Tips for Getting Involved in Research on Campus

By Kara MacIntyre, 2016

Getting involved in research can seem daunting, but the best way to go about it is to identify faculty members who research topics that interest you, and then send them a brief professional email. In your email, tell the professor 1) who you are (major, year); 2) why you are interested in his/her research in particular; and 3) ask him if there are openings in his/her lab for undergrad students and what would be the best way for you to apply if there are spots.

To search for research labs that would best suit your interests, look at the following links:

For **Biology research** labs:

Biology department page:

<http://bsc.ua.edu/>

Hover over "research" at the top, and then choose either ecology or molecular research, whichever you prefer. Then click on the name of each professor, and it will tell you about his/her research. Some even have a link to their lab webpage.

For **Chemistry research** labs:

Chemistry department faculty:

<http://chemistry.ua.edu/status/faculty/>

Click on the name of  each professor to learn about his/her research.

For **Kinesiology/ Exercise and sports science** research labs:

<http://education.ua.edu/people/d/kine/>

Click on the name of each professor to learn about his/her research.

For **Psychology research**:

<https://psychology.ua.edu/classification/faculty/>

Click on the name of each professor to learn about his/her research.

**Undergraduate Research Conference at UA** archives:

<http://osp.ua.edu/URCAnewArchive.html>

Here are the undergrads who presented at previous URCA at UA. If a title of a presentation sounds interesting to you, look into their professor's research lab.

**Database of undergrad research opportunities**:

<https://ua-app01.ua.edu/undergradresearch/public/research_opportunity>

This is a great new database where faculty members post research opportunities for undergraduates. It is new this year, so not many faculty members have used it, but hopefully more will soon.

**Emerging scholars** program:

<http://emergingscholars.ua.edu/>

If you have no success with emailing professors, or if emailing professors sounds daunting to you, I would recommend this class. It's worth 1 credit hour and meets once per week. You learn about what undergraduate research on campus is like and hear from some professors and students who do research on campus. The teacher then helps pair you with a faculty research mentor. The application is due **Tuesday, Nov 1st.**

Keep in mind that there are multiple ongoing research projects in each lab, so try to choose a lab that suits your interests, and know that you can probably choose which specific project you wish to work on once you join the lab.

Also, in order for you to gain something valuable from your research experience, most professors suggest that you dedicate about 5 hours per week on research, but labs and projects vary in their time commitments. You can choose to get as involved as you want.

Please let me know if you have any questions or want me to proofread your email before you send it to a professor! You can email me at [kemacintyre@crimson.ua.edu](mailto:kemacintyre@crimson.ua.edu) or the other co-director of research, Melanie Painter at [mlpainter@crimson.ua.edu](mailto:mlpainter@crimson.ua.edu) or we would be happy to meet with you!!