

The Odd Couple

Undergraduate Research & Career Services

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Undergraduate
Research
INITIATIVE



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
CAREER CENTRE

Why 'The Odd Couple'?



Image credit: Carl Lender <https://www.flickr.com/photos/clender/9690419857>

Career Centre - Overview

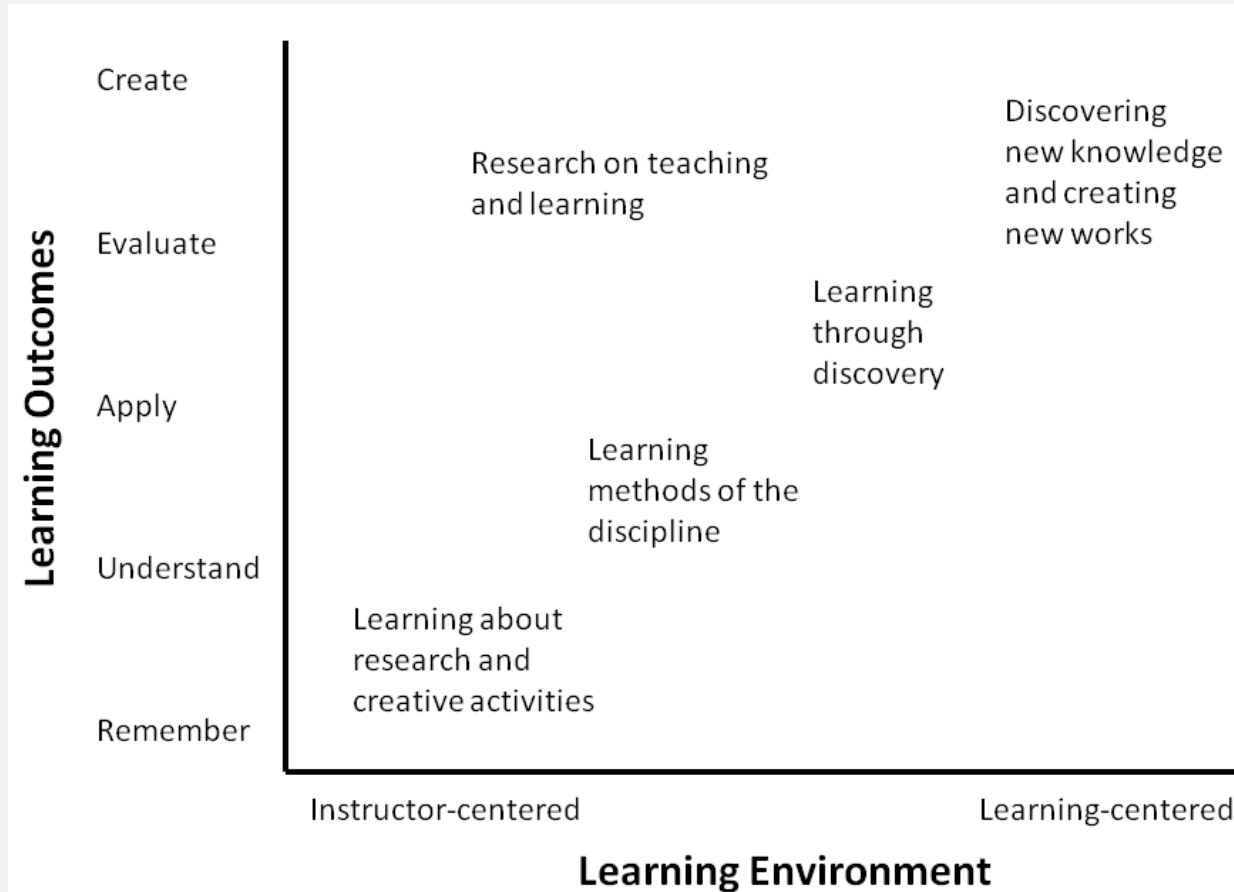
- Dean of Students portfolio
- Est. 1986 – focus on student/graduate employment
- Growth of experiential learning programming
 - Reflection of career discovery and engagement approach to career development
- Staffing
 - 20 regular, f/t
 - 23 student, p/t



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What is Undergraduate Research?

