Undergraduate Research: Information Session

Presented by

The Office of Undergraduate Research
Introductions

• Who are *we*?

• Who are *you*?
  – Name
  – Major
  – Year
  – Research interests
  – Stage of research
    – Getting started
    – Browsing Possibilities
    – Talking to professor
    – Currently Researching
    – Done research before?
Why Get Involved?

Professional Development
- Meet people in your field
- Learn about career opportunities
- Gain job skills

Learn Beyond the Classroom
- Apply your knowledge
- Improve problem-solving abilities
- Take ownership of your learning

Other Incentives
- Course credit
- Presentation
- Publication
What Will I Be Doing?

**Assisting a Professor**
- Most common for students without research experience
- Personal responsibilities & expectations vary by
  - Professor
  - Discipline

**Independent Research**
- Student is “author”
- Professor as supervisor
- Could be thesis project, creative work, etc.
What are Faculty Looking For?

- *Genuine interest*
- Intellectual curiosity
- Responsibility
- Self-motivation
- Ability to learn
- Available time commitment
When Should I Start Looking?

The sooner the better!
## Will I Get Paid?

*Probably not, but there are other forms of benefits:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Credit</th>
<th>Scholarships</th>
<th>Recognition in Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Requires extra preparation  
• May fulfill major requirements  
• Research will be on your transcript | • Different types of scholarships are available  
• Students have a good shot at getting some funding | • If your work is integral to the research, your professor may give you credit  
• You can possibly present/publish your work |
Finding a Research Position
How to Find a Research Position:

1. **Identify your research interests**
2. Find faculty with similar interests
3. Prepare to contact faculty
4. Contact faculty
5. Meet with faculty
6. Commit!

Your research goals will guide your decision-making process.

Examples of research goals:

- Learning about a specific topic
  » **Which topic?**
- Learning how to use certain research methods
  » **Which methods?**
- Finding out what it would be like to get a graduate/professional degree in a certain field
  » **Which field?**
How to Find a Research Position:

1. Identify your research interests
2. Find faculty with similar interests
3. Prepare to contact faculty
4. Contact faculty
5. Meet with faculty
6. Commit!

Compile a list of 3 or 4 faculty with similar research interests

- Search Online
  - Eureka
  - College information
  - Research Units
  - Faculty profiles
  - Research in the news
- Network through student organizations
- Get to know your professors and T.A.s
Before you contact faculty, do your homework.

– Find out what research the faculty are doing
  • Skim their recent publications
    – Find articles using Google Scholar

– Determine your availability
  • How many hours/week
    (usually 10-15, blocks of at least two hours are optimal)
  • How many semesters
    (at least 1, preferably more)

How to Find a Research Position:

1. Identify your research interests
2. Find faculty with similar interests
3. Prepare to contact faculty
4. Contact faculty
5. Meet with faculty
6. Commit!
How to Find a Research Position:

1. Identify your research interests
2. Find faculty with similar interests
3. Prepare to contact faculty
4. Contact faculty
5. Meet with faculty
6. Commit!

Show your interest and enthusiasm, but keep it brief and professional.

Sample email:

Subject: Undergraduate Research Inquiry

Text:

Dear Dr. _____,

My name is _____ and I am a _____ year _____ major interested in ___. I have read some of your recently published articles on ____, and I would like to discuss the possibility of assisting with your research. Is it convenient for me to stop by on _____ at _____?

Thank you,
_____
How to Find a Research Position:

1. Identify your research interests
2. Find faculty with similar interests
3. Prepare to contact faculty
4. Contact faculty
5. Meet with faculty
6. Commit!

Treat your meeting like an informal job interview.

To do:
- Review articles the professor has recently published
- Be ready to speak about research goals and time availability
- Think of questions to ask
- Prepare resume (optional)

Remember:
- You don’t need to say “yes” or “no” on the spot
- If the professor doesn’t have an opportunity for you, ask if he/she has a recommendation for another professor you should approach
How to Find a Research Position:

1. Identify your research interests
2. Find faculty with similar interests
3. Prepare to contact faculty
4. Contact faculty
5. Meet with faculty
6. Commit!

Plan research into your weekly schedule.

- Stick to your weekly time commitment
- Make sure you attend lab meetings
- Talk with your supervisor about how to make the most of the experience
Other Research Opportunities
Summer Research Programs

- Highlighted Program -

National Science Foundation’s Research Experience for Undergraduates (NSF REU)

http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/

Spend the summer working as a full time researcher.
And get paid!
Research Abroad

- Highlighted Program -

**Maymester**

[http://www.utexas.edu/student/abroad/mm.html](http://www.utexas.edu/student/abroad/mm.html)

Sign up for a UT research class that will take place in another country.
Student-Led Research

- Highlighted Program -

**Climate Action Student Association**

*Build research skills while helping make the university greener!*

Contact:

[sustainability@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:sustainability@austin.utexas.edu)

for full project listings

50,000 students

475,000 Metric Tons of CO₂

*Infinite solutions...*
THE OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH
will help you find the research opportunity
that’s best for you.

Check out our Web site:
www.utexas.edu/ugs/ugr

Call our office to schedule an individual appointment:
512-471-5949