

Undergraduate Research: How to get involved



The University of Texas at Austin
Undergraduate Research
School of Undergraduate Studies

The **Office of Undergraduate Research** helps undergraduates connect with research opportunities across campus

- Information sessions
- Advising appointments
- Informational website
- EUREKA!
- Research Week



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Please Introduce Yourself!

- Your name
- Your year
- Your major
- Where are you in the research process?
 - just thinking about it
 - browsing possibilities
 - talking to a professor
 - currently researching
 - done research before



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SURGe

A student organization that:

- facilitates and promotes undergraduate research
- helps students network with faculty and other student researchers
- hosts lab tours, faculty research talks, volunteer opportunities, workshops, poster sessions, plant sales, socials and more!
- meets weekly, Fridays 4-5 in PAI 2.48

SURGe welcomes students from all majors!



No dues. Just research. www.utsurge.org



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Who can get involved in research?



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Who does research?

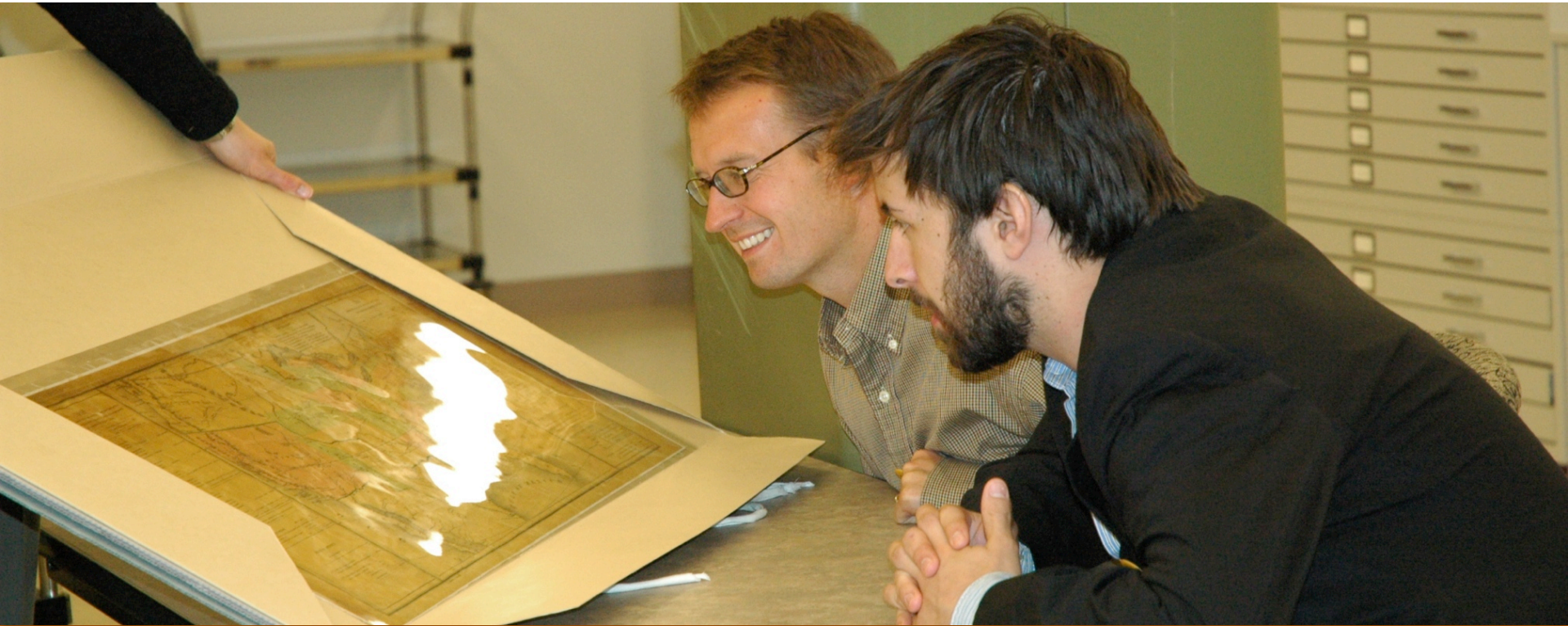
All professors in all disciplines at UT engage in research or creative activity

55% of UT undergrads go above and beyond their coursework to do research outside the classroom



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Why get involved in research as an undergraduate?



