



Helping students to learn through research



Office of Undergraduate Research
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“Information alone has a short half-life,
but students who understand how
discoveries are made are well prepared
to address the unsolved problems of the future.”

—Dr. Patricia J. Pukkila, Director, Office of Undergraduate Research

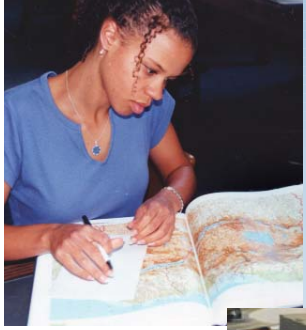
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Active learning through discovery

The Office of Undergraduate Research helps Carolina fulfill its mission to provide an unsurpassed undergraduate education for the 21st century, with all of the benefits of a world-class research university.



- Through the Office of Undergraduate Research, Carolina students engage in original research with top scholars and teachers from across the University.
- We bring together first-rate faculty scholars seeking to work one-on-one with undergraduates on original research. Faculty mentors help undergraduates to refine their research interests and learn how discoveries are made by participating in them.
- We encourage undergraduates to share their research findings with others through special symposia and presentations at professional conferences.
- We offer graduate students opportunities to mentor undergraduates (with faculty advisors), as part of their training in teaching and research.



"I was able to take a current issue and analyze it using the latest, advanced techniques, rather than just reading about historic approaches to the problem in a text book."



"I felt the thrill of discovering something that has never been realized before. I have carried that excitement derived from my undergraduate research through graduate school and postdoctoral studies, and will continue to carry it for the rest of my life as a scientist."



"The chance to do serious and top-quality research at the undergraduate level was a top priority and one of the deciding factors in my university choice."

"My advisor was absolutely fantastic; she insisted my work had to be top-notch and was always available for me."

"I gained confidence from speaking with members of the General Assembly and from the interest they showed in my research."

"I learned first-hand about an aspect of the public policy process that is hard to teach in the classroom – the actual transfer of knowledge from researchers to policymakers who can put that knowledge into practice."

Research is key to education in a fast-changing world

The Office of Undergraduate Research is instrumental in increasing undergraduates' awareness of the importance and centrality of original research in their education experiences.

Research makes a difference

Undergraduate research is conducted through course work, internships, creative performances, and mentored independent study at home and abroad. Students have researched the:

- effectiveness of Latino-owned credit unions
- challenges facing the hosiery industry
- educational needs of at-risk children
- impact of aid organizations for youth in Nairobi
- role of calcium in AIDS dementia
- effect of vitamin E on prostate cancer
- ecotourism in Belize and Kenya
- determinants of economic growth in North Carolina

Bringing graduate students and undergraduates together through mentoring

The Office of Undergraduate Research provides the necessary catalyst for breaking down artificial boundaries between learning and discovery and between graduate and undergraduate education. We recently began offering financial assistance to graduate students who wish to mentor special undergraduate research projects during the summer months. Graduate fellows connect undergraduates with faculty advisors whom they might not have known otherwise. At the same time, faculty advisors help graduate fellows learn how to become mentors, an important part of the graduate training experience, and an invaluable relationship for undergraduates seeking guidance for their research and their careers.

Communicating the impact of research

An important part of research is communicating the findings to policymakers and the general public. Carolina undergraduates and faculty demonstrate their research results for state legislators during the bi-annual "Research in the Capital" symposium.

Students also exhibit and explain their research to the University community, during the annual "Celebration of Undergraduate Research" symposium on campus. The symposium includes performances of original work, oral presentations and posters.

Undergraduate research and graduate fellowships are supported in part by private funds, including grants from the Smallwood Foundation, the McGee Family Research Fund, and the Terry Sanford Undergraduate Research Fund. We are committed to increasing the number and variety of research opportunities in all disciplines so that every undergraduate can become a full participant in the intellectual life of our research university.



For more information, please contact the Office of Undergraduate Research, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, our@unc.edu, (919) 843-7763.

