

***SPOTLIGHT***  
**The Forum**  
**Undergraduate Research Award Plenary**

At a luncheon plenary on February 18, the winners of this year's Forum Undergraduate Research Awards presented their research, and spoke about the meaning of their education abroad experiences. A highlight of each Forum conference, this year's presentations underscored the broad range of academic excellence in education abroad. Wedigo de Vivanco (Freie Universität Berlin) told the Forum: "The luncheon with the young students presenting their undergraduate research projects was phenomenal. What a pleasure and privilege to witness these young, confident, earnest and passionate students making oneself want to study abroad again."



Jodi Malmgren (University of Minnesota), who coordinated this year's awards, introduced Jeremy Bittlingmaier-Martin (Middlebury College, left). Jeremy's project addressed the complex relations between local decision making, sustainable development, global economics and environmental concerns surrounding cellulose manufacturing in Uruguay.

Reynolds Whalen (Washington University, Saint Louis '08, right, with Jodi Malmgren) travelled to Portland from Rwanda to present his work. Reynolds described the importance of "Haba na Haba," community education and development through music, theatre and dance, and its impact on the self-esteem of residents of Nairobi's slums. He illustrated his talk with a dramatic clip from his documentary film project, which was shown in a separate conference session. Reynolds current work in Africa may be followed in his blog [Deep Gladness](#).



Alexandra Sanseverino, Timothy Grant, and Alexandra Kulinkina, of Team Mae Moh (Worcester Polytechnic Institute, left; absent is fourth team member, Ryan Eley) spoke about their experiences assisting the local government in Mae Moh district, Thailand to assess the efficacy of strategies used by a local power plant to communicate with villagers. The team made recommendations for improvements specific to the villagers' information needs. They each spoke about how this interdisciplinary project shaped their career goals and understanding of engineering and science professions.

This year's deadline for nominations for the Undergraduate Research Awards is **June 26, 2009**. For full information and application forms, please visit [www.forumea.org/research-awards](http://www.forumea.org/research-awards). It is never too early to plan!

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