

Undergraduate research programs - learning to discovering

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Publication History

Received: 24 August 2015

Accepted: 21 September 2015

Published: 28 October 2015

Citation

Piyusha Kharat. Undergraduate research programs - learning to discovering. *Medical Science*, 2015, 18(74), 23-24

Dear Editor,

Today's lifestyle of most students is about studies not pertaining to books and paper but to books and the "Google Search" related to the topic. Gone are the days when the notes about related topic searched place in the book shelves entitled in bold sketch pens to be noticeable. Today's students are smarter owing to smarter ways of smart phones, internet and quicker aids that are just a touch away. Degree level colleges and universities are opening doors to such keen students under the title as "Undergraduate research programs" in their curriculum. This is a booster for students to impart practical training in various newly emerging research techniques in the multi-disciplinary areas be it arts, commerce, science, life-sciences etc.

The main objective of these undergraduate research programs is to provide an effective platform to the students to engage in research with faculty members of the Institute. What's more, they can get a chance to develop valuable mentorship through the guidance of experienced faculty of the Institute. Originality, decision-making, communication, organization, and persistence are all equally important skills to make the leap from gaining knowledge from others' discoveries to making discoveries on your own. Having these skills to encompass every level of research in every discipline, are key to an undergraduate developing the foundation for a successful career in research.

This means they have to understand the values of the profession that they are joining. Although undergraduates are provided opportunities to distinguish the importance of research, too often they fail to understand that research is not complete until it is published. Values of researchers essentially include publishing, peer review, and priority, but these values are not part of textbook information, traditional labs, and mass lectures or accessible through passive learning. Occasionally, students are listed as co-authors of articles in professional journals, but typically they are credited for their work in the acknowledgments. Rarely are students fully involved in both the writing and peer review process. Full engagement and benefit in undergraduate research will not be realized until peer review and publication are standard expectations of these critical experiences.

A series of processes are involved through the undergraduate program acceptance, execution and submission like scheduling regular meetings with your undergraduate researcher which gives a chance to check progress, answer questions, and minimize potential miscommunication concerning your research; communicating your research in layman's term thus explaining the bottom line and importance of research motivating undergraduate assistant by providing an overall goal to achieve; establishing network opportunities by introducing student to colleagues and graduate students. Researchers thus gather resources, develop partnerships between projects, and maximize the

return received from the student's investment in your research projects. Expressing energy, enthusiasm, and interest and persistence are the vital ingredients for a successful undergraduate research program.

However owing to the pros these research programs do have cons to it as well. There are plagiarisms for quicker submission and faster publications. Malpractices of the students work and name being replaced by others are also prevalent in few institutes and colleges. The easy "cut-copy-paste" of the editing world is just another "smart short cut" to this. This not only inculcates illegal ways of research procedure but also makes students psychologically dependent and thus paralyses the thought process of the student.

Thus to conclude a thorough knowledge and an awareness should be created to students regarding the undergraduate programs by the professors and teachers in the institutes so that the students understand the real meaning of such projects and can choose topics that interest them so that they mind, knowledge and skills are put to right use thus helping them discover their own talents to discovering newer ones!

Medical Science