In 1995, before Commonwealth Honors College had been created, Honors Program Director Linda Nolan aimed to build and support undergraduate student engagement in research. Her vision resulted in a conference for the four University of Massachusetts undergraduate campuses (Amherst, Boston, Dartmouth and Lowell). Students presented their work and their abstracts were published in an undergraduate journal.

Now, each year a growing number of undergraduate students from Massachusetts public community colleges and university campuses come to the UMass Amherst campus to report on their independent work; theses or culminating projects; community service; or study abroad. Some present creative works in the visual and performing arts. Students present their research on topics ranging from accounting to kinesiology to women’s studies, representing about 70 areas of study. With support
from a faculty sponsor, presenters explain their research, share their findings and respond to questions, either through 10-minute oral presentations delivered as part of a panel on related topics or by presenting a poster during a 45-minute session. E-poster boards, which support multimedia presentations, have become an added feature. The conference schedule includes a keynote speaker and hundreds of presentations throughout the day.

The annual Massachusetts Statewide Undergraduate Research Conference is co-sponsored by Commonwealth Honors College and the Massachusetts System of Public Higher Education.

The conference is free and the presentations are open to the public.

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