We would like to thank everyone for supporting the URConnection! We are happy to publish Issue 5, where you can learn more about the research experiences of Melvin Lorenzo as well as upcoming events and interesting research currently going on. We encourage students of all disciplines and class levels to get involved with undergraduate research. Whether it is participating in studies, or conducting experiments, research is something that all should take advantage of! We hope you take the opportunity to stop by so we can give you more information about what research is and how it can be a part of your college experience.

- Your Peer Advisors,
  Erica Li & Chrislyn Lawrence

Upcoming Events

How to Get Involved in Research
Thursday, Jan. 22, 4:10-5:00pm
Mtg Rm D, Student Community Ctr.

How to Write an Abstract
Tuesday, Jan. 27 4:10-5:00pm
Wednesday, Jan 28 12:10-1:00pm
Thursday, Jan. 29 3:10-4:00pm
Mtg Rm D, Student Community Ctr.

How to Get Involved in Research
Thursday, Feb. 11, 4:10-5:00pm
Mtg Rm D, Student Community Ctr.

Research Highlights

$875K Packard Fellowship Awarded
UC Davis ecology and evolutionary biology (EEB) professor, Santiago Ramirez, won an $875,000 grant for his research on biodiversity. He is currently studying bees and orchids and is in the process of focusing his work on California ecosystems. This money will allow him to develop his projects freely and adapt to changes in research directions if necessary. In the past, the prestigious Packard Foundation has also awarded past UC Davis professors. To read more, click here

Indiegogo for Puppies
The international crowdfunding website, Indiegogo, has helped veterinary professor, Benjamin Hart raise money for his research. The goal of his project is to figure out the optimum age dogs should be spayed or neutered. He hopes to apply this research to mixed-breed canines, ensuring they are spayed and neutered at the appropriate times. Professor Hart's work is dedicated toward helping dog caregivers make the right choices for their puppies. To read more, click here

Capturing Dolphin Breath
Professor Cristina Davis and colleagues have developed a tool to capture a dolphin’s “explosive breath.” Once captured, the breath is frozen in order to analyze it for metabolites. These compounds can be used to gauge the health of dolphins and hopefully diagnose any problems in the mammals. Traditional techniques such as skin biopsies, and blood sampling do not work well with wild dolphins, making Professor Davis’ technique innovative and useful. To read more, click here
Meet Undergraduate Researcher
Melvin Lorenzo!

Melvin Lorenzo began his studies here at UC Davis in 2011 from Quartz Hill High School and is now a junior majoring in Mechanical Engineering. He chose this as his major because he grew up disadvantaged and always wanted – with a push from his father- to be a lawyer, doctor, or engineer. He has always respected engineers and desired to accomplish something significant in his life. Personally, he wants to acquire a Ph.D. He was born in South Central Los Angeles where academic resources were scarce. So, he has made it his goal to take advantage of all of the resources provided for his success here at UC Davis.

Interview
What are the benefits of getting involved in undergraduate research?

Well, there are many. One is that the student gets exposed to a world not many have the opportunity to explore. The student also have the opportunity to make a difference in the world. Another reason is that research involvement in research helps open career pathways that otherwise won’t be available if a student didn’t dabble in research. Lastly, research gives one the chance to explore one’s true career passions and desires.

What was your process for finding the perfect research position?

His freshman year, he was part of the Mentorships for Undergraduate Research Participants in the Physical and Mathematical Sciences (MURPPS) program in which he was taught how to approach a professor about one’s research interest. He approached a grad student and soon became good friends. The grad student recommended him to the professor who was working in the Chemistry Department. The professor liked him and accepted him into his lab where he worked for two years. He, regrettably, left after a receiving a diagnosis of cancer. He is now better in health and is able to participate in lab-work again. His other research opportunity was via the UC Leadership Excellence through Advanced Degrees (UC LEADS). The program, again, taught on how to approach a professor. His Davis mentor from the aforementioned Chemistry lab, recommended him to a UC Irvine lab. He says that this recommendation may have been the key to his acceptance. He considers himself to be very lucky for this opportunity as he was one of the only three students accepted.

Do you have any tips for undergrads who are having trouble finding a professor to work with?

Yes! One, do not be afraid to speak to or approach professors. They were once in your position, too, and know what it is like. Two, if you have the opportunity to do research, do it! After college you may not get a research opportunity again. Three, you will be rejected by some. Do not give up! You will get accepted into others. The more you try, the more opportunities you open up for yourself. Four, If you schedule a meeting with someone (a professor or T.A.), do not miss it, and do be professional! Five, Do not burn any bridges, they might come back to harm you because everyone is connected via networking.

About Your Peer Advisors

This is Erica’s first year with the URC. She is a fourth year Psychology major who would love to share what she has learned with her students. She has had experience in multiple labs that she would be happy to share. She is always ready to give advice about anything regarding research!

This is Chrislyn’s first year with the URC. She is a fourth year Linguistics major aspiring to attend medical school. With her research experience in biology and psychology and linguistics background, she believes that her services can help students in any field here at UC Davis.

CONTACT

If you’re interested in scheduling a one-on-one appointment, or you have an interesting story or tip to share about undergraduate research that you would like posted in one of our issues, please contact us:

Phone: (530) 752-3390
Email: urc@ucdavis.edu
Location: 2300 Student Community Center, 2nd Floor
Hours: Monday-Friday; 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Website: urc.ucdavis.edu