

Undergraduate Research Opportunities Center (UROC)

“Providing Undergraduates with Faculty-Mentored Research Opportunities and Preparation for Graduate Studies”

UROC Program Overview & Mentorship Agreement

OVERALL PURPOSE

The purpose of faculty-mentored research is to develop the academic aspirations and research skills of emerging research scholars. Students will learn by participating in research under the supervision of a faculty mentor. Upon completion of the program, students will have experienced the academic mentoring relationship and the independence of the research environment.

UROC

The Undergraduate Research Opportunities Center (UROC) at UC Merced was established in Spring 2014 with a mission to encourage and facilitate faculty-mentored undergraduate research projects and creative activities across all schools and academic disciplines. Most programs housed in UROC are grant funded and initially had been STEM focused. In recent growth, UROC has established new programs that serve undergraduate students in the disciplines of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts as well as continuing their development as advanced research participants. These undergraduate research programs expand the opportunities for undergraduate students to conduct research across all academic disciplines and building upon their first research experience, truly supporting the UC mission of research to all UC Merced undergraduate students.

UROC is designed to equip undergraduate students with research experience, graduate school preparation, and leadership development to help them become competitive when applying to graduate school and more confident to contribute their diverse perspectives in the creation of new knowledge. The current programs under UROC include CAMP, JGI, SOAR, SURF, UC LEADS, and UROC-H. Most programs under UROC are highly competitive and intended for students who are first generation college students, disadvantaged, or from underrepresented minoritized backgrounds.

All UROC Scholars participate in the on-campus 9-week Summer Undergraduate Research Institute (SURI) or an external REU program. After SURI, students are encouraged and funded to attend academic and professional conferences, present their research, and participate in programing and advising sessions to prepare and assist them through the graduate school application process.

Roles and Responsibilities for UROC Scholars & Faculty Mentors

Communication and encouraging attitudes are important in undergraduate research. Establishing a strong, positive relationship between scholar and faculty mentor is essential to the success of the UROC program. UROC is a great opportunity for undergraduate students to become inspired by research and gain insight into what graduate school is all about. Through mentorship, scholars and will gain experience communicating their research to academic and non-academic audiences.

UROC RESEARCH SCHOLAR'S ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

UROC Scholars will be involved in research projects based on their defined area of research interest or academic field. Each students' specific research project will differ according to the faculty mentor and subject matter. All students are expected to conduct individual research projects and be shown where and how their individual work fits the overall goal or direction of the mentor's research project.

- Meet with Faculty Mentor 1-2 times a week during SURI or during an alternative academic year assignment due to COVID 19.
- Check-in with the UROC Coordinator once a semester to provide updates on the status of their research

project and applications and submissions for graduate school, conferences, presentations, and publications.

- Participate in UROC's SURI program virtually (June 1, 2020 – July 31, 2020) and present your research at the Summer Undergraduate Research Symposium in (Fall 2020) or at the UC Merced Research Week Showcase (Spring 2021)
- Be responsible (i.e. contact your faculty mentor/coordinator ASAP) and put forth your best effort
- Actively participate in your research project, if necessary
- Be patient, open, and honest with your Faculty Mentor
- Take initiative & expand on the information your Faculty Mentor provides you (i.e. through additional readings, etc.)
- Update UROC coordinators regarding presentations and publications as they arise
- Be self-motivated, but ASK for help to make sure you fully understand your research
- Be open to advice from your Faculty Mentor
- Show respect for EVERYONE

FACULTY MENTOR ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

One of the key characteristics to a successful mentoring experience is the willingness to guide, instruct and assist students to reach their research objectives. Beyond serving as an advisor on a research project, the mentor takes an active interest in the student's academic and professional development as a scholar. The ideal mentor seeks to quickly establish a positive working relationship with the student to promote confidence, student inquiry, focus, and discipline. Regular communication with your student is a fundamental element of a successful research experience. Schedule a regular time to meet face-to-face (virtually), talk on the phone or communicate via e-mail, and don't underestimate the value of informal conversation; all are productive and revealing exchanges.

- Be available to your scholar and set clear expectations
- Exchange or confirm contact information with your scholar
- Develop and adhere to a schedule of regular 20-30-minute meetings with your students.
- Teach your scholar core research methods and principles, how to perform routine tasks, and how-to problem solve
- Integrate scholars fully into your research team and supervise the student's research activities. Students **should not** be involved with daily clerical responsibilities.
- Lead and facilitate the IRB/IACUC process (if necessary for project) with your scholar and emphasize scientific honesty, accuracy, ethics, and reliability (**Undergraduates cannot initiate process alone at UC Merced**)
- Review your student's progress on a weekly basis (during SURI or an alternative academic year assignment due to COVID 19) and ensure that your students are staying on track with their research project and developmental skills.
- If the student is expected to make either an oral or poster presentation at a professional conference or in an academic setting, review the presentation data the student will use, and, if possible, help your student prepare presentation materials.
- Help the student prepare an abstract midway through the summer, as well as oral or poster presentation for the research symposium by the end of the summer.
- Attend scholar's presentation at the Undergraduate Research Symposium. Students must complete all requirements for the program and all work must be deemed satisfactory by the faculty mentor.

Mentoring Tips

- Talk about various issues associated with choosing and preparing for graduate school and what it means to be a professional in your field.
- Discuss career options with your student and the importance of making the most of his/her remaining undergraduate studies.
- If satisfied with your student's performance, offer to write letters of recommendation.

- Do not make assumptions about prior knowledge by under or overestimating academic skills and abilities. Regularly encourage your student to speak up if there is something that is not understood, and then take the necessary steps to fill in any knowledge gaps.
- Based on the student and the nature of their research experience you may need to adjust your level of hands-on guidance. Some students may be capable of relatively independent work and others may need, or the situation may dictate, a more guided experience. Discuss your concerns with the student and with our office if they arise.
- Provide critical feedback when necessary, as developing undergraduates as researchers is the ultimate goal.
- Promptly communicate to program administrators any problem that may arise with your student so they may resolve the issue as quickly as possible.
- Faculty members may utilize graduate student research assistants and/or postdoctoral scholars as research mentors under the careful guidance of the faculty mentor.

By e-signing the following, I have read the roles and responsibilities of UROC scholars and faculty mentors stated above and agree to join in a UROC research mentorship with the other party stated below.	
Briefly Describe Research Project	
UROC Scholar	Print Name
	Date Electronic Signature
Faculty Mentor	Print Name
	Date Electronic Signature

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jorge Arroyo, UROC Director at jarroyo22@ucmerced.edu or uroc@ucmerced.edu.