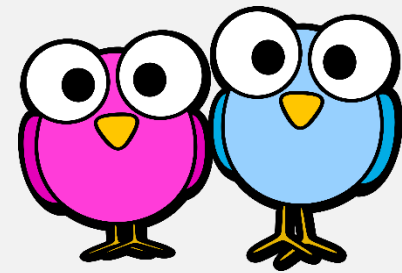
Defining Undergraduate Research



Framework for undergraduate research at the University of Alberta, adapted from the Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE) sub-committee report: Teaching, Research and Discovery Learning: Recommendations for a Great University., January 2010.

How We Became Roommates

- Growing interest in undergraduate research across campus
- Career Centre “Birds of a Feather”
- Funding issue
- Administrative support, space



URI - Overview

- Administratively housed within Career Centre
- Est. 2011
- Academic Director & Advisory Committee provide academic leadership
- Staffing
 - 3 f/t staff
 - ~20 student volunteers (peer volunteer program + student journal)



URI - Overview

Five functions of URI:

- Raising awareness/interest in undergraduate research
- Facilitating research opportunities
- Supporting undergraduate researchers' skill development
- Disseminating & celebrating undergraduate research
- Creating a culture of undergraduate research



Undergraduate
Research
INITIATIVE

- Any year of study
- Any discipline
- Any career focus
- Not GPA-based
- Any stage of the research process
- Any type of research experience

Examples of Collaboration

Promotions & Outreach

- Meet-a-Mentor @ Careers Day
- Joint classroom presentations
- Cross-promotion of student opportunities
- General awareness-raising

Examples of Collaboration

Peer Education Programs

- Career Peer Educators (Career Centre)
- Peer Undergraduate Research Liaisons (URI)
- URI Interns (Former CPEs)
- Joint CPE/PURL projects, social events



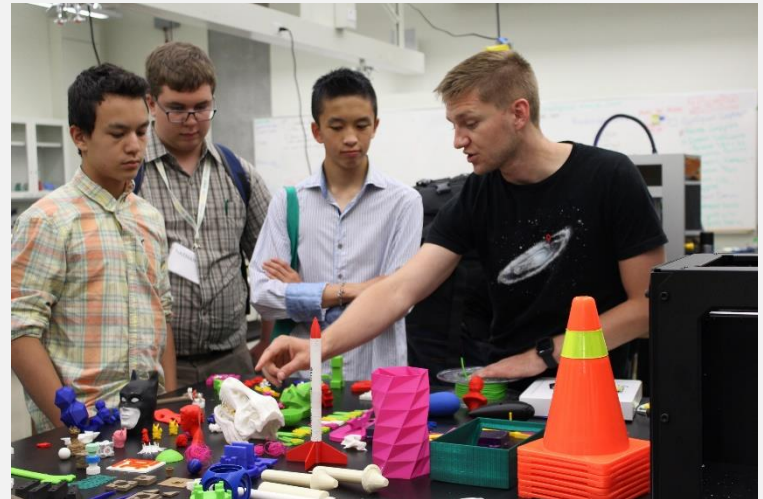
Examples of Collaboration

Programming

Summer Career Camp

- Career Crawl
- Camp Mentors
- Resilience & Failure session

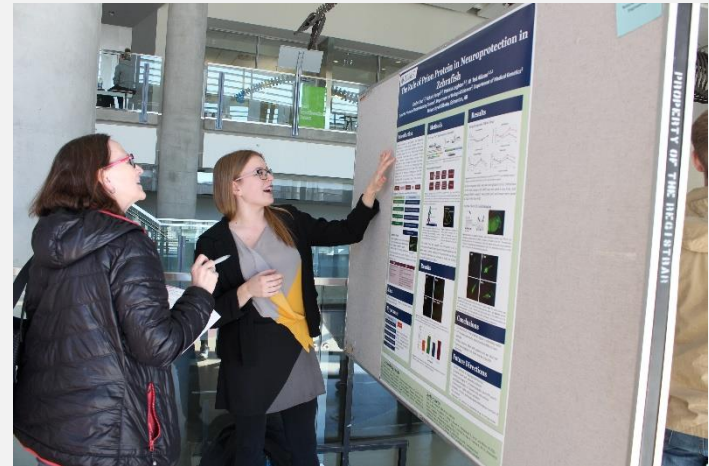
“Putting your research to work” seminar



Examples of Collaboration

Networks, event support

- Job Shadow Week – host recruitment
- Career Mentoring – host recruitment
 - Model for URI Peer Mentoring program (in development)
- Event support
 - Career fairs
 - Festival of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities



What are the overlaps?

