Qualitative Assessment of Undergraduate Research in Psychology

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Research Questions

- What are the benefits of undergraduate research (UR) for students in social sciences?
- Why do students *not* patriciate in UR?
- Purpose: to survey current students and alumni and examine both qualitative and quantitative data to answer these questions.

Methods

Participants: N = 47

Demographics

- 24 current student, 23 alumni
- 30 UR, 11 No UR
- 2 Sophomore, 7 Junior, 13 Senior
- 14 interest in grad school, 3 no
- Average GPA = 3.6
- 28 female, 4 male
- 30 White, 1 Asian, 2 Multiracial

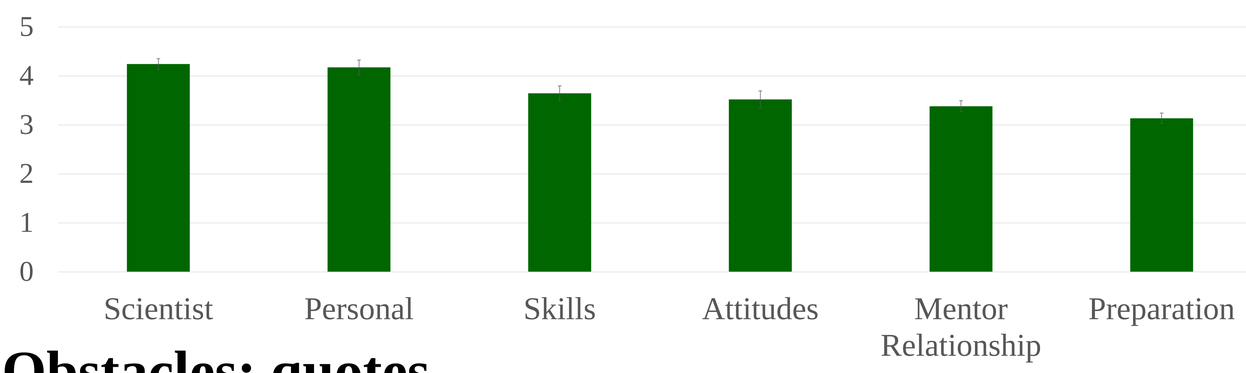
Materials

- Undergraduate Research Student Self-Assessment Survey (Weston & Lausen, 2015)
- Open-ended questions for benefits of UR
- Open-ended questions for reasons of not participating in UR
- Sample GRE Psych questions

Benefits of UR

Obstacles of UR

Self-assessment of UR experiences (gain)

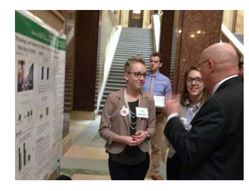


Obstacles: quotes

"My GPA is just average. BUSY schedule. I want to but not sure where to start."

"I want to participate however, at the time of this survey, my GPA is too low to participate. Participating in a research assistantship or an internship is one of my biggest goals to complete before I graduate."

"I do not have letters of recommendation from any professors on campus. In addition, I am not sure how to find these internships and I am not sure they would take me since my minor is Psych."



Other findings

GPA & GRE: UR > non-UR

Satisfaction with UR:

- Application process: 77%
- Info. about UR opportunity: 63%
- Faculty support: 91%

Motivation to do UR:

- Gain hands-on experience: 100%
  Explore interests: 95%
- Enhance resume: 95%
- Get rec letter: 91%
- Particular faculty: 82%
- Clarify interests/career plan: 70%

Summary

Many Psychology students and alumni found UR valuable experiences and gained confidence, collaboration-skills, and overall research skills.

We need to provide more information about UR opportunities to students, and broaden diversity.

References

Weston, T. J., & Laursen, S. L. (2015). The Undergraduate Research Student Self-Assessment (URSSA): Validation for Use in Program Evaluation. *CBE life sciences education*, *14*(3), ar33.

Acknowledgements

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