

Undergraduate Research at UB



CENTER FOR UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH
& CREATIVE ACTIVITIES



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CURCA's Beginnings

- Office created in 2005 as a way to help connect undergraduate students with faculty conducting research on campus
- Intended for ALL UB students not receiving these opportunities through other programs (i.e. Honors, CADs, McNair, etc.)

After 2 Years

1129 UB undergraduates received academic credit for supervised research and independent study. (These numbers do not include many others who engaged in research via practica, internships, or various arrangements that fall outside formalized curricula.)

The Spring 2007 Senior Exit Survey suggests that students engaged in research were also more likely to report the following upon graduation:

- Spending significant time on studying and academics while at UB
- Tutoring other students
- Graduating in four years or less
- Having secured a job, if seeking employment
- Being accepted into a graduate program, if pursuing graduate study

Students engaged in supervised research also appeared particularly satisfied with UB, given their ratings of many other undergraduate experiences on the Senior Exit Survey relative to those who were not engaged in research:

- They reported a higher level of academic feedback, challenge, assistance with professional goals, and emotional support.
- They were more likely to see UB as having a “supportive” and “individualistic” environment.
- They were more satisfied with the availability of campus social activities.
- They were more satisfied with both the overall quality of instruction and the overall college experience.

(Information provided by Lauren Young, Office of Institutional Analysis, blyoung@buffalo.edu)

CURCA Now

- Fall of 2008: 89 Research Opportunities vs. Fall of 2010: 179 Research Opportunities
- Undergraduate Research Awards program was started in the Spring of 2007
 - Between Spring 2007 and Spring 2010, the program awarded over \$54,000 to 145 undergraduate research projects
 - In Fall 2010 the program awarded money to 37 projects, more than in any previous single semester



Past CURCA Award Winners

CURCA Now, Continued

- Celebration of Academic Excellence, currently in its 7th year.
 - In 2005 and 2006, there were approximately 112 student presenters each year.
 - 2007 this number had grown to approximately 168.
 - In 2008 the graduate student portion of the program was added generating a total of approximately 224 student projects.
 - The undergraduate portion of the program, which is managed by CURCA, has been at capacity for the venue since the 2007 event.
- In 2009-2010 CURCA became responsible for helping to organize a SUNY-wide Undergraduate Research Exhibition in Albany



Current Outreach Activities

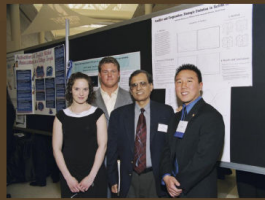
- Presentations to academic departments explaining the benefits of UG Research
- Bi-annual newsletter for faculty with information and news items
- Working with SUNY to draft an application for the CUR-NSF “Institutionalizing Undergraduate Research” institute

Future Plans

- Gain further faculty involvement
- Work with UB to recognize UG mentoring as part of the promotion/tenure process for faculty

Creation of the office...

- While addressing the UB Faculty Senate in Fall 2005 Provost Tripathi stated: " The undergraduates are coming to our research university because they feel they can benefit from the research going on here. I would like to see us cultivate and promote undergraduate research. We should be encouraging that. We should have one-third to half of all undergraduate students going through that process. **This will require the cooperation of the faculty. It's happening here, but we need to do a lot more.**"



The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program

- Part of the *federally-funded* TRiO family
- Grant funded through the U.S. Department of Education
- Named in honor of Dr. Ronald E. McNair
 - One of the first African-American astronauts
 - First in his family to graduate from college and earn a Ph.D.
 - Serves as a beacon to the current generation of college students who, for many reasons may feel that graduate education, and particularly the doctoral degree, is inaccessible
- Began at the University at Buffalo in 1990
- Serves 30 scholars per academic year
- Second semester sophomores, juniors, and seniors

Vision and Mission

- Provides eligible, academically talented undergraduate students with critical research experiences, preparation for the GRE, mentoring, professional skills, and assistance with the graduate application process.
- Students who wish to attend graduate school to ultimately earn a Ph.D. are our focus.

The “McNair Experience” Workshops/Graduate School Visits

- Scholars attend weekly workshops covering topics such as:
 - Graduate school application process/GRE preparation
 - Obtaining graduate school funding
 - Writing a “winning” personal statement
 - Making a successful research presentations
 - Networking with faculty
 - Culture of the academy
 - Alumni Forums
 - Advisory Board Panels
- Graduate School Visits (Primary Academic Interest)

The “McNair Experience” Summer Research Internships

- **Scholars:**
 - Work with McNair Faculty Mentors as a research assistant for eight weeks
 - Earn an Internship Award of between \$2,200 - \$2,800 while working on research
 - Receive assistance in paying for additional summer research expenses, if eligible
 - Weekly class topics: graduate school applications, research techniques/methodologies, and presentations
 - Present research at local, state, regional, and national conferences (all expenses paid)

The “McNair Experience” Professional Associations, Conferences, and Mentoring

- Scholars attend professional conferences with faculty mentors and/or McNair staff members
- Scholars present with faculty at State, Regional, and National Conferences
- Scholars often cited as contributors to published research
- Scholars take advantage of networking opportunities in professional settings
- Scholars obtain information on professional associations in their field of interest

McNair Advisory Board

- Consists of research faculty holding a rank of Assistant Professor or higher
- Serve as:
 - Recruitment and curriculum consultants
 - Program ambassadors
 - Faculty mentors for participants
 - Encourage peers and senior administration to support the McNair mission
 - Identify graduate students to serve as peer mentors

Impact on Students - Successes

- Completion of UB baccalaureate degree(s)
- Graduate school placement
- Fellowships and Scholarships
- Graduate Assistantships
- Teaching Assistantships
- Publications
- National Presentations
- Local, State, Regional, and National Academic Awards and Recognitions

