Hi,

Happy New Year! You are receiving this email as someone who works with undergraduate research students and who has interacted with our office in some way over the past couple of years. Please feel free to share this with others who might find it useful.

The Office of Undergraduate Research is excited to launch a brand new newsletter, where we will share information and resources to support faculty, staff, and graduate students as they work with and mentor undergraduates in research. The newsletter will be sent out twice per semester and archived on our website. If you would like to continue receiving the newsletter, please join the listserv by signing up here.

Here's what's included in our inaugural issue:

1. Undergraduate Research Practices for Spring and Summer 2021
2. Undergraduate Research Resources for faculty
3. Federal work study
4. VT's annual Research and Creative Scholarship Conference
5. Call for Proposals: Centering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in UR and Creative Activity Conference
6. Call for abstracts: Early Research Experiences for STEM Retention - Models and Promising Practices

1. Undergraduate Research Practices for Spring and Summer 2021
Undergraduate research will be offered this spring in the same way it was this fall. All research activities through January 24 will be remote/virtual, thereafter moving to in-person where appropriate.

From OVPRI:

In the spring semester, Virginia Tech will continue its research in a manner that recognizes the importance of safety, transitions back to an in-person student-learning experience, and continues to ramp up research programs.

- We are operating under the university’s modified operations status.
- Most labs can/will be opened. Undergraduate and graduate students working on sponsored research or course credit may return to established or new research projects.
- Student volunteer research activity in labs is not advised, due to lab space and physical distancing guidelines.
- Colleges and institutes may add additional requirements in their areas.
- Allowable research activities require the approval of deans, vice presidents, or institute directors or their designee(s).
- The COVID-19 Research and Continuity Guidance microsite contains various resources for researchers, including Phase Three: Reopening Guidance.

Read more on VT’s READY webpage.

Students seeking research credit will need to complete the undergraduate research form managed by each college. In addition, these must complete the COVID form, even if they will be continuing with the same project. If a student is working with the same faculty member on the same experience and they...
are volunteering or working for pay only, they do not have to complete the form again. Up to date information on the status of undergraduate research is posted on our homepage.

No guidelines have yet been posted on research in the summer but we are hoping that the situation will be safe enough to engage more students in in-person research. Faculty planning summer undergraduate research programs are encouraged to proceed with recruitment activities but are advised to include clear language to indicate our intent to host students on campus but that if health conditions warrant, the program may need to cancel or shift to a remote/virtual format. Updates on the status of summer research will be posted on our webpage as they become available.

2. Undergraduate Research Resources for faculty
The Office of Undergraduate Research will continue to operate remotely this semester.

All services of the OUR are free of charge and available to all faculty and students from any disciplinary area at Virginia Tech. OUR website is available 24/7 and has a wealth of resources to support you and your students at any stage in their undergraduate research journey. Two pages of particular relevance:

- Services for Faculty- advertising a research opportunity, reserving poster stands, programming for summer researchers, presentation request, planning a summer research program, proposal support, and information on our annual mentoring workshop;
- Resources for Faculty- undergraduate research policies at VT, administering fellowships, training and compliance guidelines, and employing a federal work study student.

We also have a number of services available for students, including research training, scholarship and fellowship opportunities, poster printing, conference travel support funds, the Undergraduate Research Excellence Program, and peer mentoring through OUR Ambassadors. OUR Ambassadors work directly with students in a mentoring and advising capacity. They offer daily virtual drop-in office hours when classes are in session. The schedule for office hours and zoom link is available on the Ambassador webpage. Ambassadors are also available to visit classes to provide information about undergraduate research at VT.

We are always looking for ways to better serve our faculty and students, so please reach out to Keri Swaby, Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research, with any questions, requests for support, or suggestions; email: kswaby@vt.edu.

3. Federal Workstudy
Did you know that you can hire eligible students to engage in undergraduate research activities through the federal work study program? If a student qualifies for financial aid they are eligible and can be hired to be paid by you and the federal government, typically in a 25:75 ratio respectively.

Due to the availability of funds, the department share of Federal Work Study wages has been updated from 25% to 10% effective January 4, 2021. For additional details please refer to the attached memo.
Monday, February 1, 2021 is the deadline to hire FWS students for the spring term. Departments are encouraged to post their available FWS positions on Handshake as soon as possible. Students will be notified of the deadline this week. Federal Work-Study awards will be cancelled for students who have not secured employment by this date.

Virginia Tech Office of University Scholarships and Financial Aid
Email: finaid@vt.edu
Web: www.finaid.vt.edu

4. VT's annual Research and Creative Scholarship Conference
The OUR will host the annual Dennis Dean Undergraduate Research and Creative Scholarship (virtual) conference on April 30 (tentatively 10am-3pm). Students are invited to submit their work from course based and independent activities for presentation. If you would like to have your students present their work as a group/cluster related to a specific topic or course, we can facilitate that. Please contact Keri Swaby (kswaby@vt.edu) to discuss. More information about the conference is available on the conference website.

5. Call for Proposals: Centering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in UR and Creative Activity Conference
CUR's Undergraduate Research Programs Division and the Committee on Diversity & Inclusion present the first step in response to the national call for awareness and action on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Thus, this virtual conference taking place June 23-25, 2021 will serve as a platform for professionals to share, learn, listen, and grow in areas of this integrated focus, in order to adequately contribute to the ongoing transformation of the undergraduate research environment on our campuses. Using creative facilitative approaches including critical conversations and innovative presentations related to the installation, operation, maintenance, and application of undergraduate research structures in higher education institutions, this conference promotes the exploration and adoption of effective tools and processes for change that will generate a range of equitable and inclusive opportunities for the advancement of undergraduate research.

Target Audience: Professionals who support the undergraduate research enterprise including mentors, administrators, faculty, and industry partners.

Primary conference themes:
- Allyship in Undergraduate Research: How can programs, leaders, faculty, and staff be good allies?
- Diversity in Undergraduate Research: How can we expand access, outreach, and recruitment?
- Equity in Undergraduate Research: How can we restructure outdated systems?
- Inclusive Curriculum/Program Design and Assessment: How can we design student-centered programs and create new pathways for underrepresented groups?
- Inclusive Mentoring: How can we ensure mentoring across identities?

Learn more and submit your abstract HERE.
6. Call for abstracts: Early Research Experiences for STEM Retention - Models and Promising Practices
You are invited to submit an abstract to the symposium session entitled "Early Research Experiences for STEM Retention - Models and Promising Practices" at the Spring 2021 American Chemical Society National Meeting (virtual, April 5-16, 2021) within the Division of Chemical Education [CHED]. The submission deadline for abstracts is 11:59 pm on Tuesday Jan. 19, 2021.

Link to Abstract Submission: callforabstracts.acs.org/acsspring2021/CHED

Symposium Session Abstract: Work from the First2 Network NSF INCLUDES Alliance indicates that early (summer before college and first two years of undergraduate) immersive experiences with scientific research improve STEM self-efficacy and contribute to STEM persistence for rural first generation and other underrepresented students. The symposium will provide details on how to organize face-to-face and virtual short-duration internships, and will invite sharing of promising practices in summer programs and academic year experiences for undergraduates in the first two years.

Thanks for your support of our undergraduate researchers! Please let us know if you would like us to include information about specific topics or if you have items to add to a future newsletter.

Best,
Keri

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