



Table of Contents

URS Staff Directory	2
URS Program Overview	3-4
Understanding Inter L&S 250	4-6
Finding a Research Opportunity	7-8
What Do Research Mentors Look For?	9
What to Do at the Interview	9-10
Expectations for the Research Experience	11-12
URS Scholar/Mentor Research Contract	13

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLARS PROGRAM 2009/2010 STAFF



URS PROGRAM

25 Ingraham Hall
1155 Observatory Drive
email: urs@lssaa.wisc.edu
website: www.lssaa.wisc.edu/urs
phone: 608-262-2583

UNIVERSITY SERVICES ASSOCIATE 2

Jan Lucchesi
25 Ingraham
email: lucchesi@lssaa.wisc.edu
phone: 608-262-2583

URS STUDENT WORKER

Ashley Jordan
25 Ingraham
Email: urs@lssaa.wisc.edu
Phone: 608-262-2583

DIRECTOR

Svetlana T. Karpe, Ph.D., Assistant Dean
25 Ingraham Hall
email: stkarpe@wisc.edu
phone: 608-262-2583

FELLOWS' SUPERVISOR

Amy Sloane, Faculty Associate
25 Ingraham
email: alsloane@wisc.edu
phone: 608-265-9726

URS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Undergraduate Research Scholars program is dedicated to enhance the academic lives of UW-Madison students by providing first and second year undergraduates with opportunities to earn credit for participating in the research and creative work of scholars on the UW-Madison campus. The program has been designed to include partnerships between students and mentors, seminars on research-relevant issues, and practice in research/artistic presentations. The many benefits of the program are found in the fluid interaction between these activities.

Admission to the Program

The URS program is intended to be a **two-semester experience**. Admitted students attend an orientation meeting, enter the program in the fall semester, and register for URS research credits (2 or 3) in both the fall and spring semesters.

Freshmen and sophomores in any UW-Madison school or college are eligible to be URS scholars. The program admits incoming first-year students in the summer before their first college fall semester. In the spring and summer, currently enrolled first-year students may apply for admission in the fall of their sophomore year. Interested students must complete an on-line application form providing details about their previous experience in and their motivation for research. Admission is based on the student's overall motivation and potential to benefit from the Program.

Faculty/Staff Mentoring

The essence of the URS Program is the Scholar/Research Mentor relationship and the opportunity it gives the student to engage in inquiry-based learning or creative work in diverse academic fields. Scholars will gain experience in probing the unexplained, exploring the possible, creating new knowledge, and producing works of art. The impact on the Scholar can be profound and life changing.

Research Fellows

Research Fellows -- juniors and seniors who have had research experience -- forge a crucial link between the URS scholars and the professional staff of the program. Research fellows develop and facilitate small seminars, assist scholars with finding compatible research opportunities, and serve as role models on the road to graduation. Research fellows participate in an ongoing training and are supervised by professional staff. Finally, your research fellow is a contact for you, should problems or concerns arise regarding your progress or performance in assisting your mentor.

URS Small Group Seminars

URS Seminars explore the research enterprise and the university experience. The seminars meet weekly on Tuesdays or Wednesdays and are facilitated by two research fellows. These sessions are designed to remove the mystique of the big university and replace it with knowledge about the campus and the broader aspects of research and creative work, and to address research-related topics of interest to students in the sciences, humanities, social sciences, and arts. These small groups allow URS scholars to voice their concerns and opinions, explore research ethics, and give each other invaluable support and feedback.

Research Presentations

At the end of fall semester, scholars give short oral presentations about their research work or artistic project. The presentations offer the students an opportunity to share findings with their fellow scholars, get feedback on ideas, and share enthusiasm for the hard work they have completed. The presentations are a step toward developing personal presentation styles and empowering a self-image of being knowledgeable about the research work.

At the end of spring semester, all scholars participate in the campus-wide Undergraduate Symposium, where they give oral or poster presentations of their work. The 2010 Undergraduate Symposium will be held on **Thursday, April 15, 2010**. Each scholar is required to submit a research abstract that must be approved by his or her research mentor in order to be accepted at the symposium.

The URS presentations become part of the students' seminar grade and are evaluated by their research fellow in collaboration with the URS staff.

