

## CALLING ALL SURF APPLICATIONS

We are excited to announce the launch of SURF! for its 47<sup>th</sup> year: [www.science.smith.edu/surf/](http://www.science.smith.edu/surf/)

New this year is an electronic application (submission deadline, Feb. 17, 2014). Content requested from students is similar to previous years. We've asked new questions designed to help us describe the diversity of undergraduate research and students' hopes about what they will learn from research.

Also new this year is an electronic advisor recommendation form. The form can be filled out in advance of, or in response to, a submitted application. (A recommendation request is triggered by the student's application.) Recommendations are due no later than Feb. 28, 2014.

Please let us know if you have any comments on our SURF! innovations: [surf@smith.edu](mailto:surf@smith.edu).

Thanks in advance to all the SURF! research supervisors and advisor recommendation writers!

# FROM THE CLARK SCIENCE CENTER DIRECTORS' OFFICE

December 2013

## AND THE WORD OF THE YEAR IS...

sci·ence *noun* \ˈsī-ən(t)s\

Did you hear? Merriam-Webster's announced on December 3<sup>rd</sup> that science was their 2013 word of the year, based on its popularity as a search term on its website. "Science" evidenced a 176% increase in look-ups on Merriam-Webster.com. Editor-at-Large of Merriam-Webster, Peter Sokolowski, noted, "A wide variety of discussions centered on science this year, from climate change to educational policy. We saw heated debates about 'phony' science, or whether science held all the answers. It's a topic of great significance for us."

We here in Division III would, I think, agree. The study of science has never been more relevant to society's pressing challenges as it is today. This requires our students to be educated broadly, using the "the power of the liberal arts" to develop "leaders for society's challenges," as stated in the mission of the College. A wonderful example of one such leader is Clarke Knight '14, a Chemistry major, who was recently named Smith's third ever Rhodes scholar (see item below). She plans to focus her studies on geography and environment while at the University of Oxford, translating science-based knowledge into environmental policy.

Interestingly, Merriam-Webster's competitor, the Oxford Dictionaries, chose a very different word of the year: selfie (i.e., a photograph one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and uploaded to a social media website).

Juxtaposing these two choices is an interesting intellectual exercise. I find myself hoping that Merriam-Webster's "word of the year" stands the test of time. After all, one of Smith's values is to prepare "women to fulfill their responsibilities to the local, national and global communities in which they live." This means harnessing talent, intellect, and critical thinking, both within and across individuals, to solve collectively our most vexing problems. These are values we hold dear in the sciences and at Smith. And they require looking beyond oneself.

Patty DiBartolo, Faculty Director of the Sciences

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--Peter Sokolowski, Merriam-Webster

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CLARKE KNIGHT '14

## FELLOWSHIP UPDATE

Congratulations to Chemistry major, Clarke Knight, '14, who has been chosen as one of 32 Rhodes Scholars for 2014. Clarke has broad interests in connecting science and society. She has worked on problems as far-ranging as potato blight, mercury exposure sample preservation, and research on early women architects and chemists through undergraduate research in environmental chemistry at Smith and with researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture. This year, under the joint direction of Bob Newton in our Geosciences department and Bob Linck and Ellane Park in our Chemistry department, she is completing an Honors project on "The Impact of Hemlock Decline in Avery Brook Watershed, West Whately, Massachusetts." We all send our congratulations to Clarke and our thanks to the many faculty members and staff who taught Clarke and helped prepare her so well for the Rhodes competition!

**HAVE A PEACEFUL WINTER BREAK.**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!**

### IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS:

December 13 <sup>th</sup> 2013	Annual Science Center holiday/end of semester party, 3-5:30 pm, Ford Seasons Rm, Drop by whenever you can!
December 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	Ford Hall power shutdown to permit solar power tie in (Ford to be vacated from 5 pm Thursday until 7 am on Friday)
December 21, 2013- January 1, 2014	WINTER BREAK
January 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	RO system in Ford Hall will be down starting at 7:30 am and continuing through most of the day. Service will be restored by January 9 <sup>th</sup> , barring any unforeseen problems
January 28, 2014	External deadline for Goldwater Scholarship (we expect Smith College will have four nominees)
February 17 <sup>th</sup> 2014	Application deadline for SURF! Program (full details available at <a href="http://www.science.smith.edu/surf/">http://www.science.smith.edu/surf/</a> )