Developing Academic Engagement Through a Virtual Week of Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity: Rethinking Collaboration

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Abstract. The goal of having a Week of Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity (RSCA) virtual event was to highlight and acknowledge the valuable array of research, scholarly, and creative activities that are currently being done across the entire campus at California State University Long Beach (CSULB). There's no doubt that in 2020 and 2021, our lives have been impacted in a multitude of ways. The COVID-19 global pandemic placed restrictions on in-person gatherings that forced many to rely on virtual meetings. Even with 'zoom' fatigue taking over, we felt that it was essential to hold the Week of RSCA event virtually in the 2020–2021 academic year. Students, faculty, and staff on campus are a community that supports one another, and CSULB seeks to enhance its local/national/global communities with the research, scholarly and creative activities that we conduct on our campus. This paper describes the development of the Week of RSCA event, its transition from an in-person to virtual event, the challenges for delivering a virtual event, and the lessons learned when we have to rethink collaboration during a pandemic.

Keywords: Research · Collaboration · Education · Virtual events

1 Engaging Students in Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities (RSCA)

1.1 The Role of Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities in Undergraduate and Graduate Education at CSULB

Engaging students in research is a high impact practice that has been shown to improve student retention and persistence in disciplines relating to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) [1]. In addition to the hands-on research experience that students gain working with their faculty mentors in research labs or with professionals in the field/industrial settings, professional development opportunities, such as professional presentations, often enrich the student learning experience. California State University Long Beach (CSULB) is a diverse comprehensive university that engages faculty and students in research, scholarly and creative activities. Traditionally, undergraduate

research training at CSULB was specific to a particular department and supervising faculty member. That is, students will solicit and engage in research in their departments and department-affiliated programs under the supervision of a faculty member. The type of training that students receive often followed an apprentice model and was tailored to the needs of the faculty member's research, scholarly, and creative activities.

In 2016, CSULB established an Office of Undergraduate Research Services (OURS). The major goal of OURS was to expand undergraduate research opportunities to the general CSULB student body by coordinating research programs and centralizing where students can learn about research opportunities available on campus. The OURS staff work in collaboration with all CSULB colleges, departments, divisions and programs to cultivate strong relationships in support of undergraduate research. In short, OURS serves as a "single-stop shopping" venue for CSULB student research. Although OURS developed and maintained its own undergraduate research training programs, an expansion of research opportunities and formalized research training across different colleges and departments at CSULB was made possible when CSULB received one of 10 BUilding Infrastructure Leading to Diversity Phase 1 (BUILD I, 2014–2019) awards from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). One aim of the CSULB BUILD I award was to develop a student-centered program that would provide intensive research training experience to undergraduate students from a variety of departments conducting health-related research in the colleges of Engineering, Health and Human Services, Liberal Arts, and Natural Sciences (for more information about CSULB BUILD I, see [2]). In 2019, CSULB received a second phase of the BUILD (i.e., BUILD II, 2019–2024) award to institutionalize program components developed in the first phase of the award within designated offices and centers at CSULB.

One aim of BUILD II was to establish a campus-wide research event that fosters a research culture to recognize and support student research across the university. The intent of this event was to help remove research silos between departments and colleges at CSULB, and promote the appreciation of discipline-specific as well as interdisciplinary approaches to research in general, and health related-research in particular. This Week of Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity (RSCA) event was also intended to be the venue for outreach of research training programs on campus to our diverse student population. The BUILD II award provided the impetus and resources to initiate, develop, and implement this university-wide event for promoting research on campus.

1.2   The Week of RSCA as a Campus-Wide Event

The Week of RSCA was originally planned to focus on the research that was being conducted on campus, and was simply called the Week of Research. It was proposed to be a unified event that promotes and celebrates the contribution of student research on our campus. The need for the Week of Research was a result of the fact that many colleges, departments, and programs celebrate their student research experiences and achievements within their own, local events. Some of these events are publicized outside of the discipline and others are not. This siloed approach does not allow all members of the university to learn about the research being conducted by students on our campus. Thus, the Week of Research was intended to be impactful to the campus in the sense

that it would bring together all campus groups to celebrate student research. This event would change the research culture by:

Recognizing research conducted by students on campus
Engaging in discussions about research
Supporting faculty and students conducting research on specific topics
Exploring research opportunities available in different departments and colleges, and at the university
Advocating diversity in research
Reaching out to the local community and regional partner institutions
Communicating the impact of research
Helping families and potential donors understand how integral research is to our students' education.