Understanding Inter L&S 250: The Undergraduate Research Experience

Inter L&S 250 is designed to allow students to earn academic credit while working on research and other kinds of creative projects with faculty and staff across the UW-Madison campus. This undergraduate course is unusual in that it involves an individual, unique research experience along with program seminars in which URS scholars and research fellows, under the direct guidance of the URS Director, explore topics of general interest and discuss the research experience.

Since Inter L&S 250 can involve research experiences in areas from engineering to nursing and from music and to biology, it is placed in the L&S Interdisciplinary Courses. On the UW transcript, the course will appear as "Inter L&S 250, "Undergraduate Research Experience." The course title makes clear that students have participated in a research-focused class.

The URS seminars are organized into small-groups that meet weekly and allow URS scholars to assemble for presentations and discussions about the university's research culture, research ethics and responsibilities, how research is conducted in the various disciplines, post-graduation options, and explorations of how to build diverse and tolerant communities. The seminars are organized by research fellows and allow you an opportunity to share your research experience with your classmates and participate in informational discussions that are relevant to the particular curricular track that you are pursuing.

Inter L&S 250 and Registration for Credit

Only first- and second-year students who have been admitted to the Undergraduate Research Scholars Program may register for Inter L&S 250. The course permits registration for 1 to 3 credits. How many credits a student registers for depends on how many hours per week s/he devotes to the assigned research or creative project. Working on research for 4 to 6 hours per week earns a student 2 credits and most students should be registered in Inter L&S 250 for a total of 2 credits. Students interested in working on their projects for 7 to 12 hours per week should talk with URD Director about being registered in Inter L&S 250 for a total of 3 credits. Be aware that if you exceed a total of 18 credits, you will be charged additional tuition. In some cases, a research mentor will prefer that you register for directed study or special problems credits under their supervision in their academic department. In such cases, contact Program Director and she will assist you in resolving the situation.

URS Research Contract

After completing interviews with prospective mentors and setting up research positions, all URS students must work out the details of their new research or creative project assistantships with their Research Mentors. Together, mentors and scholars must write these details on the URS research contract. The contract (an example is included in this handbook) should clearly outline specific tasks that will be the student's responsibility, the number of hours per week the student is expected to work, and the number of credits, either 2 or 3, that the research mentor believes is appropriate for the amount of time invested. Both must both sign and date the contract. Students must submit it to their research fellow by **Wednesday, October 7th, 2009**.

URS Research and Federal Work Study Policy

As a URS Scholar, you are permitted to earn Federal Work Study (FWS) pay for part of the work you do as a research assistant through the URS Program **if** you are eligible for FWS funds and **if your Research Mentor** has funds to pay the "employer" portion of your salary. Your mentor's departmental office will be responsible for collecting your reports of FWS hours worked (the time sheets) and for processing them so you are paid. You may not earn more than your FWS allocation per semester. The departmental office is required to have on file a description of your work position that is paid for by FWS funds.

Grading in Inter L&S 250

Performance in both of the components in Inter L&S 250 -- the research work and the seminars -- will contribute to each student's final grade. The research effort constitutes 75% of the grade, and the research mentor will determine this component of the grade. Your research fellows in direct consultation with URS Director and staff will determine the remaining 25% of the grade.

The following guidelines are suggested for Research Mentors:

- A Exceptional. Student took initiative or performed all duties above and beyond expectations.
- AB Active engagement in research activity, completed all assignments, reported to work regularly and for expected number of hours, developed new skills and applied them appropriately.
- B Did not fully meet expectations. Somewhat engaged in research activity, did not always work expected number of hours, no evidence of new or improved ability for systematic inquiry.
- BC-C Below expectations. Minimal initiative and engagement. Poor performance in all areas.
- < C Very Poor performance in all areas.

It is important for students to get feedback on their research performance. **Don't hesitate to take the first step and ask your Research Mentor to meet with you about your work performance.** Since each research experience is unique, it is very difficult to establish consistent grading guidelines for all URS Scholars. For this reason, talking with your Research Mentor about work performance can be very helpful. During an evaluation meeting, students should ask mentors for information about which aspects of their work will contribute to the research grade. Would it involve acquiring new skills with a certain level of consistent performance, or compiling a set of documents, or entering a set of data, or reading and interpreting part of the literature on the research, or even preparing a short report about their experience? Students may wish to take the initiative to suggest what they might be graded on. Doing so will allow you a much greater sense of involvement in the experience and less uncertainty about how their grades will be determined.

