HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AT OSU

KEVIN AHERN
Every OSU student will have at least one experiential learning experience before graduation
Expand undergraduate research/creativity efforts significantly beyond current bounds
Undergraduate research is open to students in all majors
PRINCIPLES OF URSA

- Undergraduate research can be noted on transcripts
- URSA seeks to expand funding opportunities to students in all majors
GETTING STARTED

- Setting a foundation
  - Grades
  - Time
- Scoping out opportunities
  - Listserv
  - Web
  - Advisor
- Getting paid
  - Listserv
- Connecting with professors
  - Class
  - Email
  - Social events
  - Advisors
FAQS FOR STARTERS

- Do I have to come up with my own project? - No. The professor will have one
- What if I have no experience? - Not a problem
- Will I get paid? - Sometimes - depends on mentor
- How much time is required? - expect 3-10 hours per week
- What is the professor going to ask me? basic things
- Can freshmen do this? Yes
- Can I change my mind? Yes, but it is better to have clear plans
CONNECTING WITH A MENTOR

- **Scan the Web**
  - Go to the OSU site
  - Click on ‘Academics’
  - From that page, click on the college of your interest
  - Depending on the College, you may have to search around a bit to find professors/research topics
  - Identify 6-8 professors who have research you are interested in
  - Consult with your advisor (or Kevin)
  - Contact your top choice by email to set up a meeting (next page)
    - DO NOT ask for anything more than a meeting in your email
Dear Dr. Ahern:

My name is Jane Flidplank and I’m a sophomore majoring in Exercise and Sport Science. I am a very motivated student and I’m interested in research in Exercise/Sport Science going on at OSU. I saw your Web page describing your work with musculature in horses and I found it very interesting. If possible, I would like to have the opportunity to meet with you to discuss it further.

I am free all afternoon on Tuesdays and Thursdays and from 10:00-1:00 on MWF. Would it be possible for me to schedule a meeting with you during these times?

Thank you so much for considering this. I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Jane Flidplank
THE WAITING GAME

- After sending your email, wait one week.
- If, after one week, you do not have a reply, it is OK to send a second request similar to the first one.
- If still no reply, you can either move on to another professor, or try to connect with the professor in their office.
- If you go to the office, introduce yourself and ask if you can meet with him/her about their research. They may say they remember your email. It is OK to acknowledge that. Otherwise, don’t bring it up.
Go to your meeting prepared

1. Be familiar with the professor’s research
2. Carry with you a copy of your resume. It should include your major, your year in school, your contact info, your GPA, any work experience you have (non-research or research), and references with contact info.
3. Carry a letter addressed to the professor thanking them for meeting with you. You should hand the resume and the letter to the professor after you have finished your meeting.
4. Walk into the professor’s office showing confidence.
5. A firm handshake is important
6. Remind the professor of your major and say you are interested in their work. Be prepared with an answer if they ask what part of their work interests you.
7. Ask the professor to tell you more about their work. This will usually get them talking considerably.
WHAT DO I SAY? WHAT DO I DO?

- 8. Ask the professor if he/she allows undergraduate students to do work with them.
- 9. If the answer is yes, ask the professor how one goes about getting a position with them.
- 10. If the professor indicates you can join them in their work, ask if he/she can provide some relevant reading material.
- 11. Note that the professor is going to want to know how many hours you can work, when you can work, etc. Have your schedule handy and have an idea of how many hours you can work. Do not leave this open ended. A good number of hours for a beginner is 3-10 per week. You do not want to start with more than 10 hours per week.
- 12. Be sure you can come in as many hours as you say.
- 13. Send an email thanking for professor for meeting with you no matter how your meeting turns out.
TO PAY OR NOT TO PAY. THAT IS THE QUESTION

- Some professors have grants and may offer you a paid position.
- If you have work-study money, bring it up very early in your talk with the professor.
- URISC, URISC-START
- College scholarships/programs
  - PH&HS - URAP
  - Science - Cripps
  - Engineering - Johnson
  - Agriculture - Jackman
- Get on the LISTSERV. Scholarship opportunities are announced through there whenever they come up.
TO PAY OR NOT TO PAY. THAT IS THE QUESTION

- Non-paying options
  - Research for credit - XX 401
  - Volunteer
REWARDS

- Align with Learning Goals for Graduates
  - Critical Thinking
  - Collaboration
  - Communication
  - Self-awareness/Life-Long Learning
- Foster independence
- Increase marketable skills
- Promote retention
- Train for careers / grad school
- Prepare for national/international programs
- Get excellent references
- Get a designation on your transcript as a Research Fellow or as an Arts Fellow
A Research Fellow will be a student who has engaged in activities leading to uncovering new knowledge or applying existing knowledge to solving problems.

An Arts Fellow will be a student completing a significant creative project in the arts. Creative works may fall under the performance arts (theater, dance, music, etc.) media (video, film) writing, or the visual arts.
Can students use work with people apart from OSU to satisfy the requirement? Sometimes, with approval.

Do students have to apply for transcript notation approval prior to initiating work? No.

Are students required to take Research, Internship, or Thesis Credits to get the notation? No.

Can the transcript notation be made after a student has graduated? NO! It must be applied for before you graduate.

When is the best time to get the notation? Earlier is better.

Do students have to do work in their major? Not necessarily, but it should be close to their major.

Is taking of Research, Internship, or Thesis Credits sufficient for satisfying the requirements? NO.
EXPECTATIONS FOR RESEARCH FELLOWS & ARTS FELLOWS

- Involvement in all major phases of their project including conception, implementation, and presentation. Will generally involve sustained work over multiple quarters resulting in an original contribution relative to the discipline.
- The project presentation must be to an audience that extends beyond the immediate research group or creative context.
- Evidence of the presentation must be submitted and materials must be deposited into the OSU Scholars Archive.
- A member of the OSU Faculty (tenured/tenure track) must endorse the application, verifying satisfaction of the criteria described above.
- College Head Advisors accept and sign finished applications for routing to the Office of Undergraduate Research.
May 21, 10:00-2:00 MU Quad (this is a tentative date)
Questions / Feedback?

- Kevin Ahern - ahernk@onid.orst.edu
- URSA Web page - http://oregonstate.edu/students/research/
- Listserv - go to http://lists.oregonstate.edu
  - enter ‘ugresearch’ in the box and Go To List
- URISC - http://oregonstate.edu/research/incentive/urisc
- URISC-START - will be announced on the listserv

THANKS!