Because students at CSULB are largely from underrepresented groups, the campus-wide event was also intended to allow students the opportunity to see themselves as researchers and be inspired by other students with whom they can relate. Further, students would be able to see how research can mitigate and ameliorate psychosocial and health problems disproportionately affecting their own communities.

Initial plans for the Week of Research event began in the fall of 2019. CSULB's University Research Advisory Committee (URAC) was utilized as a focus group to gather feedback on the premise of the event's scope and intent. This group was selected as it is comprised of high-level administrative representatives (e.g., associate deans and directors) from all of the university's colleges that have more insight regarding the types of RSCA activities that their students and faculty engage in and program needs. Once talks were completed surrounding the event's goals, URAC members were asked to go back to their respective colleges and talk with their respective Dean and faculty to suggest 1–3 events that would be representative of the RSCA work from their college.

In addition to consulting with the URAC members, the organizers of the Week of Research met with representatives from different colleges, departments and programs on campus. In these meetings, it was clear that the focus solely on traditional research will exclude many disciplines that conduct important scholarly and creative activities with their students. Thus, the title of this event was changed from the proposed Week of Research to the Week of RSCA to highlight *R*esearch, *S*cholarly, and *C*reative *A*ctivity. In terms of marketing the Week of RSCA to the campus leadership and community, we developed two main goals for the event:

1. Highlight work currently being done by CSULB students, faculty, and staff, within the sciences, humanities, arts, engineering, and business.
2. Create engagement across the campus environment by encouraging individuals to attend events outside of their disciplines.

With the development of the 2021 event, the Week of RSCA is intended to become an annual event on campus that will grow with each subsequent year; placing spotlights on all of the research, scholarly, and creative works produced at CSULB. To encourage

support by the campus community, the proposers of the Week of RSCA made presentations to the CSULB leadership, which included the President, Provost, Associated Vice Presidents, and Deans. In addition, they met with the Chair of the Academic Senate and other campus leaders to present the event and solicit additional feedback. Based on the discussion and feedback received from the various stakeholders, it was decided that the proposer of the event put out a general call for the Week of RSCA Program Chair. The duties of the Program Chair included:

- Working with the proposers to finalize the schedule of events (at that time a preliminary list of College-sponsored in-person events had already been compiled).
- Meeting with campus-wide stakeholders (e.g. college representatives, event services, parking, university marketing, University Research Advisory Committee, Academic Senate, Associated Students Incorporated, etc.) to promote and market the event.
- Working with each College event organizer to finalize timelines for each event being held during the week.
- Constructing the final program for the event.
- Organizing for opening and closing remarks by university leadership.
- Writing a report on the event outcomes, which would be provided to CSULB's AVP of Research and Sponsored Programs.

Applications for the Week of RSCA Program Chair were to be submitted and processed by the Academic Senate to show the University's support of this event. The program chair would receive a stipend and some professional development (i.e., professional travel) support. Unfortunately, due to the time commitment that the position involved, no applications were submitted for the Program Chair position. As a result, CSULB's AVP of Research and Sponsored Programs became the Chair and a staff member the Co-Chair.

Once the Chair and Co-Chair were in place, the call for session ideas went out towards the end of 2019 and was announced through the university's URAC members. The initial call for sessions indicated that every college could sponsor up to three events with departments and programs within their college. An event application was setup for colleges to submit their event proposals. The submissions were reviewed by the Week of RSCA organizers. All events that fit within the scope of the Week of RSCA were accepted. There were 13 events that were accepted as in-person sessions from this initial call for proposals.

The departments/programs selected for leading a session were in charge or creating the session, deciding what topic(s) to discuss, coming up with the format, and gathering speakers or presenters. With the small team organizing the Week of RSCA, the initial launch of the event was to have already established events be a part of RSCA. This would minimize the additional workload a department would have to burden if they created a new event altogether. However, colleges would have the opportunity to decide on moving forward with one of their established events or to create a new one. For each session, a college lead was designated to oversee its production. The Week of RSCA co-chair met with each event lead to discuss the premise of their event and flesh-out the logistics of the in-person format.

1.3 Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic Restrictions

Originally, the Week of RSCA was to coincide with CSULB's hosting of the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) in April, 2021. However, due to the move to remote instruction and restrictions to travel and in-person events in response to COVID-19, the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) decided to transform NCUR 2021 to a virtual conference that would not be hosted by CSULB. The COVID-19 restrictions on public gathering also meant that the 2021 Week of RSCA had to be either postponed or transformed into a virtual event. It was decided by the Week of RSCA proposers to transform the event to a virtual platform because many students were isolated from campus due to the COVID-19 closures, and the Week of RSCA could play an important role serving students by providing them with a venue to not only present their work, but to learn about other research and creative activities being conducted at CSULB.

