

URMI

The Undergraduate Research Mentorship Initiative

The School of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Undergraduate Research Mentorship Initiative:
Connections among Research, Teaching, and Learning
Deborah H. Holdstein, PhD, Dean

Overview

The Undergraduate Research Mentorship Initiative (URMI) is a new program in the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Columbia College Chicago that connects talented students interested in the experience of conducting academic research in particular disciplines with faculty mentors involved in worthy scholarly and research projects in their areas of expertise.

An initiative to benefit both students and faculty, the URMI will give students the opportunity to gain real-world experience and learn research and scholarly techniques from practitioners in academic and integrative disciplines based in the Liberal Arts and Sciences. The experience will prove invaluable to students as they enter professional fields or pursue higher academic degrees. Faculty will gain assistance in completing their innovative research and scholarship while mentoring students in fields of specialization within the academic community.

Rationale

The Undergraduate Research Mentorship Initiative will bring faculty members and students together in one-to-one, research and scholarship-centered relationships. Faculty members will be expected to delineate intellectually engaging, accountable, and academically enriching ways for undergraduates to participate in research and scholarly projects and will agree to work closely with these students as mentors and guides.

- > This LAS initiative is designed to enhance ways for faculty to demonstrate their overlapping responsibilities of teaching, research, and service by providing opportunities for undergraduates to develop research skills.
- > The program aims to invigorate the education of undergraduates by contributing to students' sense of and participation in the intellectual community at Columbia College Chicago.
- > The program provides faculty members with a resource: talented undergraduate students who may provide new insights and fresh perspectives to their research agendas.
- > The program provides undergraduates with an opportunity to share with faculty the intellectual excitement of inquiry into new questions, the solving of scholarly problems, and the creation of knowledge.



Process

1. Faculty will identify interested and qualified students and each will submit their proposals by the published deadline. Proposals will be due in early in spring semester for mentorships beginning the following fall.
2. In the case of more than three proposals from a given Department, the Department, with the guidance of the Chair, will rank the proposals before they go to the Dean's office.
3. The Dean will review the proposals, which will then go to an Advisory Committee appointed by the Dean for approval. Approved proposals move on to an interview process. Not all proposals are guaranteed to move to the interview stage.
4. The Dean's Advisory Committee, with the Dean or her designee, will interview faculty and nominated students to approve research teams.
5. Faculty and students will be notified of accepted research teams before registration for the following semester begins.
6. Students will earn up to 3 credit hours per semester. Under no circumstances will these courses carry LAS core credit, as this builds upon, but does not supplant, the LAS Core. Students and faculty members may extend the project/experience for one additional semester, and this likelihood should be addressed in the original proposal.
7. The student and faculty member each will write a summative report regarding the URMI experience and the nature of the research conducted to be submitted to the Dean, possibly for presentation at a URMI colloquium. The experience itself should include various writing-intensive projects for the student, whether related to the research itself or as a series of reflective pieces detailing the student's experiences. The faculty member should comment and provide feedback on these pieces.
8. The student and faculty member will jointly prepare a portfolio documenting the progress of and body of work (including the writing noted above) completed over the semester(s) and submit it to the Dean who will review it with the Dean's Advisory Committee.
9. Upon satisfactory review, the Dean will send the faculty member and student letters of completion and commendation, with copies to the Provost, the Vice President, and the President of Columbia College Chicago.

The Proposals

A competitive proposal from a faculty member will describe the following:

1. The nature and importance of the ongoing or proposed research or scholarly project and how the faculty member came to pursue this line of research.
2. The specific activities of the student and the ways the student will be included in the conceptual framework of the research or scholarly project. The student's responsibilities should extend beyond the repetitive and mundane tasks associated with research and scholarship.

3. The skills and background the student needs to successfully assist the faculty member. Students selected must have at least junior standing with a cumulative GPA of 3.0.
4. How the educational benefits of the project will be assessed, including reflective writings on the part of the student and the faculty member as the semester progresses.

A competitive proposal package from a student will contain the following:

1. A cover letter detailing the student's academic and other experiences relevant to the faculty member's work and the student's estimate of her or his ability to do the required scholarly or research activities.
2. A CCC grade transcript (or equivalent from a previous institution) documenting the student's grades.

The faculty member and student should submit the proposals together, with a cover letter (or "letter of transmission") from the faculty member written to the Dean and to the members of the Dean's Advisory Committee.

The Office of the LAS Dean

Deborah H. Holdstein, PhD, Dean x 8219

Neil Pagano, PhD, Associate Dean x 8218

Sharon Hekman, M.A., Assistant Dean x 8841

Alexandra Garcia, Assistant to the Dean x 8217

Page Deulin-Brticevich, Administrative Assistant x 8211