2007–08 Mid-Year Report on Campus Initiatives
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Undergraduate Research

Summary of Activities to Date

Central goals: The Working Group on Mentored Undergraduate Research, Scholarly, and Creative Experiences has two elements to its charge: it has been asked to complete an inventory of undergraduate research activity (broadly defined) on campus, and to sponsor a day-long undergraduate research showcase late in the spring semester.

Key activities: The working group met twice during the fall (11/12 and 12/12) under the leadership of Professor Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko (Head, Kinesiology and Community Health). Between meetings, subcommittees on the inventory and the showcase each met once (on 12/10 and 12/11, respectively).

∞ Inventory. A survey instrument was developed with versions for (a) colleges and schools; (b) departments and programs; and (c) other research-sponsoring units (e.g., Beckman). Questions are based on a definition of undergraduate research adapted from a position statement by the Council on Undergraduate Research (www.cur.org). Advice on conduct of the survey was sought from the Committee of the Associate Deans at its December 12 meeting, and from Carol Livingstone, Associate Provost and Director of the Division of Management Information.

∞ Showcase. The showcase is scheduled for Tuesday, April 29 in the Illini Union. The proceedings will begin with a keynote address in the morning, followed by concurrent sessions, followed by a poster session arranged around a light buffet lunch, and will conclude with a reception at which award winners will be recognized (by the Provost, her schedule permitting).

Next Steps

∞ Inventory. As early as the week of January 21, surveys will be sent to college office contacts for completion, and, as appropriate, for distribution to departments and programs. Other research-sponsoring units will be contacted separately. The working group—and the Office of the Provost—will be grateful for college office participation in seeing that surveys are returned by the announced deadline, likely during first week in March.

∞ Showcase. A call for participation will be sent to departments and select student organizations during the week of January 21. The showcase program will include students (and, in some cases, their faculty advisors) chosen from those who respond to the open call; other participants may be invited on the basis of findings from the inventory exercise. A faculty keynote speaker, possibly a past winner of the Campus Award for Excellence in Guiding Undergraduate Research, must be selected. A plan for advertising the showcase must be devised and implemented.

Timeline for Completion

∞ Inventory. A report on the inventory exercise will be shared with the Provost in May. Thereafter, the results may also be shared with the campus re-accreditation subcommittee on “Leadership in the 21st Century” (Professor Michael Loui, Chair).

∞ Showcase. After the event on April 29, an assessment of impact will be made, and recommendations for future events will be shared with the Provost.