



University of Nevada, Reno

The background of the cover features a close-up portrait of a man with glasses and a goatee, smiling slightly. To his left is a large, detailed ball-and-stick molecular model of a complex organic or inorganic structure, with black and white spheres representing atoms and white rods representing bonds. The overall image has a soft, slightly blurred quality.

Undergraduate Research

2003-2008

OFFICE OF
UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

SUMMARY REPORT

History and Mission of Undergraduate Research

The rate of change in most aspects of life including careers has increased dramatically in the past several decades. Faced with an ever-challenging task of educating future generations, many universities strive to better prepare students to face a dynamic world. It is well known that involving students in research could be an important step towards that goal. Whereas graduate students are given ample opportunities to conduct research, undergraduate students' exposure ranges from none to limited. Known as an active Research University, in August 2003, the University of Nevada, Reno was one of the few research institutions to establish an Office of Undergraduate Research to foster and expand research opportunities. The program started as an experiment. Short- and long-term visions were developed. Within six months, a decision was made to continue and expand the program to realize its vision. Since then, three grant programs have been established: the National Science Foundation; the Honors Undergraduate Research Award; and the General Undergraduate Research Award.

Mission The mission of the Office of Undergraduate Research is to promote, support, and publicize undergraduate research in all disciplines at the University through the following activities:

- Expand Undergraduate Research opportunities
- Develop and maintain a dedicated website, brochures, presentations and other outreach tools
- Form and utilize a cohort of faculty committed to Undergraduate Research (Network of Faculty for Undergraduate Research)
- Publicize external Undergraduate Research funding opportunities to faculty and provide support in developing Undergraduate Research award proposals
- Promote appreciation and recognition of faculty and students involved in Undergraduate Research

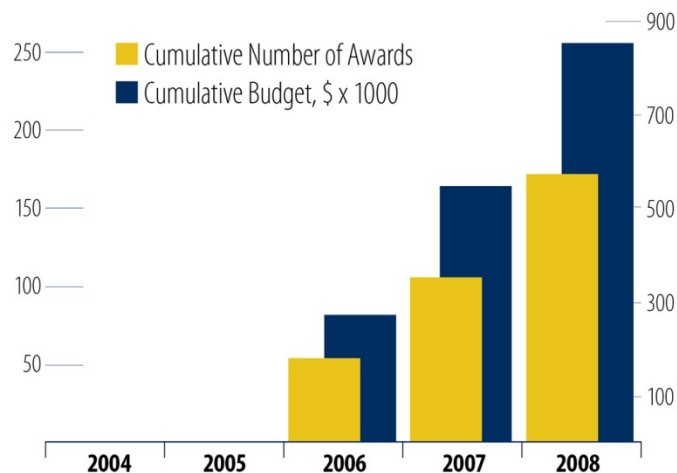
DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Developing the intellectual ability of students is the fundamental mission of all institutions of higher education. In order to further this mission, undergraduates must be offered the opportunity to do research. The Office of Undergraduate Research is the prime focal point to promote, facilitate and expand undergraduate research. This report presents brief highlights of the accomplishments of this office during the first five years of its operation.

M. SAIID SAIIDI, DIRECTOR

NSF EPSCoR Undergraduate Research Awards

- Competitive grant funded by the National Science Foundation through the Nevada EPSCoR at \$1.5M, including funds for UNLV students
- More than 50 awards are awarded annually on a competitive basis
- \$5,500 summer awards; up to \$5,000 academic year awards
- Supports research and travel for undergraduate students specializing in sciences, engineering, math and science/technology education
- Funds summer and academic year research
- Began in August 2005 for a three-year period
- Provides sufficient financial compensation to eliminate the need for outside employment
- An annual conference and two poster sessions are held for students to present research (see page 6)

