The FLEUR Program: Integrating Undergraduate Research into the Curriculum at the University of Alaska Anchorage

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Program Goals

- Increase the number of research experiences available to University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) students.
- Teach students how to conduct research and/or scholarly activity in their field, gain new research skills, learn how to think critically and scientifically.

Program Structure

- The Faculty Leadership in Expanding Undergraduate Research (FLEUR) is a competitive award for a faculty member that proposes to integrate original research into an existing course.
- Awards are up to $5,000 each, of which $2,500 may be used for curriculum development and the remainder for project expenses.
- Proposals are reviewed by a faculty panel with recommendations made to the Dean of the University Honors College.
- The FLEUR program was designed and initiated by faculty members.
- The program operates on funds donated to the University Honors College, with generous support from the Alaska Cardiovascular Research Foundation.

Results

- 18 FLEUR proposals submitted between spring 2011 and spring 2013.
  - 10 proposals funded
  - Enabled 78 students to participate directly in research
- Benefit to the research program for participating faculty, including papers
- Student End-of-Class Surveys (n=40, four FLEUR classes):
  - More likely to enroll in a Masters program
    - 38%
  - More likely to enroll in a Ph.D. program
    - 27%
- Gain from course

Conclusions

- Positive student and faculty feedback, some experiences transformative.
- The FLEUR program is a successful model for integrating research into a course. Each award provides a direct research experience for multiple students.

"(The FLEUR experience) made me realize that discovering something completely new is within reason and that it's not just super-geniuses out there making scientific discovery. Gave me confidence to pursue graduate school."

- Feedback from student end-of-class survey

http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/ours/for-faculty/FLEUR/