Strong mentors key to undergraduate research experiences

by Nicole Gardiner

In August, the Chronicle of Higher Education published a feature article on mentors for the experience of undergraduates doing science research. In particular, the study highlighted a commonly accepted belief that undergraduates (who are not yet established researchers) expect students to succeed and need mentors to become better candidates for future research.

The conclusion? [The study] found that undergraduate mentors were “key in students’ success.” The article also points to the fact that mentors do not necessarily have to be established researchers themselves, but can be effective mentors in their own right.

Mentoring of undergraduates requires a strong relationship between the student and mentor. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, a strong mentor relationship produces authentic research experiences, which helps undergraduates learn and grow significantly.

It’s important to note that mentoring of undergraduates requires a strong mentor relationship. Although the studies are new, they lend to the idea that experience makes a difference.

The studies acknowledge that quality mentoring of undergraduates requires a strong relationship between the student and mentor. Although the studies are new, they lend to the idea that experience makes a difference.

Assistant, Matthew King, Thayer Aggeler, Benson Beaker Perkins and Colin Viehmann (students)

SОARS and RESESS Summer Research Sites 1996-2008

The SOARS program has expanded to the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR), which manages the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) program for mentoring undergraduates in the sciences. The SOARS program provides students with opportunities to work with experienced researchers and learn about the latest research in their field.

SОARS-RESESS Summer Research Sites 1996-2008

In January, a number of SOARS protégés published an article in the Physics of Medicine and Biology, which included original data and research. The article was published under the SOARS-RESESS mentoring program.

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The SOARS program is designed to support the development of students in the sciences, and the SOARS-RESESS mentoring program has been successful in helping students gain experience and become better candidates for future research.

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Preparing for the next academic year, RESESS program leaders are looking forward to the upcoming research opportunities. The program is planning to continue its successful mentoring program and will be offering new opportunities for students to work with experienced researchers.

Some SOARS-RESESS protégés have left the program, but the experience they gained has been valuable. SOARS mentors have continued to mentor students, and the program has continued to grow.

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During fall 2007 and winter 2008, 20 protégés gave a total of 28 poster presentations at national conferences, Ian Colon Pagan, a senior majoring in Atmospheric Science at the University of Maryland in College Park, received a Recognition for Outstanding Student Poster award at the Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) National Conference in Kansas City, MO. Ian presented a poster, "The Daily Cycle of Hurricanes & Tropical Storms: the Impact on Urban Hydrological Systems," which won in the Social and Behavioral Sciences Category.

National Association of Black Geologists and Geophysicists, National Meeting
Poster Presentations
Poster Presentations

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting
Poster Presentations

American Meteorological Society, 88th Annual Meeting
Poster Presentations

American Association for the Advancement of Science, 2008 Annual Meeting
Poster Presentations

ORAL PRESENTATIONS