

University of Nebraska-Lincoln's UCARE Program, <http://www.unl.edu/ucare/>

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's UCARE program was originally funded by a contract from the Pepsi Company. As the program grew, UCARE was given additional funding from the university's Program of Excellence (PoE), which is similar to UH's QEP funding. Now two thirds of the annual budget for the program is paid for by Pepsi, and one third of the program is funded through the PoE program.

The UCARE program supports opportunities for undergraduates to work alongside faculty members and directly participate in the campus's research or creative activities. Undergraduates may apply for UCARE awards to incorporate a research or creative experience into their undergraduate education. The program supports students and faculty from all colleges and disciplines, and about 400 students participate in the program annually.

The program is two years in length. During the first year, the student works as a research assistant for the faculty sponsor. The student may learn such skills as how to do library literature reviews, code or retrieve data, work in a research laboratory, undertake research techniques specific to a project or discipline, assist with an experiment, work in a studio, etc.

During the second year, the student advances to a more independent project proposed by the student and sponsored by the faculty member. The project may be an extension of or related to the student's UCARE experience during the first year or may simply build upon skills gained in the first year.

The maximum award is \$2,000 for Year #1 and \$2,400 for Year #2, or a total of \$4,400 over the two-year period. Through UCARE, the student is a paid student worker. In some cases, however, it may be possible for the student to receive course credit (e.g., under internship or independent study listings) for the work being done. All such arrangements are worked out between the student and his or her faculty sponsor, subject to the department's and college's rules and expectations.

University of North Carolina Chapel Hill “Making Critical Connections”

http://www.unc.edu/inst_res/SACS/qep_committee.htm

Through the “Making Critical Connections” initiative, which was proposed in April 2006, UNC Chapel Hill’s QEP focuses on developing innovative educational programs, undergraduate research, and international activities.

Three central goals:

- Connecting the learning expected inside the classroom with what happens outside it – and enhancing the connections between and among courses
- Making research a critical connection between the curriculum and the faculty and the students
- Internationalizing the undergraduate experience

Interdisciplinary Experiences:

Maymester:

Established an innovative scheduling alternative, “Maymester.” This intersession option allows faculty members to spend two weeks with a group of undergraduate students, either on or off campus. Team teaching and interdisciplinary courses are encouraged. Twenty-three proposals were accepted from the 30 submissions for May 2007.

Interdisciplinary Cluster Program:

Nine proposals comprised of two or more faculty members per course proposal are in the pipeline for formal approval by the Ad Boards with two or three more under consideration (development grants issued). Obstacles include the demand on faculty members’ time that the clusters represent and getting the required courses taught on a regular basis – clusters are proving to be expensive.

Enhanced Academic Advising:

Additional academic advisors were needed to reinforce the mission of “Making Critical Connections.” As a result, five full-time advisors and one support position have been added to the Academic Advising Program.

Enhancing Undergraduate Research:

- Full-time Associate Director was hired for the Office of Undergraduate Research
- Four new term-based “Undergraduate Research Professorships”, one in each division of the College were approved,; significant increase in course offerings in which students carry out original research projects using Graduate Research Consultants, has occurred, from 14 courses/471 students in 2005-2006 to 41 courses/1,210 students in 2006-2007
- Significant increase in the number of SURF applicants and in the number of SURFs awarded has occurred. In 2005-06: 150 applicants/62 funded; in 2006-07: 193 applicants/73 funded

- Enhanced undergraduate research website to include flexible database of research opportunities where faculty, graduate students, and postdoctoral students can “invite” undergraduate participation, <http://www.unc.edu/depts/our/index.html>

Internationalization:

Generally speaking, UNC Chapel Hill is seeking to embed internationalization as deeply as possible in the curriculum by seeking out, encouraging, and supporting important creative work of all sorts pertaining to the international realms.

- Funded a full-time ESL coordinator position in the Writing Center
- Co-funded ESL position in the Department of English
- Funded salary supplements in the Study Abroad Office staff to enhance offerings in specific geographical areas

Georgia Tech “Strengthening the International Competence and Research Experiences of Undergraduate Students”

QEP proposed in March 2005 with five-year plan for implementation

Create an Institute-wide UROP

Goal: increase participation of undergraduates in research, the length of their involvement, and the quality of the experiences

- Increase participation to 60% (from 40+%)
- Have 70% with more than one semester
- Office: coordination, fairs, symposia, endowment

Create a “Research Plan” program

- 3 semesters of research; two with same project
- Writing class and symposia presentation(s)
- Research proposal; thesis/research report
- Degree designation

Strengthening International Competence

Goal: integrate international education and experiences into any undergraduate major at Georgia Tech

Create “International Plan” degree option

- A degree-long program including language proficiency and international studies
- Overseas work and/or study (English option, Second language option)
- Senior culminating course/academic experience
- Diploma designation
- Not an add-on program (e.g., minor, certificate)
- Integrates global preparation within the major

—*Many institutions’ QEP initiative was inspired by the AAC&U National Panel Report from 2002, www.greaterexpectations.org. Many universities quote the following in their literature, “Education has the strongest impact when studies reach **beyond the classroom** to the larger community, asking students to **apply** their developing **analytical** skills and **ethical judgment** to **concrete** problems in the world around them, and to **connect theory** with the insights gained from **practice**.” (Chapter Three, 2002)*