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?