The goal of this paper is to describe the process of transforming the Week of RSCA from an in-person to virtual event. In the subsequent sections, we describe how the virtual platform for hosting the event was selected, the process for working with the individual event organizers to transform their in-person event to a virtual one, and how we worked with the University to brand and market the event. We end the paper with lessons learned and recommendations for organizers of future events who want to move from an in-person to virtual format.

2 Method: Transforming an In-Person Event to a Virtual Event

2.1 Selection of Platform

As noted earlier, the initial idea for the Week of RSCA was to have the event held on the CSULB campus with the intent of in-person interactions. However, COVID-19 restrictions led to a decision to produce the event through a virtual environment. With a variety of university departments already selected to participate, the event required a platform that would allow for a mixture of presentations to be showcased (e.g. live stream, pre-recorded video, poster presentations). While the university already used the Zoom video conferencing software that can accommodate different types of presentations and group meetings, this event required a centralized hub for organization of materials and showcasing of content.

A search was conducted to locate a video conferencing platform that would allow for all of the features that were being asked for by the individual event organizers participating in the Week of RSCA. During the month of May 2020, emails were sent out to event planners that were coordinating scientific conferences through virtual platforms to determine which platforms are currently being used by different organizations. A list of potential virtual platforms was compiled, and the event co-chair researched the capabilities and features of each. The search was then narrowed down to a top three list of companies that conference organizers were using: Socio, Eventfinity, and Cvent.

Each of the platforms came with some similar applications for the event developer: centralized registration, event database access, social media feed, event email templates, video conferencing, exhibitor halls, and appointment settings with session presenters.

However, since many of these virtual conferencing platforms worked primarily with large corporations, the needs of a university-based conferences were still fairly new to them. Due to COVID-19, many organizations were also looking at virtual platforms to host their events, and at the time, Socio, Eventfinity, and Cvent were still working on adding new features to their platforms in order to meet the needs of this new market.

This adaptation to a new sales market opened the creation of new features that were previously not considered by these companies. While the adaptation to these needs were being created, it then played a major role in deciding which platform to use for the Week of RSCA. Both Socio and Eventfinity were adding new features each month that allowed for a better user experience, such as gamification, and would appeal to tech-saavy undergraduate students. The result of this; however, meant that their product fees also increased with every new feature that was added. Although the cost of the features would be easily accommodated by adding a participant registration fee, this was not an option for our event since it is being made freely available to CSULB students. An estimate cost of one single event using Socio and Eventfinity exceeded our event budget for the Week of RSCA. With the increase in purchase price for a platform, the selection for which one to use came down to cost effectiveness.

Cvent retained its lower price point while it was generating new conference capabilities through the virtual setting. These features include an event website, registration page, customizable emails for registrants, attendee hub, appointment settings, personalized session spaces with video, and a mobile application to name a few. It also allowed for a developer platform that allowed for quick learning and a range of free courses to learn new techniques for developing online conferences. These features were sufficient for the Week of RSCA, so the organizers selected Cvent as the virtual platform.

2.2 Working with Campus Leadership on Transitions of Events from Face-To-Face to Virtual Formats

During the month of March 2020, CSULB closed the campus for regular day-to-day operation of in-person classes and in-office work due to COVID-19 stay-at-home orders issued from the State of California. This situation moved a majority of staff to work from home, with very limited access to the campus. The uncertainty of the global pandemic caused for plans for the Week of RSCA to come to a halt, as the planning of how to situate campus staff to work from home and administrators looking for answers as to how to keep the campus secure and safe for everyone became the priority. As the months proceeded into summer 2020, there was uncertainty regarding when the campus would re-open for in-person instruction or how on-campus events would be allowed to proceed.

To keep things moving forward, the event chairs decided to produce the Week of RSCA through a virtual platform in August 2020. While many other webinars and events started being produced through online platforms, such as Zoom, the event chairs needed to figure out the best solution for incorporating a multitude of sessions with a range of presentation options. Considering the many players involved with organizing all of the sessions, having a system that could centralize the registration and presentation productions was the best option for follow.

Once the decision was made to purchase the Cvent platform (see Sect. 2.1), the next step was to contact each of the session leads, update them with the information regarding

the online platform, and discuss whether they were planning on continuing with their session. Of the initial 13 sessions, only 7 of the event organizers indicated that they would move forward with the sessions and modify their event to fit the virtual platform. A targeted call for additional events was sent out to several department administrators. From this search, 5 new sessions were added to the Week of RSCA event. However, as the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters progressed, some of the planned events were canceled due to a variety of reasons and new sessions were added to the schedule.