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Why get involved in research as an undergraduate?



networking

skills

knowledge

rec letters

**Research experience
leads to student success**

grad school

self-discovery



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Additional Benefits: Course Credit

- Research **grade** goes on your transcript!
- Many departments offer research **credit**
- Sometimes counts toward **degree** plan



Additional Benefits: Course Credit

The OUR offers **UGS 310 & 320L**:
Undergraduate Research
Experience

- One semester, 3-hour elective course
- About 10-12 hours per week
- Similar to “independent study”
- You and your faculty supervisor agree on expectations and meetings
- Submit contract for approval by OUR (available on website: “course credit”)
- We register you after approval



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Additional Benefits

Present your work

- Research Week (April)
- Departmental presentations
- Conferences

Publish your work

- *Undergraduate Research Journal* at UT is prestigious
- Possible co-authorship or acknowledgement on publication



Additional Benefits

Scholarships and grants
often available to
support research

A few research
assistantships may be
paid (but most aren't)



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Models for Research Opportunities

Assist a professor

Conduct
supervised
independent
research



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Models for Research Opportunities

Assist a professor

Conduct supervised
independent
research

During the school year

Pursue a summer

Research Experience for
Undergraduates (REU)

Study abroad

Find an internship

Connect to a community
organization



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Models for Research Opportunities



Archives



Classroom



Lab



Abroad



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When Can I Start Researching?

As a freshman, sophomore, junior or senior!

Depends on...

- Your readiness
- Independent project vs. research assistantship
- Conventions of the field
- Degree plans and class schedules
- Faculty expectations

Talk with your advisor, faculty, OUR to determine what's best



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Professors' expectations

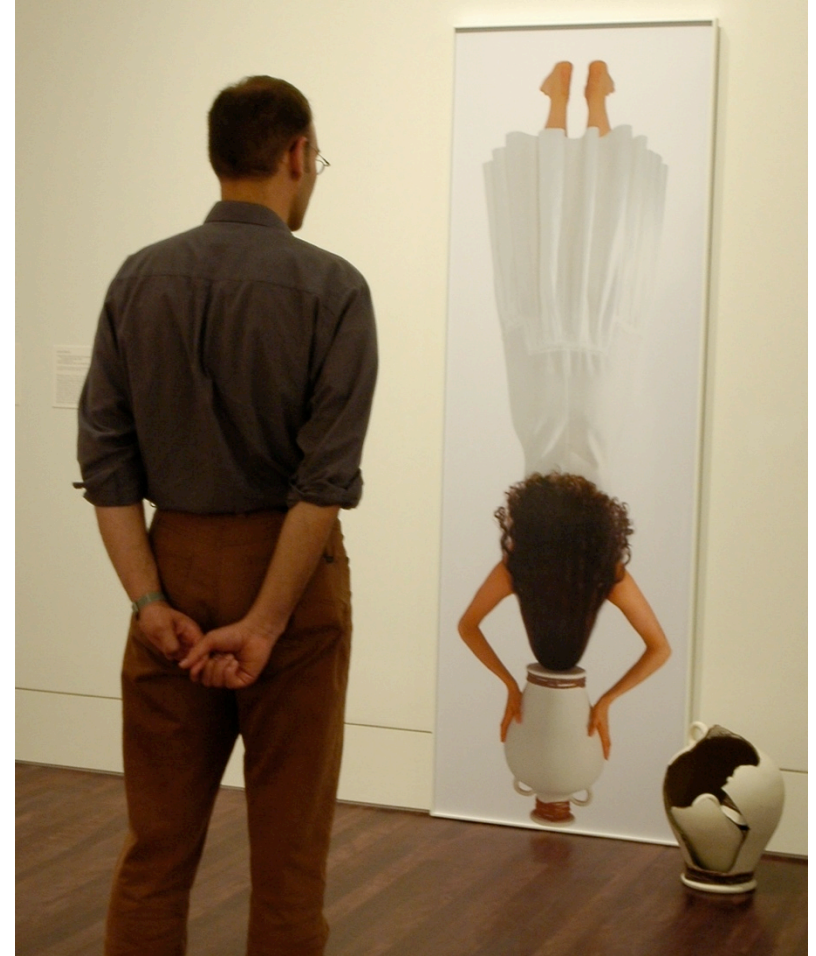
Demonstrate genuine interest and **curiosity**

