

Undergraduate Research Spotlight: Dhanai Anthimidou-Friel

09/04/2026



English Department undergraduate Dhanai Anthimidou-Friel's poster presentation, "Sappho on Tour: Mapping Lesvos' Poetic Heritage," placed first in its division at the Annual Conference of the Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters (UASAL) held at Utah State University in Spring 2026.

Dhanai says that "Sappho on Tour" came about after her faculty mentor, C.R. Grimmer, visited Lesvos, Greece, the birthplace of Sappho, and recognized a lack of reputable, permanent sources accessible to non-Greek speakers.

"The trip was originally planned to work on a poetry manuscript that uses place-based research to think about Sappho's legacy," C.R. recalls. Dhanai's research is aimed at preserving that legacy. Through a UASAL Undergraduate Research Fellowship, Dhanai and C.R. set out to build a foundational research infrastructure, creating a comprehensive international database of scholars, artists, museums, archives, and cultural organizations whose work engages with Sappho. Dhanai's winning poster presentation details this process.

"I'm personally invested in Sappho because she's one of the only women who lived in the public sphere of Greek antiquity and whose legacy survived through history," Dhanai reflects. "As a Greek woman myself, she's the only internationally known female figure I can look to among

the many prolific men of that period. As I told Dr. Grimmer when we first met, Sappho is all we have."

Dhanai primarily focused on internet-based archival research, creating a foundation for the project to build upon, as she searched for existing projects focused on Sappho on Lesvos, identified current scholars and translators for collaboration, analyzed relevant literature, and explored opportunities to further fund the project.

Through this project, she's been able to meet new people, learn more about a subject that interests her, and improve her capacities as a researcher.

Her advice to students interested in pursuing undergraduate research opportunities, especially in the humanities, is twofold.

"First: Do the research on your own. Look into a thing as deeply as possible — it really doesn't matter what that thing is. Collect information about the things that interest you," Dhanai suggests. "Observe, write what you notice, chew on it for a little while. Look at the 6th page of Google results. Read the book, watch the interview, email that person you don't think will email you back with your question, etc. Read a scholarly article that no one else told you to read. Highlight it! Keep a notebook or blog or something with all the new things you've found out."

Second, Dhanai encourages students to stretch themselves. "Take some chances. Apply to something you might not get, talk to someone who you know is presenting at a conference, ask a professor if they know about any research opportunities. Research is mostly communication, which is famously hard at times, but famously important. Especially in the humanities," Dhanai adds.