

# 2017

## Undergraduate Research & Creative Activity (URECA)

### Project Final Report

Within one month of project completion and no later than July 15, 2017, please provide an informative but concise (1-2pp) report that addresses the questions/items below. Please submit reports, along with any project photos that you approve of being distributed or publicized, to both [kmjensen@alaska.edu](mailto:kmjensen@alaska.edu) and [bbuma@alaska.edu](mailto:bbuma@alaska.edu).

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Your Name: Rosie Ainza

Your Faculty Mentor: Emily Wall

(1) What was the original project objective or purpose?

My URECA project has centered around creating a poetry collection inspired by finding heritage and cultural community through life on the road around Northern Mexico and the U.S. Southwest. My original objective was to highlight the shared hopes and fears of my own family and the people I meet while on the road. I aimed to pay close attention to resisting ethnographic elements within this project so that my research and writing may resist coloniality while imparting intersubjective reciprocity via the sharing of stories and experiences through a consanguineous journey.

(2) With respect to your proposed project activities, what have you achieved thus far?

The primary research portion of my project was conducted during the spring as I spent roughly one month on the road, traveling through the U.S. Southwest and Mexico, along some of the same paths my father's family took as they immigrated from Sonora, Mexico to San Diego, California during the 1960's. Along these paths, I spent a considerable portion of time volunteering for non-profit organizations who were created to assist and advocate along the U.S./Mexico border. I spent time meeting and reconnecting with family members, and speaking with other members of borderland communities. During my travels, I worked through a large reading list and filled notebooks with writings, some of which will become my manuscript this fall.

(3) Please explain any departures from your original project objectives, proposed activities, and/or notable budget changes.

During the travel portion of my project I had anticipated the majority of my research to be based on the immigration stories of my family. I had planned to work with non-profit organizations and speak with migrants and members of the borderland communities that I visited. Because I have been to the desert, I anticipated how that environment would feel. I had expectations about what it would be like to be on the road and expectations of what I would write about or be inspired to write about.

A large departure from my original plan was that much about my in-field research was not what I anticipated or planned for. Sometimes what I found was the opposite of what I had expected. My research became even more multi-faceted. My interest and connection with Mestiza identity (women of mixed race, typically Indigenous North American and Latin-European cultures) grew, as did the amount of connection I found to the desert environments of the U.S. Southwest and Northern Mexico. The time I dedicated to volunteering with non-profit groups in assisting migrant border-crossers grew to be my primary work during my trip. I had planned for 6 credits at UAS, but ended up taking 13 which was challenging. The connection I had anticipated to make with my own family sometimes was not made, as many members have assimilated entirely to a privileged globalized culture with no interest in their roots "across the border." Many times I found my writing slipping into Romanticism bred on coloniality. I created my URECA project around the idea of finding something that both completed my project and completed something within myself. What I found, however, was that the closure of this project will never truly be completed.

(4) What is the current status of your project? If not complete, when do you anticipate completing it? Do you plan to spend any more of the remaining funding?

I have completed the originally proposed in-field research and am currently working on a course outline with Emily Wall to polish my URECA manuscript in conjunction with an English 499 Thesis course at UAS. Yesterday I returned to San Diego to spend the fall semester along the border so that I may continue my research and stay fully immersed as I complete my manuscript. I hope to be chosen to present my work at the upcoming Power and Privilege Symposium in the fall, prior to presenting at the URECA symposium next spring.

(5) Please summarize the project outcomes and/or any tangible products that resulted (or will result) from the project.

See above.

(6) Please communicate the personal significance of your project, such as the impacts of the project on your education and experience at UAS; impacts on your future interests and outlook; how this project influenced your relationship with a faculty member; or simply use this space to provide some perspective about research & creative activities for students at UAS.

As soon as I entered the border towns of East Texas, I found myself dedicating much of my time to understanding the current struggles of migrants and immigrants who come north to the U.S. Because of this, much of my work took on the form of volunteering for non-profit groups. Now that I am in California again, my work will continue. Because of this project, I have found an even stronger need to continue my education past my undergraduate degree. This fall I plan to apply to a number of graduate degree programs in this area, some that focus on creative writing and others that focus on social justice. The opportunity afforded to me through the URECA grant is both astonishing and uplifting. To receive funding as an undergrad so that I could dedicate over a month to traveling for the production of a creative writing piece is overwhelming. The opportunity that URECA has given me is one that I would have never attempted to apply for if it were not for my faculty mentor, Emily Wall. I am excited for what my thesis course with her holds, and I am excited at the idea of turning my URECA project into a lifelong endeavor.