Informing Students about How to Get Involved in Research

**Student Name**

Chinonso Opara

**Experiential Learning Category**

Service

**Associated UW Course (if applicable)**

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**Summary**

As an undergraduate research leader (URL), I develop my public speaking ability as I talk to fellow undergraduates and students who are about to enter college about how to get involved in and make the most of undergraduate research. My activities as a URL consist of engaging students during tabling events and advising them during panel discussions. While helping people who are going through steps I have gone through, I have gotten the opportunity to interact with several students at both the high school and university level.

**Explain how your project fits the provided Honors Program definition of the Experiential Learning area you selected:**

In this volunteer project, I work closely with the Center for Experiential Learning and Diversity. Specifically, I collaborate with the Undergraduate Research Program, whose goal is to assist students plan for a successful research experience.

**How and why did you select this engagement?**

I would like to extend my hand, in terms of academic and research support, to those who are in the same position I was in just a couple years ago. Serving as a URL allows me the opportunity to do this. In addition, this volunteer activity develops my leadership ability. As a chemistry tutor for the Athletic Department I engage in the process of forming new ways to help fellow students understand material. Being a URL helps me participate in this process at a different capacity, where I can expand my insights about being a good leader. Furthermore, being a URL gives me a great chance to develop my public speaking ability, which would be very useful as I progress in my career.

**How does this project connect to your concurrent or past coursework? How does it speak to your broader education goals and experiences?**

Being a URL is connected with my coursework in that it encourages me to enrich my curriculum with a service aspect. Furthermore, my role as a URL correlates well with what I would like to do in the future as a physician. Being a medical doctor evaluating and managing the community's long-term care requires good communication and the ability to work well with diverse group of people. Reaching out to fellow undergraduates gives me early exposure to this.

**How will your project contribute to the larger goals of the organization or those of your partners?**

It is the goal of the Undergraduate Research Program to help undergraduates learn how to get into and the make the most of an undergraduate experience. Being an undergraduate researcher, I am especially suited to helping the Undergraduate Research Program address this objective as a URL, as I have many recent experiences in common with the students I am serving.

**Estimated hours per week:**

2

**Estimated project start:**

10/01/2012

**Estimated project end:**

06/13/2014

Supervisor

**First name**

Jennifer

**Last name**

Harris

**Title/Affiliation**

Associate Director, Undergraduate Research Program

**Organization (if applicable)**

Center for Experiential Learning and Diversity

**UW NetID (if applicable)**

genoveva

**Email**

genoveva@uw.edu

Final Reflection

**Project Title**

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**Reflection**

The two years I've spent as an undergraduate research leader (URL) has been a great learning experience. After being part of the 2012 Amgen Scholars Cohort, I felt that being a URL would be a great way to give back to the Undergraduate Research Program (URP). As a URL, I got the opportunity to sharpen my public speaking ability as I interacted with fellow undergrads and incoming college students. I gave them several tips and insiders about how to get into undergraduate research and succeed in college.   
  
Reaching out to incoming freshmen was a particularly rewarding experience. During these events I got to speak with several curious incoming college students and their parents. There was a particular student who followed up with me through email, asking for my four year plan (since she was considering the same major) and general advise about how to schedule courses. I remember replying to her email right away, remembering what it was like to be in her shoes four years ago. I gave her a copy of my four year schedule and advise about how to choose courses for the biochemistry major. Because she took the initiative to reach out to me, she got a hold of very valuable information. This reminded me of the importance of taking the initiative to gather a community of mentors.  
  
Furthermore, as a URL, we got the opportunity to screen the abstracts for the annual spring Undergraduate Research Symposium, hosted by the URP. This was particularly rewarding, as we knew that we were playing a large role in the largest undergraduate research symposium in the world.

**Submitted on**

Jun 04, 2014