



# Mentoring Undergraduate Researchers

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# Topics for Today

- Getting Started
- Expectations
- Communication

# Common Goals

- Build a productive relationship
- Communicate effectively
- Provide context/ background
- Develop skills
- Establish appropriate benchmarks
- Foster high-level performance
- Provide effective assessment & feedback
- Addressing obstacles and challenges
- Foster critical thinking & synthesis
- Foster independence
- Introductions to the scholarly community
- Assist with career planning



# Finding Research Students\*

- Classes – Look for students who are doing well and enjoy the subject
- Extending class projects
- Students come to you – makes it publically known that you want to do research
- Being available/ relational to students
- Be careful with blanket invitations
- Collegial with other faculty members/ they can send you students

\*Ideas generated during the Adams Center Session 10/01/14

[Blogs.acu.edu/undergradresearch](http://blogs.acu.edu/undergradresearch)



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# What can Research Students Do?/ How Do You Pick a Project?\*

- Sociology – relatively easy taking general survey data, challenge trying to get them to look at interesting data
- Starting at the beginning, from IRB, taking through the whole process not just collecting data
- Generated from professor interest
  - Some times student generated idea
- Look for students that want to go to grad school so they will be invested
- Encourage them to take classes that will help their research (for example programing)
- Having some students that have some relevant experience, starting ahead of time meeting, starting with relevant papers
- In some fields they can work along side you with whatever you are doing.

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# Setting Expectations

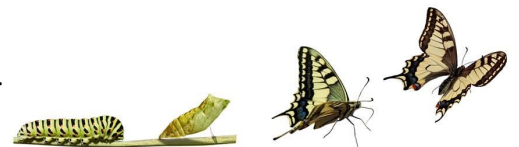
- What are common mentor expectations of mentees?
- What do you imagine mentees expect of mentors?

# Amazing Mentees\*

- Follow through
- Self-motivated
- Prompt and dutiful arrival
- Show up when they ought and do what they ought
- Professionalism
- Superior writing skills
- Aptitude to learn what's needed
- Inquisitiveness
- Interest
- Exhibit initiative
- A mini-Ph.D. (already knows how to do stuff)
- Finished what is asked of them

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# Expectations of fabulous mentees\*

- Flexible schedule to get what needs to be done, done
- Make mistakes- common/necessary in research; don't be afraid to fail
- Be positive
- Dedicated, “whole heart”
- Get excited/share in others' excitement even if you don't fully understand
- Try to problem solve on your own before asking for help
- Make a contribution to project; suggest an idea
- Reliable
- Be organized, especially with lab notebook
- Ask questions
- Be open to feedback

\*Generated by 2013 UW Amgen & HHMI EXROP Summer Scholars, Orientation 6/14



# Awesome Mentors\*

- A lot of personal and individual time
- Readily available on mentees timeline
- Respectful of the mentee
- Soft critique
- Personable and helpful (Leonard not Sheldon)
- More structure than we are used to giving
- Constant feedback
- To treat student as equals
- That mentors will protect them from the Sheldons during presentations
- Give parameters/ benchmark/ schedule
- Liaison to great community

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# What makes a Good Mentor?\*

- Committed to Educational process
- Sacrifice time, energy and resources
- Encourages student make the project his or her own
- Patience
- Encouraging
- Passionate about the research and helping student grow
- Clear Communication
- Allows students to make mistakes and helps correct it with constructive direction
- Involving the student in every step
- Guiding to answers instead of telling the answers
- Dependable
- Take time to ask their students questions and then push back on their answers
- Punctuality/ showing up to scheduled meetings
- Friendly attitude
- Confidence in students
- Helps understand WHY you do certain steps
- Specific – ask specific questions about the direction of the student’s work, doesn’t accept vague or general responses
- Keep student accountable
- Take them to educational/ professional events



\*From survey of undergraduate researchers September 2014

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# Communication\*

- Emailing
- Meeting face-to-face
- Detail in writing
- Redundancy
- Getting everyone in a group meeting together
- Shared google doc
- Willingness to give cell phone number
- Praise within a group/ meet privately to share concerns
- Establish the mentor is the person to come to when there are problems

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# Communicate Effectively\*

- Ask students how they prefer to be communicated with
- Regular (team) meetings
- Establish Checklists
- Talk to the mentee about your concerns
- Check-in with the mentee about how they feel about the process

\*Ideas generated during the CUR conference June 2014

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# Resources

- Members of your department
- University Undergraduate Research Council
- Cur.org
  
- [Blogs.acu.edu/undergradresearch/](https://blogs.acu.edu/undergradresearch/)
  - Under Faculty mentors
  - Resources