

Brook Haight Performed Research with an URCO Grant

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English Department Creative Writing undergraduate Brook Haight recently traveled to Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, on a research trip funded by USU's Undergraduate Research and Creative Opportunity (URCO) grant. There, she explored the archives where many of the materials of May Swenson, poet and USU alum, are housed.

Brook's research centers on the visual elements of Swenson's work, which was inspired after discovering her collage poem. This poem will be published along with an essay coauthored by Brook and Professor Christine

Cooper-Rompato at Sugar House Review at the end of the year.

In Missouri, Brook spent almost twenty hours looking through Swenson's materials. "I didn't even cover half!" Brook reflects. "I had to really prioritize what materials I was looking at and take a lot of pictures for looking at later. I definitely learned a lot more about archival research in general."

Brook's previous research on Swenson has primarily focused on her poems, but this trip allowed her to uncover more about the poet. "I was able to learn much more about her as a person through the materials in the archives, like what jobs she had and the schools she taught at," Brook comments. "I think the coolest thing I found, though, was a 'postcard journal' that she kept on her months-long trip through Italy and France. It's a collection of postcards that she journaled on each day, documenting what she did. There are even some early drafts of poems that she later got published on them! It was also really awesome to finally be able to see the collage poem in person and hold it in my hands after having only seen it as a digital scan this whole time."

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"It was honestly just so cool to be able to go on a research trip as an undergraduate. I knew USU was a research-focused college when I first started going here, but I never would've thought that I was someone who could be involved in that type of thing," says Brook. "I had never really considered that there were research opportunities in English, much less creative writing, and it's just been so amazing to be proven wrong."