Demonstrate self-motivation and show **initiative**

Be **responsible**

Some professors may ask you to **commit** for a particular length of time or number of hours/week

Some professors may ask you to complete a **prerequisite**



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Examples of Research Assistant Activities

Generate data or conduct **experiments**

Compile, enter, and **analyze** data

Create an annotated bibliography or **review** of literature

Administer **surveys** or interview participants

Find primary **documents**

Laboratory upkeep

Transcribe interviews



Examples of Student Research Projects

Sara went to Ian Fleming's estates and archives in England and Jamaica to study the creator of James Bond.

Charlie looked at primary historical documents to learn about the War on Hunger in the 1960s-70s.

Rudy researched how the asphalt on Texas roads might be used as a solar energy collector.

Elizabeth studied how brain damage affects speech and language disorders.

Amanda discovered a fossil collection that can help her reconstruct Nevada's climate 30 million years ago.





How do I get started?

It's an individualized process!

- Reaching out to professors who interest you
- Lots of flexibility, but sometimes requires persistence



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Finding Your Research Experience

Step 1: Identify your interests

By field or discipline

Government, Biochemistry

By topic

cancer, climate change, WWII

By method

laboratory research, interviews,
computer modeling, fieldwork,
archival work, sample collection



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Finding Your Research Experience

Step 2: Find potential faculty mentors

- Network with current/former professors, TAs
- Network with student groups (SURGe, etc.)
- Browse department websites for faculty profiles and research news
- Attend research-related events
- Browse EUREKA!

