I caught up with her to discuss the details of the colloquium.

**What made you want to organize this colloquium?**

When I was an undergrad, one of my instructors nominated me for a paper I was writing to present at our student research colloquium. I was terrified. The colloquium was university wide and set up like an academic conference, which I had never been to. At the same time, I never felt like my work was any good until I was nominated, so I was very flattered. I presented the paper, and even my family came to watch. They never really understood what I did as an English major, so it was a cool thing to invite them to. This is why I wanted to start a SRC here at Metro: to give students a chance to feel proud of their work, to show it off to friends, family, other students, the community, to everyone.

**Has there been a colloquium like this at Metro State in the past?**

While I don't believe there has been a university-wide event, several departments hold departmental events that are very popular. Psychology, for one, holds several incredible events for their students that are set up like academic conferences and poster sessions. They have been instrumental in getting this university-wide event off the ground.

**Why should students get involved and present?**

There are many reasons students should present. First, every student I've had in my classes for the last two years has something to add to our community, whether it be research, a creative voice, a design ability, whatever. I've taught at several different places, and the sheer skill and ability Metro students has is second to none. Students here have things to say, brilliant things, and this is a venue for it. Second, presenting your ideas and work outside of the classroom is a crucial skill. When your only audience is your instructor, work can stop feeling real. But as students go find jobs and engage in scholarship, the audience is much wider. This is a nice first step in that process. Third, it can be a fantastic resume builder. Many fields reward engagement on this level, so being able to say you have presented at a real colloquium can show your ability to be a leader, whatever your field may be. Finally, there will be food and prizes that may take the form of goods and/or gift cards.

**What sort of projects do you expect to see?**

I know my MDST 381: The Culture of Video Game students will be presenting posters there. Their work deals with the impact of video games on our culture and society. One is even going to be demo-ing a video game he has been working on as part of a class project. I anticipate seeing a lot of posters, as the Psychology Lab has generously offered to print posters for free. I hope to see some creative work, perhaps music, videos, or paintings. I also hope that I see a lot of projects that are engaged in the community and in activism in some way.

**Do you plan to make this a regular annual event?**

As long as I'm still breathing I will be pushing for this to be a yearly event. Everyone, including top administrators, has been overwhelmingly supportive of the idea, so I don't imagine this will disappear any time soon — fingers crossed, knock on wood.

The Student Research Colloquium will be held on April 25, 2016 at 6 p.m. at Metro State. Attendance is open and free for everyone. Proposals must be submitted by April 11, at bit.ly/1TOKC2T.