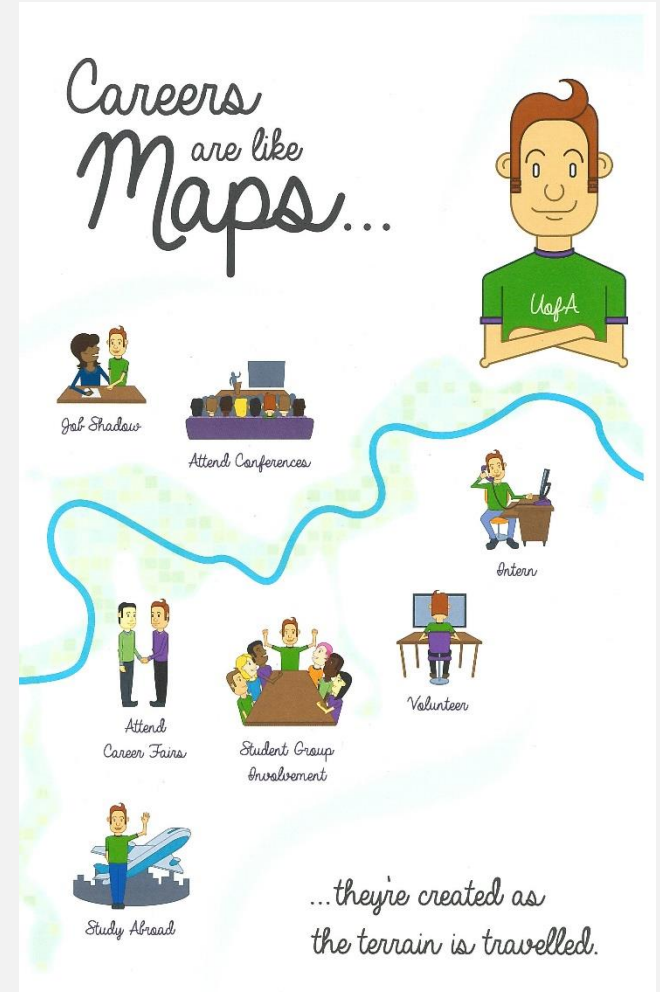
Why it works



A question can take you anywhere...



Careers are like Maps...



Job Shadow

Attend Conferences

Intern

Attend Career Fairs

Student Group Involvement

Volunteer

Study Abroad

...they're created as the terrain is travelled.

Why it works

Common themes supporting career development

- Experiential learning & reflection
- Building resilience
- Value of networks, mentorship
- Progressive skill development

Why it works

Skills Employers Want

- Ability to work in a team
- Decision making, problem solving
- Written & oral communications
- Ability to plan, organize & prioritize work
- Ability to obtain & process information

Skills Needed for Research

- Creativity
- Judgement
- Communication
- Organization
- Persistence

What we gain

- Administrative efficiency
- Networks/partners across campus
- Innovation, creativity
- Work environment

What students gain

“I believe happenstance played a role during the start of my undergrad career...I thought research was only for the smartest people in class...however, after attending one of URI’s sessions, [the URI] started to debunk these myths...I started taking a research course, then I got involved in a Psychology lab. These experiences led me to become a summer student in the Faculty of Medicine. I think the best take-away I learned is this: you don’t have to be insanely intelligent, but you have to be curious!”

What students gain

*"As a student who will be heading into the work world shortly, **this program has helped strengthen my desire to remain a lifelong learner.** It has solidified my desire to undertake graduate studies in the future, preferably in a creative field."*

What students gain

*"I would describe undergraduate research as **meaningful exploration into a career path**...Many of us students need to work part time during the semester to cover living costs and **URI has allowed us to make that part time job relevant and meaningful for our future careers.**"*

What students gain

- Increased confidence, reduced anxiety about careers
- Clarity about their career direction
- Broader understanding of the value of research (i.e. opportunity to develop skills applicable to any career)
- Professional network, mentor(s)

Our new roomie

Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science & Technology (WISEST)

- Programs encourage Gr. 6-12 girls to pursue careers in science
- Opportunities for collaboration
 - Career-focused workshops at SET Conference (Gr. 10-12 girls) – e.g. How Careers Happen, Resilience & Failure, Mindfulness
 - URI involvement in high school Summer Research Program (Gr. 11) → create a pathway into undergraduate research

Questions?

Rate this session on the Cannexus I8 app!

Learn more:

- www.uab.ca/uri
- www.uab.ca/cc