

The DEAN'S MESSAGE

It's hard to believe that it is already March! The semester is flying by, and we are excited for what CPMS students are discovering and accomplishing along the way.

Students continue to soak up information in their classes within their chosen areas of study, but their educational experience extends far beyond the classroom. With group projects, lab assignments and important research opportunities, they are learning through hands-on experience. Students are pushing themselves and discovering not only themselves but their majors through on- and off-campus research.

With the month of March comes the annual Student Research Conference (SRC), where graduate and undergraduate students present their current research for constructive criticism from a panel of the college's faculty. This year is the college's 26th Student Research Conference, known previously as the Spring Research Conference.

Last year, the SRC was a huge success, and I am confident that this year will run just as smoothly. Students have already submitted their abstracts, which are available to the general public [online](#). Their research is in every department and ranges from measuring electron life spans to mapping likely areas for wilderness search and rescue.

Some other examples of this year's student projects presented will include research of HIV reservoirs, social media's effect on public health and methods of teaching math using video games—just to name a few. The

submitted research abstracts are the compilation of hours of work, not to mention the fact that they are enticing and highly relevant to the general public.

Students' first-hand experiences through research projects like those presented at SRC are building blocks in their education. The research provides real experience outside of the classroom. The availability of these opportunities for our students has been expanded through generous donations from friends of the college, such as many of you. We are committed to doing all that we can to provide continued support for these important research mentoring activities. If you are interested in helping to support these experiences for next year's SRC presenters, please visit cpms.byu.edu, follow the link [Giving to the College](#) and give the gift of opportunity.

We invite you to attend this year's Student Research Conference, which will take place Saturday, March 17, 2012. The conference will begin at 8 a.m. and continue until 1 p.m. throughout the Jesse Knight Building. But students will showcase their work specifically for the general public from 10 a.m. until noon in room 1102 of the Jesse Knight Building.

I look forward to continuing to build opportunities to enhance our students' education and future. I'm sure the Student Research Conference will be a wonderful reflection of just how much mentored research has strengthened not only our CPMS students but all of us in our endeavors to better the future through science.

.....➔ **Scott Sommerfeldt, Dean**

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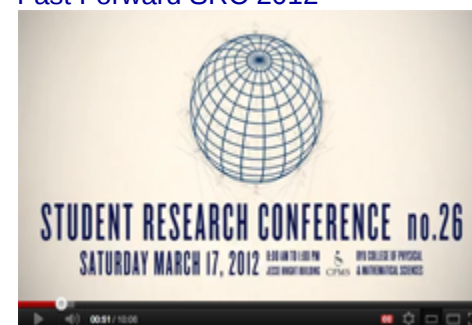
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TESTING THE STREAM TABLE WATER

The Eyring Science Center was overflowing with good times this week.

BYU students and faculty floated over to the Department of Geological Sciences Wednesday, February 29, to check out the new state-of-the-art stream table. Constructed with help from Little River Research & Design, the 12-foot table illustrates sedimentary processes with plastic sand, rushing water, small trees and blue dye.

The stream table opened its doors Wednesday, allowing anyone to come play in the sand and learn plenty about geology along the way.

"You can see real life processes on a smaller scale," conservation biology major Ivy Hazlett said. "It really makes you think about the consequences of human actions." Hazlett, who goes white-water rafting, especially appreciated having a bird's-eye view of streams and rivers that resemble the ones she navigates in the summertime.

"Plus, who doesn't like playing in a sandbox?" she said.

Students get their hands dirty in the stream table while learning about geological processes. It is anticipated that the table will be used in classes and course assignments to help visualize concepts related to rivers and groundwater.

"There is not stretching of the truth in terms of what this is going to do for our students," said Jeff Keith, associate academic vice president over undergraduate studies. "It's very satisfying to understand Earth processes, but this demonstrates it so quickly and well."

Students representing a wide range of majors, from computer science to communications, enjoyed the open house. Cycling around the room, they changed the angle, water velocity and landscape of the table, while discovering geological concepts. They also enjoyed refreshments afterwards provided by the Department of Geological Sciences.

[Follow this link for the rest of the story.](#)

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