Moreover, the event team was small (2 individuals, plus limited support from other university staff and graduate students), it was important to have department administrators assist with the collection of their session information. Their department team would be collecting all of their required content, review it for approval, and then submit to the event co-chair for final review. This would allow for thorough review of content, while managing a small production team.

3 Implementation

3.1 Setting up the Virtual Platform

CSULB's Week of RSCA event was held Aril 4–9, 2021 using the Cvent virtual platform. However, prior to the event, all sessions had to be created in the Cvent platform. Within the platform, the event organizers were allowed to create features to enhance the online virtual experience. Features provided through the system enabled for university logos, images, wording and color palettes to be placed throughout the environment. These details allow for any organization's or company's event streamlined with the rest of their products they release for marketing.

The following figures (see Figs. 1–3) are some of the examples of the customization allowed through the virtual environment:

Fig. 1. Cvent customizable website for the week of RSCA

Fig. 2. Cvent customizable event registration page for the week of RSCA
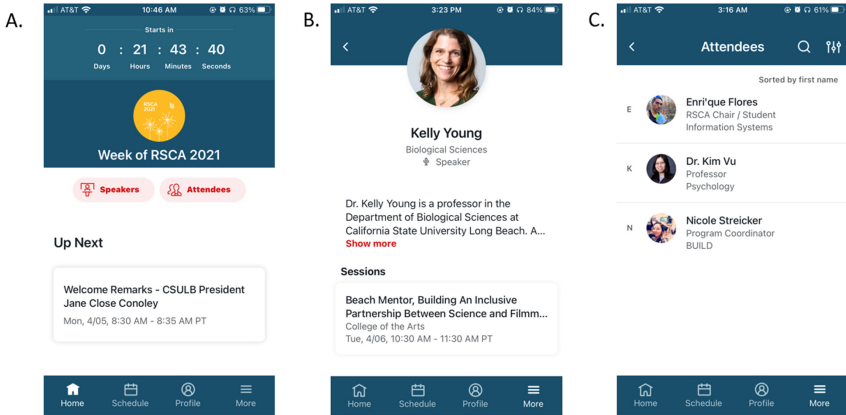

Fig. 3. Cvent App illustrating the up-coming week of RSCA event (A), a speaker profile (B) and session attendee profiles (C).

Central to CSULB's Week of RSCA event is the customization capability of the platform to accommodate the formats of the various session types. This allowed for easier transitions from in-person to virtual formats.

3.2 Marketing

To begin the efforts of promoting the event across the university, content needed to be created. To assist with the marketing efforts of the event, the CSULB Strategic Communications Department was asked to join the event collaboration by creating a logo

(Fig. 4), banners for the CSULB event website (Fig. 5) and virtual platform, mobile app, and access to the campus photographic repository.

Fig. 4. Week of RSCA logo

Fig. 5. Week of RSCA webpage on the CSULB website (www.csulb.edu/rsca) highlighting the event and a schedule "at a glance"

As the intent of the Week of RSCA is to bring all sections of the university together, it is important to utilize CSULB resources that are established for creating marketing content. The Strategic Communications Department consisted of web designers and visual artists that are responsible for keeping the university's image streamlined. Having access to these individuals was valuable in that you were privy to their knowledge of what is currently allowed at the university with respect to marketing materials. This prevented going back and forth with concepts and ideas for logos, color palettes, and other details associated with branding. The utilization of the university's marketing team was also a strategic move to allow for more buy-in with the university.

To reach other communities within the university, student communication groups and administrators were asked to join the efforts with promoting the event. The student led DigMag magazine would take on the efforts of writing articles on the different sessions taking place within the event. University administrators (e.g. president, provost, deans) were also informed of the latest updates with the events and asked to promote the event within their regular communication with their departments. The university's student body, ASI (Associated Student, Inc), also joined the efforts of promoting the event across the campus.