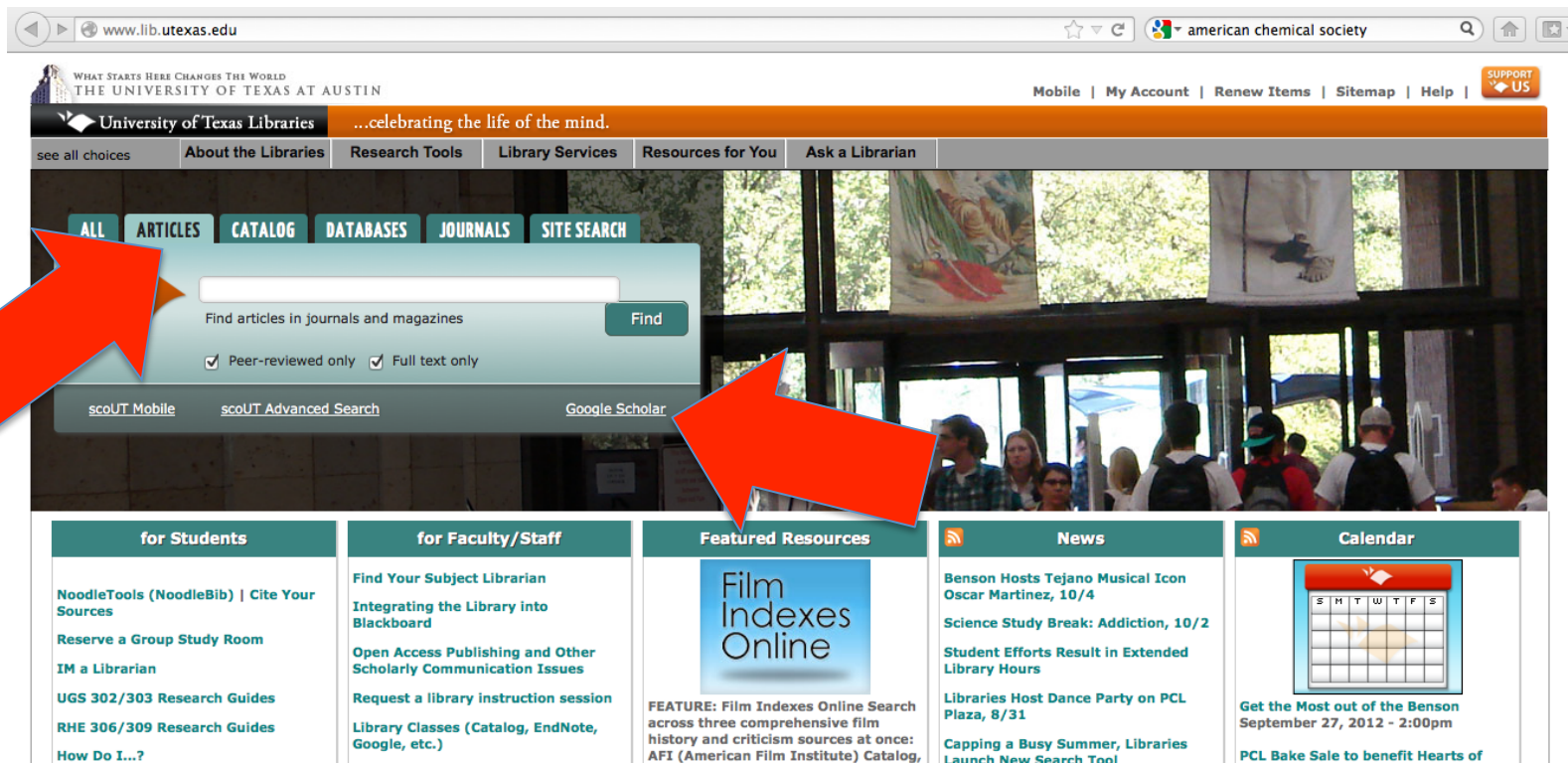
<http://www.utexas.edu/research/eureka/>



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Finding Your Research Experience

Step 3: Prepare for first contact



The screenshot shows the University of Texas Libraries website. The browser address bar displays www.lib.utexas.edu. The website header includes the University of Texas logo and the tagline "...celebrating the life of the mind." Navigation links include "Mobile", "My Account", "Renew Items", "Sitemap", and "Help". A "SUPPORT US" button is also present. The main navigation bar lists "see all choices", "About the Libraries", "Research Tools", "Library Services", "Resources for You", and "Ask a Librarian". Below this, a search bar is visible with the text "Find articles in journals and magazines" and a "Find" button. Two red arrows point to the search bar: one from the left and one from the bottom right. Below the search bar, there are checkboxes for "Peer-reviewed only" and "Full text only", both of which are checked. At the bottom of the search bar, there are links for "scoUT Mobile", "scoUT Advanced Search", and "Google Scholar". The website footer is divided into five columns: "for Students", "for Faculty/Staff", "Featured Resources", "News", and "Calendar". The "Featured Resources" column highlights "Film Indexes Online" with a description of its features. The "Calendar" column shows a calendar for September 2012 with a highlighted date for a "PCL Bake Sale to benefit Hearts of".



