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Undergraduate Research Project Mentor Selection Guidelines

Undergraduate research experience is about perseverance as well as intelligence. You will need a strong mentor to offer support and guidance as you navigate the world of research.

Considerations When Choosing A Mentor— Does the Professor....

- ❖ Have the time to take you on as an undergraduate research student?
Will the professor be on campus when you are planning to conduct your undergraduate research project? Is s/he willing to commit to at least 5 hours per week in direct, focused counseling on all aspects of the research? Would you be supervised by a graduate student for 30 hours/week and just meet with the professor 5 hours per week? How would that work in practice? (It's recommended that you work 30-35 hours per week on an 8-week summer research project or you can spread that out over a semester according to the professor's schedule and yours.)
- ❖ Exhibit an interest in working with you and in mentoring you?
- ❖ Have a history of giving proper attention to students who serve under his/her guidance?
How many students is the Professor currently working with and will s/he be able to add you as a mentee without being overloaded?
- ❖ Have an on-going project that is of interest to you? *or* Is the professor open to guiding you in an original project?

Can you see the professor in the role of a guide, a counselor, and a coach?

A Mentor Should:

- ❖ Push you forward by providing support and guidance in all phases of your research.
- ❖ Seriously read your initial proposal and final paper and offer feedback.

Suggestions

- ❖ Make an appointment for one hour with your prospective mentor. Be sure to tell them that you are interested in working with them for an undergraduate research project. Don't be discouraged if you are turned away. Faculty may be overloaded with work or may already be supervising several students. Try another faculty member until you succeed in meeting with someone. Remember that someone in a related area may be able to guide you just as well.
- ❖ Be Prepared To:
 - ❖ Discuss research ideas you have or to ask questions about how you might assist the professor's ongoing research.
 - ❖ Seek answers to the questions at the top of this page.
- ❖ Explore your options with at least one other faculty member before making a mentor commitment.
- ❖ Talk to other undergraduate researchers: What tasks/duties do they perform? How long have they worked with the professor? Do they have increasing levels of responsibilities the longer they have worked with the professor? Do they get funded? How likely is funding? Do they know about the grant funding application process?

Adapted from the University of Wyoming McNair Scholars Program Packet