3.3   Working with the Department Leads to Populate the Events Within Cvent

Originally, each session lead would then be responsible for putting out a call for participants, based on the in-person session format they chose to go with. However, when the event moved to the virtual platform, this allowed for an increase in opportunities for individuals to participate within sessions. Departments that were planning on holding research presentations, now were able to allow more students and faculty to take part as presenters. The option to have pre-recorded, live, or a mixture of both within a session or multiple session, paved the way for a wider range of participation. The online event also allowed the expansion of the inaugural Week of RSCA from a 3-day event following CSULB's hosting of the NCUR conference (which, as noted earlier, was no longer being hosted by CSULB due to COVID-19 restrictions) to a full week event. The Week of RSCA co-Chair reached out to other organizations, programs, and departments on campus to obtain additional events for the week of RSCA. Also, as some events were canceled as time came closer to the event, the co-Chair added additional events up to the week prior to the event. For the final program, there were 28 sponsored events, held over 40 individual sessions for the Week of RSCA.

Because the event was new to campus, and the move to the online platform resulted in the Week of RSCA organizers having to set up the initial sessions in Cvent and populate it, this increased the workload drastically for the organizers. Moreover, at the time of the event's production, the Cvent platform did not allow for pre-recorded video presentations to be individual links that were grouped together in a single session. Therefore, each student presentation needed its own session to be created within the platform. This particular activity required the creation of over 60 individual presentation sessions within the platform. While the system allowed for sessions to be cloned, the additional steps added more time to the production.

With the timing of the event being right after the university's spring break session, this caused for many delays related to session content submissions. Students were also preparing for midterms and faculty were administering and grading those exams, all prior to the break. As a result, deadline submissions kept getting pushed back and content that was submitted was not complete. Since late submissions became an obstacle with a majority of the departments involved in the program, having a strict deadline to omit content would not have worked. If a strict cut-off date was used, the program itself would have consisted of a very thin line-up. Each event lead kept in contact with the co-Chair to submit content as soon as it was sent to them. While this was not the optimal procedure for the production, flexibility needed to be a component in order to have a complete program. Event leads were appreciative with the consideration of the situation.

In preparation for the start of the event, the co-Chair scheduled a training appointment with every individual that was going to moderate a live session. Each of these sessions lasted between 60–90 min. Within the training, the co-Chair went through a step-by-step process of how to engage with the Cvent platform and what duties the moderator was in charge of. Moderators were able to test out the system by completing a 'dry-run' session through the platform. This allowed them to go through the log-in process for the Attendee Hub, learn how to locate their session, how to make their session go live, and monitor the question and answer feature within their session.

The Cvent Attendee Hub utilized Zoom for its virtual meeting room that was a familiar setting for each of the session leads who had used the system for over a year during the country's quarantine phase. However, as this was a live event, this did add some nervousness to each of the sessions. Considering that wi-fi played a role with everyone's connection to Zoom, a backup plan needed to be put in place. Thus, during the entire week of the event, the co-Chair was on call throughout the day via mobile phone. If individuals were having issues with the platform (i.e. logging in, unable to view specific settings), then they would call or text the co-Chair. The co-Chair would then immediately jump into the Zoom session and assist with the situation. Additionally, the set of speakers and moderators for each of the sessions would also join the Zoom sessions 15 min prior to the start of their session. This would allow time for presenters to organize themselves and review any last-minute changes to their session. At this point, the co-Chair would also join the team and make sure that everyone was fine with their virtual settings and knew how to navigate the session.

4   Results of 2021 Implementation

4.1   Registration

Registration for the Week of RSCA was kept free of charge for all CSULB students, staff, and faculty. As there was a limitation on how many individuals could attend, attendees were kept to only current CSULB community members when registration opened on February 1, 2021 until a week prior to the event. During the last week of the event, registration was open to everyone. The registration trend is captured in Fig. 6.
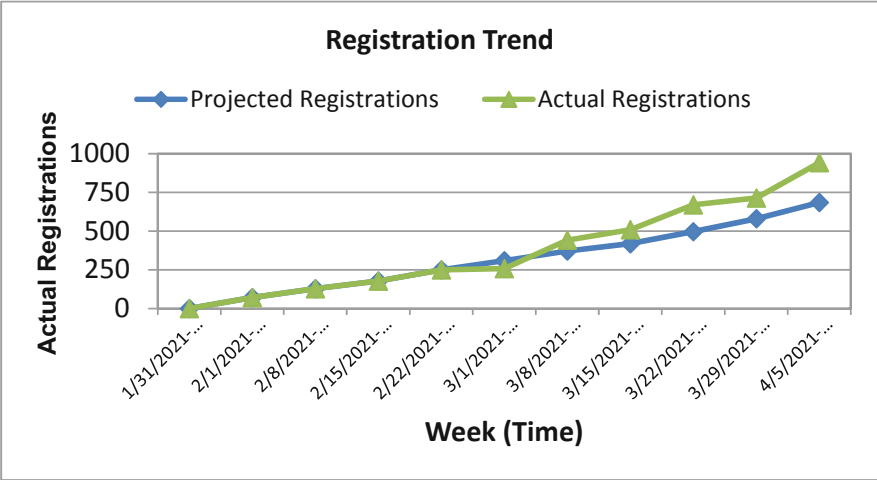
Fig. 6. Registration trend over time.

