Opportunities for undergraduates to engage in Undergraduate Research (UR) have proliferated at institutions of all sizes in recent years. The Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR), which supports and promotes collaborative student-faculty scholarship, has seen its institutional membership triple in the last two decades; UND is one of CUR’s 600 member institutions. Likewise, since CUR’s founding the Carnegie Foundation’s Boyer Commission has twice (1998, 2004) advised undergraduate institutions to do more, for the purpose of teaching, to increase undergraduates’ participation in faculty research activities. Finally, the American Association of Colleges & Universities recently labeled UR one of the “high-impact best practices” through which undergraduate institutions can promote student learning, engagement, and success (AAC&U 2008). The AAC&U has gone out of its way to connect UR to the retention and success of first generation, minority, and non-traditional students in particular.

Given these developments, we should not be surprised to see that resources devoted to UR have increased considerably as well in the last decade (Hu et al. 2007). Such support has come on the heels of research into students’ overwhelmingly positive response to their UR experiences. According to one study by David Lopatto, for example, 56% of undergraduate science students surveyed in 2003, from 41 institutions, left their UR experience with an improved opinion of research as a teaching and learning tool—and the faculty with whom they worked. Moreover, nearly 80% of students indicated that the learning community aspect of their research experience—which includes collaboration with both faculty and student peers—increased their appetite for further research in their field, including convincing many to pursue graduate education, an option they had not previously considered (Lopatto 2004).

But in spite of the attention and resources devoted to UR recently, the 2011 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) report shows that UR is still a marginal practice at most research universities. Although comparable to similar institutions, UND is no exception; our NSSE results from 2011 indicate that 20% of seniors at High Activity Research Universities had engaged in research with faculty, as compared to 18% at UND. Indeed, despite the array of qualitative, quantitative, basic, and applied UR at this institution—from aerospace and medicine to the social sciences and fine arts—too many opportunities fly under too many students’ radar, and too few faculty see the benefits of making UR a high-profile practice. There are many reasons for this, of course, the most obvious of which is that our approach to UR has been neither systematic nor comprehensive. Such a statistic nevertheless suggests that in spite of the UR opportunities available at UND, faculty and administrators can and should be more intentional in creating, coordinating, and communicating with students and each other on UR.

As such, the purpose of this essay is fourfold: to initiate a dialogue on UR generally on campus; to encourage faculty (and administrators) either to formulate anew or redefine departments’ approach to undergraduate research; to recommend that they devote more resources to such programs and do more to embed UR in curricula from the bottom up, freshman to senior; and to make UR part of the classroom experience.
specifically and university culture generally.

A reconsideration of UR begins, of course, with defining the term. CUR defines UR as “An inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline.” While I appreciate the definition, I suggest that as faculty we remember students need not produce novel work in their field—only begin thinking about how to do so. With an expanded definition of research in mind, then, the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning has recognized that one size does not fit all in UR: decisions on whether models should be process or product centered, disciplinary or interdisciplinary, and open or restricted (“Honors students only”), for example, will have to be determined by each institution.

As a representative of the UND Honors Program, an interdisciplinary, skills-based program serving a rural, mid-sized public university, I would encourage UND to follow the Carnegie Academy’s lead and broaden our definition of UR rather than restrict it. Although UR is often considered “original,” “primary,” and “applied,” occurring in the studio, field, or laboratory, it can also include conceptual and secondary research problems, critical inquiry of class texts or published research, course-based or capstone research papers, well-defined group projects outside the lab, and service and/or experiential learning projects, particularly for younger students.

However we choose to define UR, we must be intentional in communicating this definition to our students and reminding them of the benefits of UR. Such benefits are many, after all. For students, UR:

- Reinforces students’ classroom learning, allowing students to apply lectures/textbooks to projects outside the classroom;
- Gives students an organic, intentional learning community beyond the first year experience;
- Helps students get to know faculty better;
- Allows them to develop skills they can use for any career path: communication, leadership, and organizational skills for different audiences, and thinking and reasoning strategies for any text;
- Increases engagement, “persistence,” and degree completion (Nagda 1998; Kuh 2008);
- Increase students’ likelihood for acceptance to top graduate/professional schools;
- Allows students to publish in one of many general and discipline-specific undergraduate journals.

