

Conceptual Issues about Undergraduate Research

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1) Purpose of the research?

- Creation of new knowledge
- Student learning experience
- Faculty learning experience
- Institutional benefits

Definition of Undergraduate Research: Research vs Research-like?

Undergraduate research is an inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline

- Original work
- Peer-reviewed publications
- Undergraduate Research Summit

<http://www.bates.edu/x50817.xml>

2) How to structure the experience?

- Depends on the goals (i.e, published outcomes or not?).
- What are the learning goals?
- How do we optimize them?

- Should the student undertake a collaborative project with a faculty member?
- Should the research topic/question be student-designed?

3) How to build enough capacity?

- Undergraduate research is a time-intensive activity for faculty members
- Yet, for many students it is the best learning experience
- How do we provide it for all students?
- Better if faculty members benefit by advancing their personal research agenda

4) Financial support?

- Undergraduate research costs money
- External sources of the money
 - Do they value the research outcomes?
 - Do they value the education outcomes?

Questions

- What is the purpose(s) of undergraduate research?
 - Should these be prioritized?
- How should we structure the experience?
 - Is one structure preferable to another?
- How do we build capacity?
 - In courses? Individualized experiences?
- How do we generate financial support for undergraduate research?
 - Buy-in from faculty and administrators?