

## URSCA Committee Survey on Undergraduate Research Results 3/2/2012 (results reported to Provost from URSCA)

The good news: undergraduate research and scholarly activity is widely practiced on our campus:

- 90 faculty/staff members completed surveys, of 180 FTE faculty/staff, with responses from each academic department.
- Of those surveyed, 84% include URSCA in their program curriculum and 76% include it in a regularly scheduled class. 82% of respondents promote the practice of URSCA within their program.
- The URSCA activities we have ongoing on our campus are varied. Respondents identified review of written work (51%), literature review (46%), working in a lab with students (36%), monitoring student lab work (24%) or fieldwork (41%) as the most common practices.
- 80% of respondents report mentoring undergraduate researchers in the past year.
- 26% of respondents spent 6 or more hours per week mentoring students during the academic year and 20% during the summer.

The two most commonly cited barriers to the practice of URSCA on campus are *time* and *money*. The overall perception reflected in the survey results indicated faculty are very committed to the practice, yet it is a 'free extra' we do for the university – it is not included explicitly in tenure and promotion process, nor is it rewarded with financial backing from the institution. Individual comments from the surveys:

- “Because of the teaching load (and the required senior capstone is just a huge amount of work), I have to do most of my own research on my time (summer, evenings, and weekend). Because of that, I don't get to use students as much as I could. Money is also an issue. We have traditionally paid for the regional conference with our SUFAC funding, but that seems to be getting smaller every year. I am nervous we may not be able to pay for that trip much longer and that's a shame because it is such a crucial thing for our students.”
- “Faculty time – mentoring undergraduates for research takes time, and the current course load of 4 and 4 plus heavy service load does not leave much time. “
- “The biggest issue to my mind is that mentoring undergraduate research requires a large investment of time and effort, yet it is not something we are required to do. Our regular responsibilities aren't lessened if we mentor research. Speaking for myself, balancing work responsibilities is enough of a juggle without the added pressure of mentoring research. While I find it one of the most useful and rewarding professional activities I do, there just isn't any incentive to do so. This may sound selfish. Providing contact hour release for supervision of undergraduate research would be one way around this issue, although it would perhaps be difficult to implement a fair plan.”

Many comments on the survey reflected that people felt they were too new to comment on what we as faculty could/should do. Even though many respondents didn't feel they had been here long enough to answer (on the preparedness of the students, the amount of time faculty spent with students, etc.), many of them are doing some type of URSCA.

The URSCA committee recommends the university devote more resources to the high-impact practice of undergraduate research. The UWS faculty and students are invested in this practice and now is an ideal time for the administration to make a financial investment toward institutionalizing undergraduate research.