Likewise, UR benefits faculty in a number of ways. Besides being an effective pedagogical model, UR helps students to see the “real world” application of lectures/methods/theories outside the classroom, aids in recruitment and retention of majors to our disciplines, increases the likelihood of students’ acceptance to top graduate/professional schools, and gives departments another avenue for assessing progress toward promotion or tenure. Perhaps most importantly, UR provides departments with an additional student assessment module. For example, the English or History department might be seeking data on how effectively upperclassmen are retaining and applying the analytical methods and theories learned in Engl 272 “Introduction to Literary Criticism” or Hist 240 “The Historian’s Craft” to texts/genres/projects beyond those specific courses. UR can help these departments know the extent to which this is really occurring—how efficiently curricula are developing young historians or literary scholars.

In spite of these benefits to both faculty and students, making UR a part of departments’ (or the university’s) culture is easier said than done. Especially in the Arts & Humanities, many faculty question whether the same opportunities exist for students as in the hard sciences, where there tends to be more money available for research, and asking undergrads to assist in faculty research appears much easier to do, structurally speaking, whether in terms of methods employed or domain knowledge required to conduct meaningful research.

Nevertheless, there are things we can all do to encourage the UR culture in our disciplines. The most important move we can make collectively is to make UR routine, to assume the participation of undergraduates.

The most important move we can make collectively is to make UR routine, to assume the participation of undergraduates.

(continued on page 4)
ENRICHING THE UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING EXPERIENCE AT UND

AN INVITATION TO FACULTY
TO DEVELOP AND TEACH COURSES
IN THE SCALE-UP CLASSROOM

Exceptional UND is our campus community’s shared vision of the future. A key strategic priority is to enrich the student learning experience through high-impact teaching and learning initiatives. The goal of the new **Student-Centered Active Learning Environment for Undergraduate Programs** (SCALE-UP) learning environment in O’Kelly Hall is to change the paradigm for teaching and learning in large undergraduate classes from a passive, lecture-based model of instruction to a collaborative, inquiry-based model.

In conjunction with the Office of Instructional Development, the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will fund model projects by faculty who teach large enrollment classes. The projects will be undertaken during the **summer of 2012**, with the primary objective being the development of appropriate course materials for teaching inquiry/group-based courses in the SCALE-UP classroom in the spring of 2013. The courses developed will also serve as models for faculty who will use such spaces in the future and OID will organize several venues for the sharing of that work. The structure of the projects will parallel past Essential Studies Model Project grants previously offered through OID.

The primary intent of SCALE-UP is to establish a highly collaborative, hands-on, computer-rich, interactive learning environment for large-enrollment courses. This faculty development program in support of that approach is open to UND faculty (with the exception of GTAs and visiting professors) interested in teaching in the SCALE-UP classroom. Preference will be given to large enrollment courses and introductory level courses.

More details and the call for proposals are available on the OID website (www.oid.und.edu). Faculty chosen to participate in the pilot project will receive $4000 per course developed. This will include a **May 14-16** workshop with other faculty in the cohort that will be developing SCALE-UP courses. The workshop will assist faculty in thinking about their learning goals and how best to accomplish them in the SCALE-UP environment, and will facilitate collaboration during the development phase. The workshop also will focus on developing assessment plans for these learning goals. Given the size and interactive nature of these courses, funding will be provided ($1500 per course for the spring of 2013) for an undergraduate teaching assistant.

Proposal deadline: **April 2, 2012 at noon**
grams, both of which further the priority of “enrich[ing] the student learning experience.” UR also serves to enhance “adaptive...personalized” faculty-student relationships, facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration, and expand UND’s presence in the Grand Cities, Red River Valley Research Corridor, and region generally.

The good news is that our campus has begun conversations on how to take UR initiatives forward under Exceptional UND. The Office of Instructional Development recently held an “On Teaching” Box Lunch session in which some 25 faculty from across the university came to hear about UR. Likewise, the Division of Research and Economic Development and the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs held a listening session to solicit faculty input on a partnership to develop an interactive website connecting interested students to faculty seeking undergraduate researchers, and vice versa. The Provost’s Office has also sponsored a First-Year Experience pilot seminar in which UR was the centerpiece.