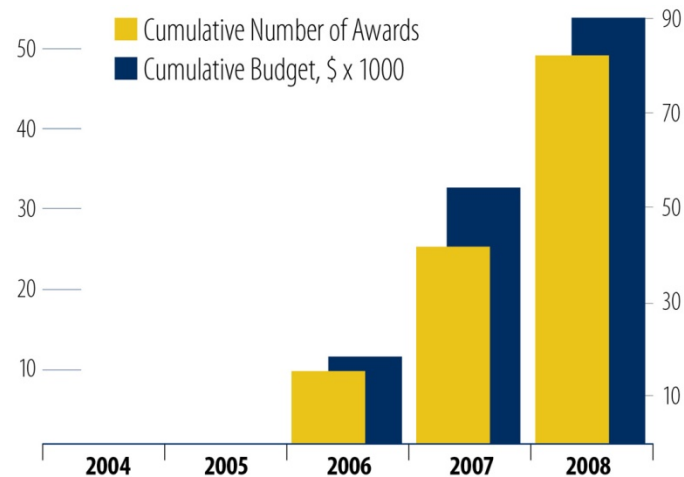


I came to the realization that the research opportunity provided by the NSF-EPSCoR program isn't common. I have many friends in very prestigious schools who are discouraged by the lack of opportunities present at their institution and are quite envious of mine.

STUDENT COMMENT

Honors Undergraduate Research Awards

- Funded by the Office of the Vice President for Research in collaboration with the Honors Program
- Supports research and travel for senior Honors students regardless of field of study
- Established in 2005
- \$2,500 awards fund research and stipend
- Awards cover academic year research
- Up to 25 awards are awarded annually on a competitive basis

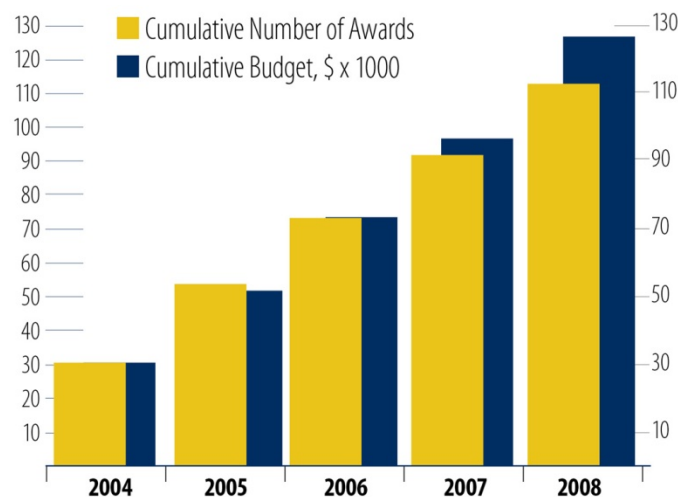


The experience was enjoyable and fulfilling. It was a very nice grant and it greatly eased the financial aspects of the project.

STUDENT COMMENT

General Undergraduate Research Awards

- Established in 2003 and funded by the Office of the Vice President for Research
- Supports research and travel for students regardless of field of study
- Open to both lower and upper division students
- \$1,500 awards to fund research
- Awards cover summer and academic year research
- Up to 25 awards are awarded annually on a competitive basis



[Undergraduate research] was tougher than I expected but overall [was] very rewarding. The funds made my research in German literature possible.

STUDENT COMMENT

Faculty Mentors

Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award

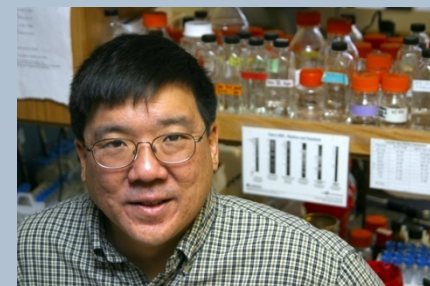
Mentoring undergraduate researchers takes unique attributes such as dedication, patience, faith and ability to see a bright future in students with nothing but their enthusiasm to offer. Established in 2007, this award annually recognizes the contribution of a faculty mentor to the success of undergraduate research at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Network of Faculty for Undergraduate Research (NFUR)

NFUR was established by the Office of Undergraduate Research to identify and link faculty who are enthusiastic and active in undergraduate research. Members of NFUR develop ideas and implementation plans, promote, and support undergraduate research effort by publicizing, mentoring, and serving on proposal selection panels. NFUR was established in 2004 and its membership has doubled to 85 faculty members in 2008.

