History takes two undergrads back in time, forward to national recognition

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Those who attended the American Historical Association conference last January in Chicago saw something that’s not all that common at this national gathering: undergraduates.

Two Utah State University History students were among the 28 undergraduate students nationwide selected to share poster presentations with peers, professors and established scholars.

“It is considered a great accomplishment for graduate students to be chosen to present at our national conference,” said History Department Head Dr. Jamie Sanders, “so it is even more impressive for undergraduate students to receive this rare honor.”

Frankie Urrutia-Smith presented her scholarship titled “A Dowager Countess or a Poor Old Awnte? The Intersection of Age and Gender in the Life of Lady Elizabeth Russell.” Urrutia-Smith researched how old age and a society’s biases wounded the proud Lady Russell, an Elizabethan-era scholar, who in her younger years had been a renowned scholar and influencer.

Daniel Bertrand’s research, “Building the Medieval Trebuchet,” was captured not only on a poster, but demonstrated publicly at a test pumpkin toss with a 30-foot “half-scale” trebuchet he had constructed using medieval engineering plans. The 22-year-old is from Taylorsville, Utah.

Their enthusiastic mentor, Dr. Susan Cogan, an assistant professor of History, tweeted as she watched the two young historians in action, “Proud academic mentor moment right now, watching my undergrad research students presenting their work at #AHA2019!”

And Sanders added this: “We are so proud of Frankie and Daniel for representing Utah State and the History Department on a national stage.”

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