

Mentoring Student Researchers in Psychology

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Undergraduate research continues to grow in prominence as a high-impact student learning activity. Benefits to students are typically reported within three domains: cognitive and intellectual growth, professional skill development and advancement (including academic achievement and education attainment), and personal growth. Psychology departments have long engaged students in undergraduate research activities, within the curriculum, such as in Research Methods courses, as well in research laboratories and independent research experiences. Given the numerous reported benefits of undergraduate research, institutions are seeking to enhance and expand their undergraduate research offerings by developing summer research programs, expanding honors and co-curricular research opportunities, and integrating and scaffolding more research experiences into the curriculum.

High-quality mentoring contributes significantly to the positive outcomes obtained from engaging in undergraduate research. Students benefit from opportunities to interact and engage with faculty on substantive matters and to receive frequent and meaningful feedback (Elrod, Husic & Kinzie, 2010) and mentoring plays an important role in identity development of students (Palmer, et al. 2018). During this workshop, utilizing Shanahan et al. (2015) Ten Salient Practices of Undergraduate Research Mentoring, participants will explore the important elements of mentoring relationships. Participants will have time for reflection and dialogue on how they can ensure students experience quality mentoring as they supervise both course-based undergraduate research and mentored research in psychology laboratories. Special attention will be paid to course-based undergraduate research experiences, which hold great promise for broadening participation and providing inquiry-based research experiences to more students.

By the close of the workshop, participants will have an enhanced understanding of the benefits of undergraduate research and the practices of quality mentoring. In addition, they will have articulated strategies that they can adopt at their home institution, in their courses or laboratory, to improve their experience mentoring student researchers. This workshop will benefit from the collective experiences of attendees as we explore the challenges and rewards, and pleasures and pitfalls of mentoring student researchers.