At the end of each semester, Research Mentors and URS Director will consult about students' grades. The URS Office will submit final grades to the Registrar.

Finding a Research Opportunity

Finding a research position through the Undergraduate Research Scholars program entails your discussing the list of current available opportunities with URS staff during the orientation meeting or by making an appointment with a URS staff member. The research positions described in the opportunities book were submitted to URS by UW faculty and staff who are interested in having undergraduates work with them in their scholarly endeavor. You can search through this book and select two to three research positions that are interesting to you. After you attend an orientation session, it will be **up to you** to contact the research mentor and set up an appointment to meet with him or her for an interview.

Sample email when contacting Faculty Mentors

To: mentoremailaddress@wisc.edu

From : scholaremailaddress@wisc.edu (advice: use your wisc.edu account and not any other email address as yahoo, gmail, etc.)

Subject: Undergraduate Research Scholars Program

Dear Professor/ Dr. LastNameOfTheMentor (advice: in an academic environment professional titles as Dr. and Professor are preferred to formal titles Mr. , Mrs., Ms., etc*.)

My name is (_____) and I am participating in the Undergraduate Research Scholars Program. I am contacting you regarding a research opportunity (Name of opportunity) you listed with URS. I would like to set up an in interview to discuss my possible involvement with your project.

I am (first/second) year student at the UW-Madison and I am interested in (mention your general career interests or specific discipline interests.) (You can continue in this paragraph with any background experience you might have that might be relevant to this project and might attract Mentor's attention.) I am interested in this opportunity because (state main reason(s) that attracted you to this project.) Be concise.

I would like to meet with you at your earliest convenience for a half hour interview. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
BuckyBadger, URScholar

* Address your Research Mentor as "Professor" or "Dr." or whatever their professional title is and their last name, unless they give you permission to call them otherwise.



INTERVIEWING??? Students might be surprised that they have to interview with a faculty or staff person -- a prospective Research Mentor -- about the research or creative opportunity. Both students and research mentors have a choice about working together. It should be a mutual decision. Through the interview process, students and mentors will learn about each other, and students will learn more about what the mentor's project entails. Then, students will have a chance to decide if it would be a good opportunity for them to develop their skills and interests.

Finding a project can be a bit stressful during the hectic first few weeks of school, but if you keep the following tips in mind, your search will help you find what you want.

- 1) **Don't delay!** Students should contact prospective mentors by phone or email and set up an appointment to meet with them as soon as possible. It is important to get started on a project as early in the fall semester as possible.
- 2) Students should think carefully about what they want to gain from and contribute to the research project. Carefully assess whether a research or creative project offers the opportunity to acquire the skills or knowledge desired.
- 3) Students should keep an open mind and be willing to apply for projects outside of their proposed majors or disciplines.
- 4) Don't be intimidated by the kinds of student tasks that the research mentor has listed for the project. As long as students are willing to learn new skills, they are probably eligible for the project.
- 5) Use the interview as an opportunity to get to know the research mentor and vice versa. Ask about things such as who supervises the work, how many hours are expected, what the work entails, etc.
- 6) Students who have more than one offer of a research position might consider discussing the pros and cons with a Research Fellow or URS staff member. Students should **contact all of the research mentors with whom they've interviewed to let them know with whom they've decided to work.**
- 7) Research contracts must be submitted to your Research Fellow by **Wednesday, October 7th 2009.**

What Do Research Mentors Look For?

Faculty sponsors generally look for things that fall into three broad categories: technical skills, general abilities, and personality characteristics.

- ◇ Interests - are you interested in the research area?
- ◇ Compatibility - will you fit into the organization of her/his research project? Does your weekly schedule fit with the needs of the project?
- ◇ Thoughtfulness - are you capable of making a contribution to the research project?
Did you ask thoughtful questions about the project?
- ◇ Motivation - will you be self-motivated to do the required work?
- ◇ Enthusiasm - are you enthusiastic and interested in the project, field, topic?
- ◇ Assertiveness - can you think on your own and stand up for your ideas?
- ◇ Adaptability - can you adapt to a field or project that is forever changing?
- ◇ Maturity - can you accept responsibility and get along with all types of people?
- ◇ Independence - are you able to work on your own?
- ◇ Communication - can you articulate your thoughts effectively? Are you willing to ask questions or seek clarification?
- ◇ Commitment - are you serious about the research and willing to make the project an important part of your work load?