Perhaps the best news of all is that both anecdotal and survey evidence suggests that UR is the type of learning experience students want, and that they are seeking out such opportunities earlier in their undergraduate education. If we don’t want to risk losing engaged students to rival institutions, UND should move to provide more of these exceptional learning opportunities. Acting together, we can and will.

References


National Survey of Student Engagement. Fostering Student Engagement Campuswide—annual results 2011. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research.


GATHER STUDENT FEEDBACK ON YOUR CLASS IN PROGRESS

SCHEDULE AN SGID

SGIDs, (small group instructional diagnosis, a process for soliciting student feedback at mid-term.) are conducted by trained faculty who work as facilitators for the process in their colleagues' classrooms. A facilitator will collect information from your students, write it up, and provide you with high-quality student input regarding their learning. You’ll have this information now, rather than waiting until semester's end when course evaluations are completed. Furthermore, the interactive nature of the process can motivate students to think more carefully and deeply, so SGID feedback is often more thorough than course evaluations, providing you with a clear understanding of student perceptions. SGIDs are intended to be formative (i.e., for your own benefit as a teacher) rather than summative (they are not to be used as an evaluation of teaching, for example in promotion and tenure files). You’ll find more information at under the “Resources” link on the OID webpage.

We are at mid-semester, and it is not too late to schedule an SGID for your class but do it soon—we recommend you do not go past the third week in March. To schedule an SGID, please contact Jana Lagro at 7-4998 or jana.lagro@email.und.edu
SUMMER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

7th Annual Teaching with Technology Seminars

May 21-24 & May 29-June 1
12:30 pm to 4 pm
or
June 11-14 & 18-21
8:30 am to noon

These CILT seminars are designed for faculty interested in using technology to enhance traditional classroom or online teaching. This includes instructors at all levels: those thinking about using technology; beginning users; and others who are interested in more advanced applications. In this context, “technology” includes course web sites (Blackboard), web research projects, tutorials and animations, social software (wikis, blogs, and journals), “clickers” (audience response system), lecture capture and other audio and video enhancements.

A $500 stipend is offered. Visit the CILT website or contact CILT (777-2129) for more information. Registration is limited to 12 faculty (per seminar), and applications will be accepted and reviewed until April 1.

Register online at http://und.edu/academics/cilt/workshops/twt.cfm

2012 Teaching with Writing Course Development Workshop

May 21-25
8:00 am to noon

How would you like to have that new prep for fall 2012 completely planned out before the end of May? If you are planning to use writing in a new course or a revision of a course, apply to participate in the Teaching with Writing workshop. The workshop provides an opportunity to work on course development with the input of colleagues from across the disciplines. Along the way you’ll learn about best practices for teaching with writing, including ways to use writing to promote learning and ways to teach students the writing conventions of their disciplines.

The workshop will take place May 21-25 from 8:00 am to noon. Participants receive a $500 stipend (subject to standard deductions) and workshop materials.

The workshop is limited to 12 participants, and applications are due April 2.

To apply, complete the online application at http://und.edu/academics/writing-across-the-curriculum/workshops.cfm

UPCOMING ON TEACHING LUNCH SEMINAR

Integrating Teaching, Research, and Service

Thursday, April 05, 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM (register by Tuesday, April 3 at noon)

On Teaching Lunch Seminars are informal lunch-time discussions on teaching-related topics of interest to faculty in all disciplines. All sessions take place in the Badlands Room. To register and reserve a lunch, please fill out the online registration form on the OID webpage (oid.und.edu).

For information contact Jana Lagro at 7-4998 or jana.lagro@email.und.edu
UPCOMING DEADLINES

April 2   SCALE-UP course development proposals due (noon)
April 2   FIDC Grant Monthly Deadline (noon)
April 2   Teaching with Writing Course Development Workshop application due
April 2   FIDC Mini-Project Grant Deadline (noon)
May 1     FIDC Grant Monthly Deadline (noon)
          should include all requests between May 1-Aug. 31