The event had a total of 942 registered participants (see Tables 1a and 1b), with about 25% of participants registering during the week of the event. The registered attendees were from mostly from CSULB, with many of the colleges and programs on campus being represented.

Table 1a. Number of registered participants by college/program

College/Program of registrants	Number of registrants
Liberal arts	239
Natural sciences and mathematics	194
Health and human services	150
Arts	75
University research opportunity program	67
Education	58
Engineering	37
Business	17
BUILD	8
Office of undergraduate research services	6
University library	5
Office of research and sponsored programs	3
Did not specify or listed N/A (e.g., guests)	74
Other: academic affairs, office of research and sponsored programs, president's office, graduate studies, etc	9
Total	**942**

Table 1b. Number of registered participants by role

Registrants' self-identified role	Number of registrants
Student (Undergraduate)	437
Student (Graduate)	153
Faculty	246
Guest (Non-CSULB Attendee)	47
Staff	37
Administrator	10
CSULB (Alumni)	12
Total	**942**

4.2 Final Program

The final program consisted on 40 sessions from different disciplines across the CSULB campus, plus the welcoming remarks from the President of the University, see Table 2. In addition, there were over 300 speakers/presenters/moderators/judges. All sessions were attended by attendees from different disciplines.

4.3 Feedback from Evaluation Surveys

The response rates for the session and general surveys were low, with 66 attendees providing feedback about the individual sessions (see Table 3) and 87 about the general event (see Table 4).

Session Surveys. Because the response rate for the individual sessions were low, we report the average ratings across sessions. Overall, those who provided feedback on the session indicated that they agreed that the sessions were informative/useful and engaging, and that they would recommend the session to others who would be interested in the topic.

General, End-of-Event Survey. The general survey was designed to assess whether the Week of RSCA achieved its goals. Attendees were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statements listed in Table 4 about the *Week of RSCA* event using a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree). The mean rating for each of the questions are listed in Table 4. For all questions, except for Question 5, attendees' ratings were significantly higher than a test-value of 4, indicating that their level of agreement was higher than somewhat agree and not different from agree.

Table 2. Week of RSCA sessions and number of speakers and moderators/judges

Session Name (40 sessions+ Welcome Remarks)	# of Speakers	# of Moderators/ Judges
55th Annual Comparative Literature Conference: Outcasts & Outliers in Literature, Music & Visual Arts	4	1
Beach Mentor, Building an Inclusive Partnership Between Science and Filmmaking	6	1
Biochemistry: Poster/Pre-Recorded Presentations	5	
Biology: Poster/Pre-Recorded Presentations	15	
Chemistry: Poster/Pre-Recorded Presentations	7	
College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (CNSM) Virtual Student Research Symposium - Department of Biological Sciences	6	1
CNSM Virtual Student Research Symposium - Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry (Session A)	6	1
CNSM Virtual Student Research Symposium - Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry (Session B)	5	1
CNSM Virtual Student Research Symposium - Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry (Session C)	12	1
CNSM Virtual Student Research Symposium - Department of Mathematics & Statistics	4	1
CNSM Virtual Student Research Symposium - Department of Physics & Astronomy	9	1
College of Education Graduate Research Colloquium (Session A)	6	1
College of Education Graduate Research Colloquium (Session B)	6	1
College of Education Graduate Research Colloquium (Session C)	6	1
College of Education Graduate Research Colloquium (Session D)	6	1
College of Education Graduate Research Colloquium (Session E)	4	1
College of Education Graduate Research Colloquium (Welcome Session)	1	1
College of Engineering	1	
CSULB BUILD: Poster/Pre-Recorded Presentations	11	
Dance, Design, and Music Research and Performance Fair (Session A)	5	1
Dance, Design, and Music Research and Performance Fair (Session B)	5	1

(*continued*)

Table 2. (*continued*)

