

Posters in Parliament – Undergraduate research on display at Westminster

*Undergraduates don't always get a chance to showcase the findings of their research in a conference style environment, but the **British Conference of Undergraduate Research (BCUR)** hosted Posters in Parliament event allows them just this opportunity. This year two LSE students attended the event. **LSE Research Festival** went along to Westminster to see how they got on.*



The opportunity for undergraduates to be involved with academic research at a level which reaches beyond the classroom can be an important supplement to the learning experience, honing valuable skills which can be used in their future careers. Recently, the BCUR brought together undergraduates from 24 universities to present their work to Westminster, and LSE Research Festival was there to sample the work on display.

“Posters in Parliament, now in its third year, is a wonderful opportunity for undergraduates across the country to discuss, disseminate and celebrate their research to the academic and policy communities,” says Dr Claire Gordon, Academic Developer in LSE Teaching and Learning Centre. Along with representatives from LSE Research Festival, she attended the event this year to support the two LSE undergraduates who were exhibiting their work, “It is evident from Posters in Parliament as well as other undergraduate research assessments at the LSE that students who undertake research as part of their undergraduate experience feel truly integrated into the work of the university and develop into critical thinkers and practitioners in their disciplines.” Jane Hindle of LSE Research Festival, who attended the event with Claire Gordon, said, “The quality of some of the posters we saw was excellent. Students had used effective layout, graphic devices, images and text to convey their findings in really interesting ways. This is what Research Festival is all about – engaging the public with research so that debate and discussion can happen.”

This year LSE was represented by Xavier Auty, recently graduated from the Department of Geography and Environment, and Cristina Espinal, recently graduated from the Department of Government. “The Posters in Parliament event allowed me to present my work in a less formal and more personal way, as there was a two-way information exchange between the audience and the presenter,” said Cristina, who presented her work on the evolution of populist discourse in Hugo Chavez’s TV broadcasts to a visiting audience including influential academics and Members of Parliament, “through this, I was able to share my work with a broader audience in the UK, familiarising them with Venezuelan politics. Moreover, I also received a lot of positive feedback encouraging me to publish my work in a journal.”



The range of posters on display varied across disciplines, including research on children’s attitudes to conservation, the public’s perception of multilingualism, and hearing aid technology, being presented by undergraduate researchers from all across the UK. Even though for many it was their first time presenting a research poster, the quality was impressively high. Cristina seemed undeterred by this new challenge. “Despite never having designed a research poster before, any nerves I had were overridden by my excitement to present my research,” she explained, “My studies at the LSE have prepared me to be very independent so after researching online and brainstorming, I was able to come up with a concept and poster design. **Feeling**



New Academic Building on the evening of 21 May 2015.

uninspired by some of the previous posters, I decided to make my poster more visual and creative which allowed me to attract more attention to my work at the event.”

*This interplay between visual representations and academic research is central to **LSE Research Festival's** upcoming series of public events. You can see exhibits from researchers at LSE and beyond across three categories – posters, photography, and film – at a public exhibition in the*

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