◇ What To Do At Your Interview

- ◇ **Do** dress properly. Wear a nice shirt or blouse with casual slacks or skirt.
- ◇ **Do** find the office ahead of time and be prompt.
- ◇ **Do** address the interviewer by his/her professional title. Ex: **Professor** Smith
- ◇ **Do** listen attentively and show interest.
- ◇ **Do** read the position description carefully and bring notes to the interview.
- ◇ **Do** prepare some answers to common interview questions in advance.
- ◇ **Do** appear enthusiastic!
- ◇ **Do** ask intelligent questions; prepare some ahead of time. (See sample interview questions.)

- ◇ Do remember the interviewer's name and use it periodically throughout the interview.
- ◇ Do ask questions thoroughly.
- ◇ Do present a confident self-image.
- ◇ Do focus your attention on what the interviewer is saying and listen to the content.
- ◇ Do take notes during the discussion.
- ◇ Do listen actively, and be engaged in the conversation.
- ◇ Do let the research mentor know ahead of time if you must miss the interview.
- ◇ Do appear or sound interested.
- ◇ Do deliver answers to interview questions without sounding rehearsed.



Suggested Questions You Might Ask at a Research Interview

- ◇ What is the purpose of the research?
- ◇ How long has the project been going?
- ◇ How many hours am I expected to work?
- ◇ What type of background knowledge am I expected to have? How can I acquire this knowledge, if I don't already have it?
- ◇ Do I need any outside training (i.e. radiation workshop, library workshop, animal handling course)?
- ◇ What role or additional responsibilities would I be given in the project as I gain more experience?
- ◇ What type of work will I be doing (i.e. data entry, observations, experiments, interviews)?
- ◇ Does the project involve working with animals, radiation, computers, chemicals, etc.? (anything that you are particularly concerned about)
- ◇ Am I expected to work at home?
- ◇ Can I attend lab meetings or other research meetings?
- ◇ Will I ever be expected to miss classes for meetings?
- ◇ Will I work in any area that is hazardous to my health?
- ◇ How flexible will my hours be? Am I allowed to have time off for exams?

- ◇ Will I be directly working with you or with someone else on the project? Who will be my day-to-day supervisor?

Expectations for the Research Experience During the Academic Year

Ask your project mentor what is expected of you so you can work toward those goals. Here are some tips to help you create a good first impression and foster a mutually beneficial partnership with your Research Mentor and your research team:

- ◇ Arrive at work on time and ready to work.
- ◇ Be respectful to your Research Mentor and Research Fellow.
- ◇ Follow your assigned research schedule. If an emergency situation or sickness occurs and absence is a necessity, please contact your Research Mentor about your absence.
- ◇ Express yourself clearly.
- ◇ Be enthusiastic and positive.
- ◇ Accept responsibility for your actions.
- ◇ Keep us informed of your experience and discuss any concerns with your research fellow or mentor.
- ◇ Show courtesy and politeness.
- ◇ Be hardworking and productive.
- ◇ Ask questions until you understand.
- ◇ Address your Research Mentor as "Professor" or "Dr." or whatever their title is and their last name, unless they give your permission to call them otherwise.
- ◇ When given your assignments, make sure you understand fully what is required and when it is due.
- ◇ Keep up with your response papers and all URS assignments.
- ◇ Where possible, read background literature about the project. Ask your Research Mentor for materials to read that will help you understand the research.
- ◇ Follow office or lab procedure and etiquette.
- ◇ Interact with a variety of people at work.

- ◇ If you work with other students on the same project, remember you are a team and need to work together to achieve success.
- ◇ If you complete all of your assigned tasks early, ask for additional work or assist others when appropriate.

Please keep in mind that you are a representative of the entire Undergraduate Research Scholars Program. Your conduct at your research site, with your research mentor and team is a reflection of the entire program. Please conduct yourself responsibly at all times and follow all guidelines established in your lab or research site or situation.

