

**Profile of
Research Apprenticeship Program (RAP)
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
2015 Regents' Diversity Program Award Recipient**

Highlights from nomination materials:

- Led by Catherine Chan, director of the Undergraduate Research Program, the Research Apprenticeship Program (RAP) engages mainly first- and second-year UW-Whitewater undergraduate students in the high-impact practice of undergraduate research, aiming to eliminate equity gaps between minority and majority students.
- RAP began in 2011 as a pilot program for 20 students in the College of Business and Economics and in the College of Education and Professional Studies. It has since expanded to all four colleges at UW-Whitewater and has served nearly 200 students; capacity for the program was increased from 50 students in 2013 to 70 students in 2014.
- RAP students are paid research assistants who work with faculty and staff mentors on research and scholarly projects for one year. They also enroll in an online course to help build basic research skills and ethics.
- RAP students demonstrate significantly better academic outcomes than the campus average, including first-year grade-point averages (GPA) and second- to fourth-year retention rates.

Data from 2012-13 academic year:

- 1st-year GPA: 3.38 for RAP vs. 2.94 for campus overall.
- 2nd-year retention rate: 96.5% for RAP vs. 78.0% for campus overall.
- 3rd-year retention rate: 93.1% for RAP vs. 69.0% for campus overall.
- 4th-year retention rate: 86.6% for RAP vs. 64.0% for campus overall.

In the words of colleagues:

- “RAP students are more successful than the general student population as measured by various parameters, such as having higher GPAs and higher retention rates.”
—*Catherine Chan, Director, Undergraduate Research Program, UW-Whitewater*
- “One of the critical barriers faced by many students from lower-income, first-generation, or underrepresented minority groups is the need to work during the school year to satisfy financial needs. When students work substantial hours off campus, they are less available to participate in on-campus projects that might engage them in their disciplines. To address this barrier, the RAP program provides an hourly wage to students to work on projects with faculty mentors, and this opportunity makes a substantial difference for many of our students.”
—*Greg Cook, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, UW-Whitewater*
- “Through the yearlong RAP experience, students begin to network with other aspiring student scholars, develop the skills and confidence needed to excel in college, and prepare to take on independent scholarly and creative endeavors in subsequent years of college. They are also nurtured to be emerging professionals in their chosen fields of interest.”
—*Beverly Kopper, Provost, UW-Whitewater*