SUMMER RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES WORKSHOP

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AGENDA

1. Why do summer research?
2. How do I find opportunities?
3. How do I apply?
WHY SUMMER RESEARCH?
What is Research?

Discussion
What is Research?

Sac State’s Draft Definition:

Undergraduate research is an in-depth experience that complements and/or extends learning in your coursework; this experience can consist of examining, creating, and sharing new knowledge or works in ways consistent with practices in the disciplines:

- Laboratory research in sciences
- Text-based research in the humanities - both primary and secondary sources
- Field research in the natural and social sciences and in some of the humanities, such as history and communication studies
- Creative projects in fine arts and humanities
A strong undergraduate research experience will:

• Be guided by a research mentor (faculty, graduate student, or research staff)
• Move along a developmental trajectory toward independence, originality, and autonomy
• Develop critical thinking, inquiry, communication, and analytical skills
• Contribute to real-world research and communicate findings
• Prepare students for graduate school and/or career

What is Research?
• Explore fields of interest
• Develop knowledge and discipline-specific skills
• Acquire hands-on experience in a research environment
• Networking and professional development
• Graduate school & career preparation
• Potential for travel and visiting new areas
General Program Structure:
• 8-10 weeks during the summer at research institution
• Research mentor provides guidance and support
• Academic workshops and professional development opportunities (e.g. GRE prep, student panels, communication training, grad school recruitment)
• Research seminars and facility tours
• Research symposium to present summer research, sometimes support to present at national conferences
HOW DO I FIND OPPORTUNITIES?
Develop a search strategy

- Define what you want to get out of a research experience
- Create a list of keywords that describe your discipline and research interests

Activity

www.csus.edu/research

Fill out first two bullets ONLY!
Places to Look

- **www.csus.edu/research** select “student research” undergraduate summer research opportunities
- Pathways to Science: [http://www.pathwaystoscience.org](http://www.pathwaystoscience.org)
- CIC SROP List: [http://www.cic.net/students/srop](http://www.cic.net/students/srop)
- Leadership Alliance SR-EIP: [http://www.theleadershipalliance.org](http://www.theleadershipalliance.org)
- Federal Agency Internship Programs: [http://www.science.gov/internships](http://www.science.gov/internships)
  - NASA OSSI: [https://intern.nasa.gov](https://intern.nasa.gov)
  - ORISE/orau: [http://see.orau.org](http://see.orau.org)
- Individual University Programs (often use acronyms such as SURF/SURP/SURE/STARS/SRP/SIP)
Considerations

• Research focus and associated faculty
• Eligibility and requirements
• Time commitment
• Location
• Stipends
• Travel, housing, and living costs
• Networking and professional development opportunities
• Explaining your choices to and involving family
• Keep your family up to date about your hopes and dreams
• Involve your family in the process
• Be patient
• Learn how to talk about summer research
HOW DO I APPLY?
• Get organized: review eligibility requirements and application deadlines
• Review program information and identify specific mentors or research projects that interest you
• Seek input from faculty, peers, and family
• Begin drafting letters and statements
• Request recommendation letters and transcripts as early as possible
• Application Form
• Personal Statement or Essay
• Academic Resume or Curriculum Vitae (CV)
• Academic Transcripts
• Letters of Recommendation
What are reviewers looking for?

Discussion
• AKA “statement of purpose,” “cover letter,” “letter of intent,” “personal narrative,” etc., or may be in the form of a series of essay questions
• Carefully address specific prompts and tailor essays to individual programs
• Avoid cliché and simple biographies
• Talk about your specific skills and experiences and how they lead to your goals.
General Prompts:
• What are my academic and career goals? What is my purpose and motivation to achieve these goals?
• Why have I chosen this program or institution?
• Why am I an excellent fit for this program?
• What preparation and personal attributes do I have that demonstrates I will succeed? What can I contribute to the program and institution?
• How will my participation help me achieve my academic and career goals?
Brainstorm your personal statement

- What training and experiences have prepared you to participate?
- What attributes do you have that will allow you to succeed as a researcher?
- What motivates you to pursue undergraduate research, and how does research relate to your goals?
• Build relationships with potential letter writers
• Choose letter writers carefully
• Provide letter writers with ample time
• Provide letter writers with necessary information:
  • Program description and instructions for submitting letter
  • Your application materials
  • Information you wish for them to include in their letter
• Send reminders and thanks
## Activity

Plan your letter requests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Letter 1</th>
<th>Letter 2</th>
<th>Letter 3</th>
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• Include *relevant* academic and work experiences, honors, leadership activities, and skills and training
• Sell yourself – highlight content that will impress your audience
• Write active descriptions of experiences focusing on accomplishments and ‘end products’
• Customize your resume or CV for your audience
• Use consistent formatting so that your resume or CV looks professional and information is easy to find
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strive for</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What did you do, accomplish, or contribute?</td>
<td>• Passive phrasing with no ownership</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Conducted</td>
<td>• Worked with…</td>
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<td>• Investigated</td>
<td>• Gained understanding…</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Designed</td>
<td>• Assisted with…</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Developed</td>
<td>• Enabled me to…</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Determined</td>
<td>• Laundry lists of duties</td>
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www.pathwaystoscience.org

Csus.edu/research

(links directly to undergraduate research opportunities page)

Learn More