Finding Your Research Experience

Step 4: Contact a professor

Email to set up an appointment

Keep it brief and professional

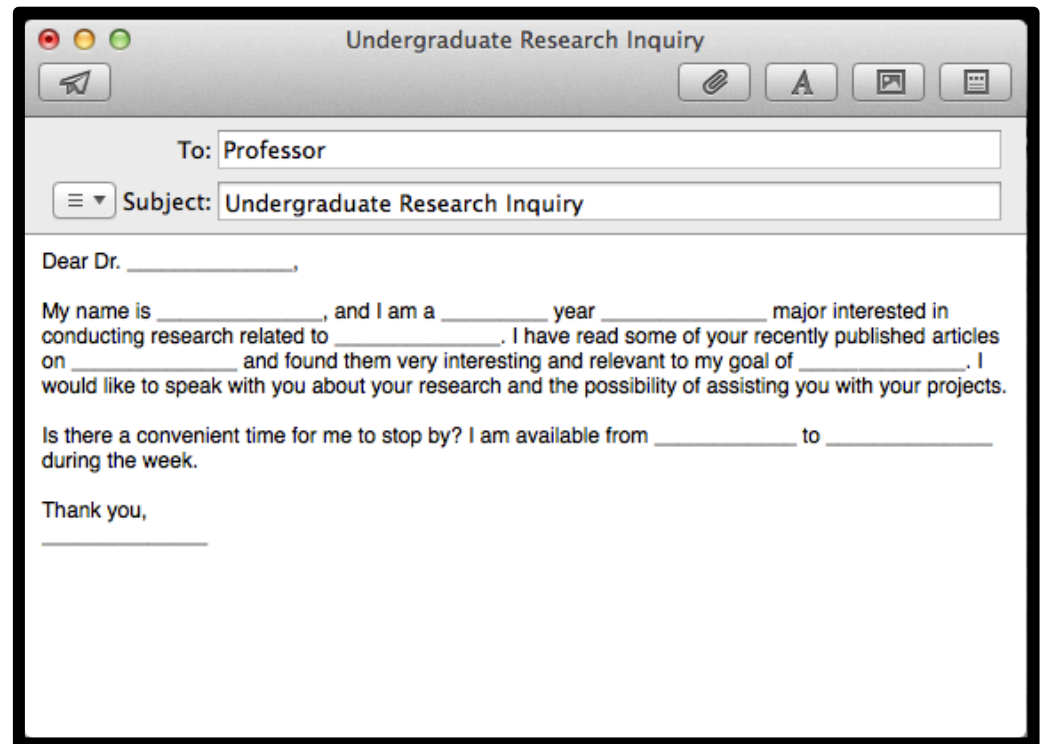
Use a formal title

Personalize a template

Use the subject line to make a connection

Use an appropriate email address

Follow up if necessary



The screenshot shows a window titled "Undergraduate Research Inquiry" with a standard macOS-style title bar (red, yellow, green buttons). Below the title bar is a toolbar with icons for sending, attaching, bold text, inserting a picture, and inserting a link. The email body contains the following text:

To: Professor

Subject: Undergraduate Research Inquiry

Dear Dr. _____,

My name is _____, and I am a _____ year _____ major interested in conducting research related to _____. I have read some of your recently published articles on _____ and found them very interesting and relevant to my goal of _____. I would like to speak with you about your research and the possibility of assisting you with your projects.

Is there a convenient time for me to stop by? I am available from _____ to _____ during the week.

