**URECA Fellowship, Summer 2022**

**Emily Du – Linguistics Minor**

**“To What Extent Does Vowel Proximity Between English and Other Languages Play a Role in Second Language Acquisition?”**

*"There aren’t any languages that only have consonants, in other words, every language has vowels. Moreover, vowels aren’t categorical like consonants based on whether the lips touch each other, or the tongue touches a point on the roof of the mouth. The gradual movement between vowels means that differences are gradient, which is ambivalent to describe and approach in terms of language acquisition.*

*The purpose of this study was to determine what makes vowels interesting and simply to encourage and extend the application of a new measure of phonetic difference. In contrast to measures between vowel class averages or between minimal pair word lists, the community structure of vowel systems is integral to account for the phonetic environments over clusters of datasets.*

*Through the identification of 100 vowel systems of languages across different language families, and categorization of monophthongs according to the F1 x F2 vowel system, which includes parameters of tongue height (high/mid/low), tongue backness (front/central/back), and lip rounding (rounded/unrounded), this exploratory study finds reassuring correlations between vowel systems and language acquisition.*

*Key Words:  Vowel Distance; Community Structure; Second Language Acquisition"*

**Faculty Advisors:** Ken Berenhaut (Math & Stats) and Irma Alarcón (Linguistics)

**2022 Undergraduate Research Day**

The 2022 Undergraduate Research Day which will be held from 3 pm to 5 pm on October 7th at the Clinical Research Center. This building is about a mile from the Reynolda Campus and we will be organizing shuttles to get people to and from the event. There will also be limited parking available near Bridger Field House. [See a map here.](https://about.wfu.edu/visiting/maps/)