Dance, Design, and Music Research and Performance Fair (Session C)	3	1
Fiction Reading with MFA Creative Writing Students	5	1
Mobilizing for Health and Social Justice - Research, Teaching, and Practice: (Aging)	5	1
Mobilizing for Health and Social Justice - Research, Teaching, and Practice: (Clinical Practice)	5	1
Mobilizing for Health and Social Justice - Research, Teaching, and Practice: (Health & Wellness I)	7	1
Mobilizing for Health and Social Justice - Research, Teaching, and Practice: (Health & Wellness II)	7	1
Mobilizing for Health and Social Justice - Research, Teaching, and Practice: (Health Equity)	7	1
Mobilizing for Health and Social Justice - Research, Teaching, and Practice: (Social Justice)	6	1
Perspectives On Voting	5	1
Playwrights, Trans Rights, and LGBTQ Fights for Justice: Engaging LGBTQIA Research	5	1
Psych Day Research Competition (Session A)	7	3
Psych Day Research Competition (Session B)	4	3
Psych Day Research Competition (Session C)	10	3
Psych Day Research Competition (Session D)	7	3
UROP: Poster/Pre-Recorded Presentations	65	
Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program Symposium (Session A)	5	1
Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program Symposium (Session B)	10	1
Using Your University Library for the "R" in RSCA	3	
Using Your University Library for the "R" in RSCA (2)	3	
Welcome Remarks - CSULB President Jane Close Conoley	1	
TOTAL	**300**	**40**
Note: Shaded sessions represent parallel sessions		

Table 3. Session ratings. Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements using a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Question	Range of individual session ratings	Mean rating n = 66
This session was informative and/or useful	4.2–5.0	4.82
I would recommend this session to a friend/colleague interested in this session's topic	4.2–5.0	4.78
This session was engaging	3.6–5.0	4.53

Table 4. General *feedback for the week of RSCA*. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly Agree, or Don't Know).

Question	N	Mean rating	Standard deviation	Largest test value
1. After attending the *Week of RSCA* event, I am more knowledgeable about research, scholarly and creative activities (RSCA) at CSULB	85	5.15	0.98	Test value = 4 $t(84) = 10.82, p < .001$
2. After attending the *Week of RSCA* event, I am more knowledgeable about RSCA opportunities *available to me* at CSULB	79	4.52	1.33	Test value = 4 $t(78) = 3.47, p < .001$
3. Because of the *Week of RSCA* event, I am interested in learning more about RSCA at CSULB	81	4.83	1.02	Test value = 4 $(80) = 7.28, p < .001$
4. During the *Week of RSCA* event, I learned about important RSCA conducted at CSULB that can lead to improving the lives of people in our community	81	5.20	1.04	Test value = 4 $t(80) = 10.35, p < .001$
5. During the *Week of RSCA* event, I learned about RSCA that CSULB faculty and students conduct in partnership with *other universities*	70	4.10	1.40	Test value = 3 $t(69) = 6.60, p < .001$
6. During the *Week of RSCA* event, I learned about RSCA conducted by CSULB investigators in partnership with community collaborators (e.g., health agencies, non-profit organizations, community partners)	75	4.56	1.31	Test value = 4 $t(74) = 3.71, p < .001$
7. Research, scholarly, and creative activities are important at CSULB	84	5.52	1.05	Test value = 5 $(83) = 4.59, p < .001$
8. Research, scholarly, and creative activities are major components of campus culture at CSULB	84	5.10	1.16	Test value = 4 $t(83) = 8.67, p < .001$

In addition, attendees were asked, "Prior to attending the Week of RSCA event, were you involved in research, scholarly and/or creative activities at CSULB?" 80.5% (n = 70) indicated "yes", 17.2% (n = 15) indicated "no", and 2.3% (n = 2) indicated "not sure". For those who responded "yes", 55.7% (n = 39/70) indicated that they attended any sessions outside of their discipline at the *Week of RSCA* event. For those who responded "no", 73.3% (n = 11/15) indicated that they planned to get involved with research, scholarly and/or creative activities because of attending this event.

The final question asked, "What recommendations do you have for future annual Week of RSCA events?" Forty two (42) comments were provided.

- Eighteen percent of the comments (n = 8) were related to the Cvent platform. Specifically, participants indicated that the Cvent platform was either hard to navigate through or that they did not like the login process.
- Sixteen percent of the comments (n = 7) recommended making the session more interactive (e.g., live Q&A sessions; use of zoom features for interactions; allow more time for discussion).
- Eleven percent of the comments (n = 5) indicated that the event should be made an in-person event.
- Nine percent of the comments (n = 4) were related to the notification of the event and event program. These attendees wanted more advertising of the event and to be provide with the full program schedule earlier.
- The following comments were each provided by two (2) attendees:
- provide on demand videos for all sessions
- avoid scheduling conflicts or scheduling during busy time of the semester
- provide a central portal for submission of presentations; clear instructions for presenters
- The following comments were each provided by one (1) attendee:

  - include more joint faculty-student events
  - provide more information about who to contact to get more information about research or to become involved in research
  - have better audio quality
  - mix up the disciplines in a specific session
  - have more industrial presentations/opportunities

- Seven (7) attendees provided no additional recommendations or indicated that they were content with the event as delivered.