Thank you,



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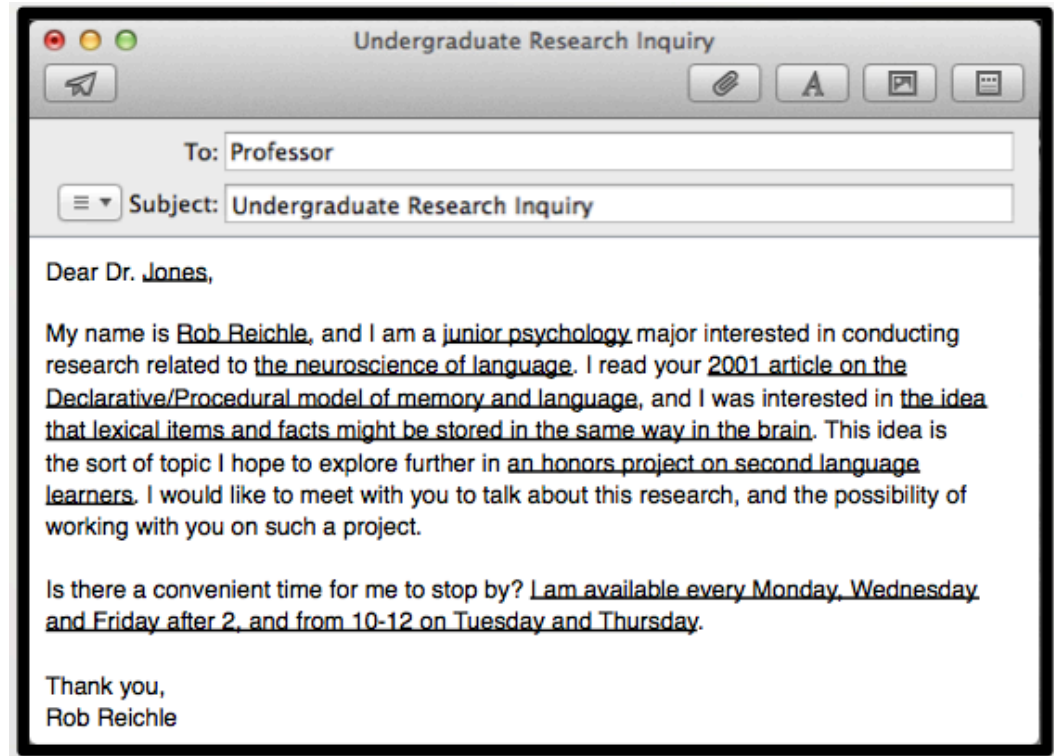
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Finding Your Research Experience

Step 5: Meet a faculty member

- Prepare to discuss your interests, goals, and long-term plans
- Prepare to ask questions about research
- Prepare to discuss your time commitment and your expectations and needs, especially for independent research
- Ask about approval/training for human subjects
- Ask for suggestions if you're not a good match



Finding Your Research Experience

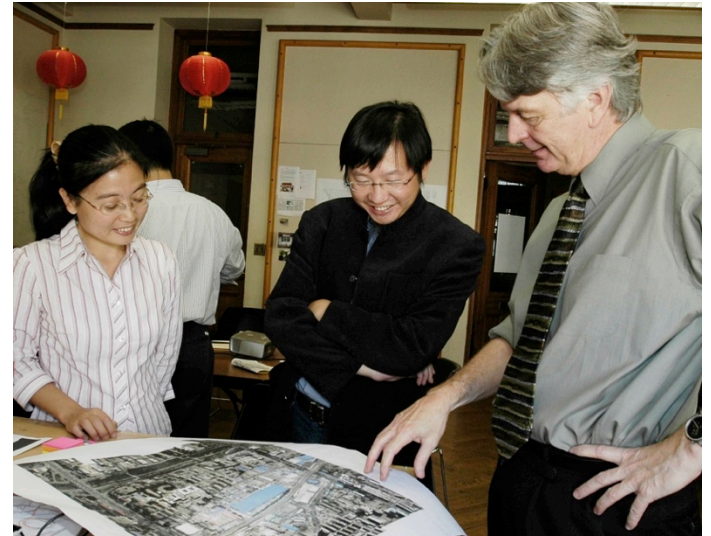
Step 6: Commit!

- Stick to your time commitment
- Attend all meetings with professor/team
- Communicate with your professor and any other team members



What Comes Next?

- Identify your priorities
- Make your list of top 3-4 faculty members to contact
- Draft your email
- Meet with faculty
- Ask the OUR for help at any stage in the process



Questions?

uresearch@austin.utexas.edu

FAC 33

512-471-7152



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