

## **Students strive to keep research funded**

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When Holly Andrew heard from doctors that being anorexic may have injured her bones, she began to worry. Her thoughts led the Utah State University anthropology major to research the effects of anorexia and starvation on bone density and the long-term effects either might have on the health of an individual.

"Have you ever heard the saying that the key to the present is often found in the past?" Andrew said. She exhibited to legislators and other Capitol Hill visitors Thursday the conditions of bone loss in starved populations throughout time.

"We're developing a method to study, and in the process, it has helped us to understand something about the past," said Patricia Lambert, Andrew's research mentor and USU professor. "As we study how starvation affects bones, we are then able to identify it in skeletons."

Their research — one of dozens of projects presented during Research Day on the Hill — will eventually label some of the long-term ramifications of anorexia and starvation, perhaps leading to effective changes in hunger-relief efforts throughout the world.

For nine years, students from Utah's two research-intensive institutions have been showcasing projects dealing with disciplines from genetics to elementary education and environmental studies to dance education. Efforts are made to persuade lawmakers to keep the research dollars flowing.

"We want to convince politicians that the programs they're funding actually do work," USU senior Aubree Nielsen said. She recalled speaking with a lawmaker during last year's presentation, divulging information he later used to muster support for his education-related bill. The aspiring teacher said the hands-on approach to learning allows her "a chance to see what works in classrooms and what doesn't."

For three years, she has been working with other undergraduate researchers and a professor mentor to determine how to keep young students interested in reading and other projects in school.

"We're here to let the decision-makers understand how important it is to not cut funding to higher education," said Michelle J. Kang, a USU senior who spent several months living in the Sawtooth Mountains of Idaho to study conditions of varying watersheds there.

"Research is an important and enriching component of the undergraduate experience," said Kim Wirthlin, vice president of government relations at the U.



Tom Smart, Deseret News

USU professor Joseph Kwok-Kwong Li, Steven T. Baird and USU student Luke Peterson discuss project at the Capitol.