5 Discussion

5.1 Lessons Learned

University Collaborations: Creating a large campus event to engage community members is a great feature to include within a yearly academic calendar. With the event being held on a regular basis, all stakeholders and participants will know what to expect. Because this event was new to campus this year along with the COVID-19 restrictions

on in-person events, there was some confusion about what the Week of RSCA event was, who was organizing it, and how it will be delivered. When deciding to create an event for the university that comprises of all departments, it is very important to have high-level administrators in the meetings that are deciding these items. The importance of having the buy-in from administrators (e.g. president, provost, deans) from the start of the planning is crucial. These individuals have the ability to start the promotion across campus and can place your event in the forefront of the university's news. In addition, it is critical to have funding for the event, and BUILD was able to cover the costs associated with the online platform and individual sessions, as well as some of the personnel costs for administering the event. For campuses that may not have a specific funding source for the event, plans need to be made regarding how to cost-share and distribute the personnel workload by leveraging existing campus events, personnel, and resources.

Technology: With the new technology for virtual meetings and presentations evolving rapidly, it is valuable for universities to access these resources to engage wider audiences. Since the current market for virtual conferencing is quickly expanding, the pricing for utilizing these resources is quite high. However, with more companies creating new products to create video conferencing environments, the high spike in pricing may not be a hindrance in the coming years. Also, it is important to think about the "must haves" versus the "wants". For our event, we went with the standard package recommended from Cvent. We ended up not using some of the features we paid for (mainly due to a lack of time to launch those features and train speakers/attendees) and did not have access to other features that were available at an additional cost. Unfortunately, some of the features that we would have liked to have implemented were not launched by the company until after our event ended. The event organizers should also keep in mind accessibility requirements such as the ability to have closed captions or interpreter videos.

Unforeseen Events: With the pandemic hitting the global community extremely hard, it managed to halt all planning for the Week of RSCA. Many session leads had to manage organizing their departments transition from in-person teaching to virtual classrooms. With a large learning curve to deal with, many months of planning were lost. However, as there was a shift in everyone learning how to use a new software, it played as an advantage when the decision was made to move the event to a virtual platform. As the months progressed, the campus community had already become accustomed to the new virtual classroom and office settings. This made it easier to propose new ideas to them, have them consider new ways of rethinking how to present virtually, and how they could engage more students to participate. However, we still had to spend a lot of time to train the speakers and moderators on how to use the Cvent platform, which was novel to them.

5.2   Recommendations for Transforming In-Person Events to Virtual Ones

The 2021 Week of RSCA was produced virtually due to the global pandemic that commenced in 2020. This was undoubtably a scenario that could not be avoided, but that did not mean that continuing with the planning of an event was not possible.

Here are some recommendations for transitioning to a virtual event:

- Get the buy-in from the campus leadership;
- Plan out a draft of what the requirements are for your event (e.g. live presentations, concurrent sessions). Make sure you consider what your event's 'must have' and 'would like' features would be.
- Prepare a budget for what you are able to spend on producing your virtual event.
- Research available virtual conference platforms. Compare your list of event requirements with the available functions that each platform guarantees to have. This process can assist you with narrowing down your options of products. You can then setup meetings with a company representative to go over pricing and features. Make sure to ask what each price package encompasses and if any new features will be included.
- Create your deadline schedule that every party involved with the event needs to follow. While obstacles due occur and dates may need to get pushed back, it is still important that everyone involved knows when the initial deadline dates are.
- Ensure that you train session moderators how to utilize the software interface. While most functionalities for live streaming are common practice, do not assume that every individual is comfortable in using them. Doing a walkthrough of how to use the system benefits the user and the production team.
- Set up a team to assist moderators on the day of the event. As everyone will have varying degrees of wi-fi access, you should plan on having someone from your team available to assist with any issues that may occur. Keeping in contact with the moderator and speakers of a session will ease some of the stress that occur when there are technical issues.

Overall, keeping in communication with all the parties involved with the event is crucial. This will allow for understanding of what is expected from each party and will build a relationship between them. That relationship will assist with the production of the event as each individual knows that someone is relying on them to complete their task.

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