Other Programs

In addition to those funded by the Office of Undergraduate Research a large number of undergraduate research projects are funded through other sources such as the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation REU, McNair program, and individual research grants from other sponsors. These students are involved in the workshops and conferences sponsored by the Office of Undergraduate Research.



2007 Outstanding Mentor: David Shintani, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology



2008 Outstanding Mentor: Brian Frost, Chemistry

Undergraduate Research Conference, Poster Sessions and Workshops

Nevada Undergraduate Research Symposium (NURS)

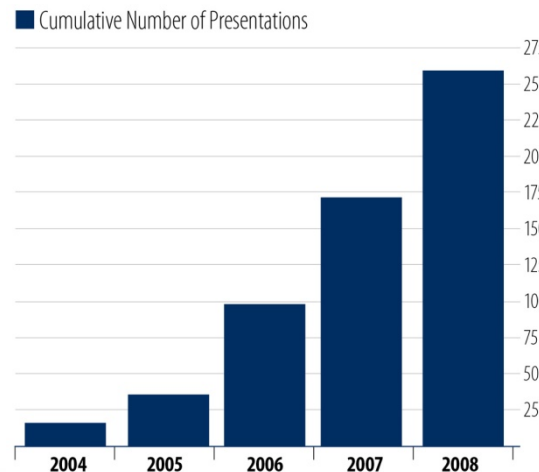
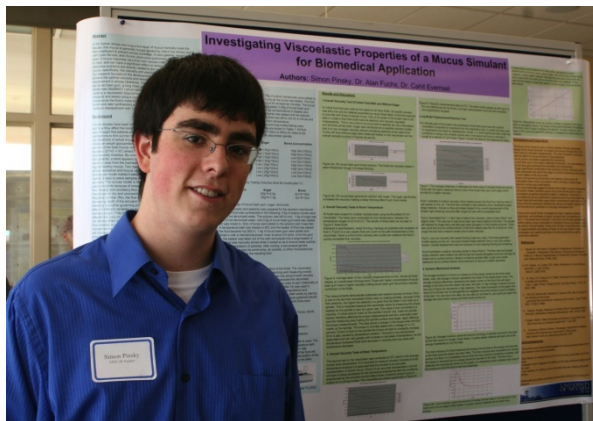
Held for two days every April, NURS provides an opportunity for all undergraduate student researchers, regardless of field of study, to disseminate their research to other students, faculty, and administrators in oral or poster form. A banquet with an inspiring speaker is held to celebrate students' accomplishments.

Research Poster Sessions

To present yet another opportunity for all undergraduate student researchers to publicize their work, poster sessions are held regularly. Members of the families, faculty mentors, administrators, legislators, and members of the Board of Regents are all invited to share the pride and joy of student researchers.

The Office of Undergraduate Research regularly offers the following workshops:

- Ethics in Research
- How to Conduct Research
- Public Speaking
- Applying to Graduate School
- Preparing Research Posters



Sponsors

Sponsors

The office of Undergraduate Research is thankful to the following sponsors and collaborators:

- Office of the Vice President for Research
- National Science Foundation
- Honors Program
- McNair Scholars Program
- Nevada EPSCoR Office
- Members of the Network of Faculty for Undergraduate Research

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On the Horizon

A solid base for a viable and sustainable undergraduate research effort at the University has been established. Survey data from students and mentors have reinforced and strengthened the programs. New funding has been approved by the National Science Foundation to continue the program. The University continues to be committed to undergraduate research. New initiatives are being taken to leverage scholarship funds for more undergraduate research.





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**A Division of the
Office of the Vice President for Research**

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