

Congratulations to the 2021 MSU Undergraduate Research Mentor and Supervisor of the Year.

Dr. Amy Nuttall, assistant professor in the College of Social Science, and **Dr. Sarah Comstock**, assistant professor in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, were honored with the 2021 Undergraduate Research Faculty Mentor of the Year award for Michigan State University; **Dr. Christina Reppucci**, a post-doctoral research supervisor in Dr. Alexa Veenema's laboratory, was honored with the Undergraduate Research Supervisor of the Year award.

Two awards in the areas of science, mathematics, and engineering as well as social sciences and humanities are presented annually in recognition of those faculty members who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to mentoring undergraduate researchers. An additional award is also given to a research supervisor who has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to mentoring. These honors were awarded virtually during the University Undergraduate Research and Arts Forum (UURAF) Award Ceremony. These awardees are exemplars of how faculty and staff contributed to student success.



Dr. Amy Nuttall, an assistant professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies in the College of Social Science, focuses on processes of resilience and risk in the context of family stress with the goal of translating research into effective interventions. As one mentee described, “Dr. Nuttall is embodies what it means to be an outstanding mentor: she is supportive, encouraging, values her students' opinions, and believes in her students.” Another mentee explained that Dr. Nuttall encourages students to perform at a high aptitude and has provided opportunities for her student researchers to demonstrate their learning at conferences.

Dr. Sarah Comstock is an assistant professor in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. She and her team study the influence of nutrition on immune system development in infants, the impact of maternal obesity on child growth and intestinal health, and the role of lipids in child health and development. One mentee remarked that Dr. Comstock trusts undergraduate students with their own projects and through her guidance, has learned various laboratory skills such as DNA extractions,



purification, gel electrophoresis, and how to analyze data using coding and graphing software. “Dr. Comstock’s mentoring relationship is exceptional,” the mentee explained. “She has taught me how to work independently but also how to work in a team. I’m so grateful for all that she has done for me and for other undergraduate members of our lab.”



Dr. Christina Reppucci, who is a post-doctoral researcher in Dr. Alexa Veenema’s laboratory in the Department of Psychology, was honored with the Undergraduate Research Supervisor of the Year award. The Veenema Lab explores the neural basis of social behavior, specifically, the roles of the neuropeptides vasopressin and oxytocin in regulating social behavior. Reppucci’s student mentee stated that “Dr. Reppucci is a mentor who believes in all students’ abilities, no matter their background. If one is present, passionate, and committed, she will train you to become the best scientist, researcher, and student you can possibly be”.

The Undergraduate Research Faculty Mentor of the Year award is a completely student-driven process, as only undergraduate researchers can submit nominations and the university’s undergraduate Research Ambassadors review and select the finalists.

[Michigan State University \(MSU\)](#)

Michigan State University has been advancing the common good with uncommon will for more than 160 years. One of the top research universities in the world, MSU pushes the boundaries of discovery and forges enduring partnerships to solve the most pressing global challenges while providing life-changing opportunities to a diverse and inclusive academic community through more than 200 programs of study in 17 degree-granting colleges.

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