

URSC at Wabash College

Karen L. Gunther¹, James Brown², Lon Porter³,
Colin McKinney⁴, Robert Foote⁴

¹Department of Psychology, ²Department of Physics,
³Department of Chemistry, ⁴Department of Mathematics



The main successes we have achieved include ...

- A new statement in the Academic Bulletin about how Wabash values Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work (URSC).
- Suggestions for modifications to the faculty handbook to discuss URSC when submitting materials for faculty reviews.
- New poster stands (partially initiated by hosting mGluRs, the Midwest/Great Lakes Undergraduate Research Symposium in Neuroscience, in Sept. 2013).
- A new campus position of Institutional Researcher.
- An NSF S-STEM grant to support a community of students in the physical sciences – one goal of this project is to engage prospective science students in the scientific research process early on in their college careers through pre-enrollment internships, an innovative research-focused freshman seminar course, and subsequent immersion in the culture of scientific research.
- On-going annual (since 2001) campus-wide Research Celebration
 - students present research from summer internships and classes
 - during a trustees visit

Major challenges we are facing include ...

- Funding for all of the students who want to participate in summer research.

We are looking for creative solutions on ...

- Student summer internship funding.
- Helping in particular our humanities colleagues find ways to include students as collaborators in their research, scholarship, and creative work (e.g., trips to archives and libraries):
 - use the humanities colleagues who do successfully collaborate with students as examples
 - bring a humanity-oriented CUR facilitator to campus?
- How to do URSC and yet avoid faculty burnout?
 - Credit banking? But that would shift our teaching loads to our colleagues.
 - Summer stipends? Currently students are paid but faculty not (other than a consideration in salary reviews).

Our updated plans include ...

- Leveling the barriers to faculty wishing to engage undergraduates in research across the disciplines.
- Rewarding faculty in tenure and promotion for efforts of engaging students in URSC.
- A first attempt at reworking the Tenure & Promotion guidelines to highlight the significance of undergraduate research is stalled and we hope to restart those conversations.
- Create more community-building experiences for summer researchers across academic departments.
- Review the benefits of URSC campus-wide, not just within departments.
- Promote UGR as a high-impact experience to donors/alumni/trustees.

Questions still being pondered.

- Can all disciplines feasibly collaborate with students?
- Does URSC need to be original or simply new to the student?
- How to track what students do off campus.