

## **UNC Charlotte Providing Summer Research Experiences for Undergraduates**

**Charlotte, North Carolina, June 6, 2012....**The University of North Carolina at Charlotte announces the inaugural Charlotte Research Scholars (CRS) program, providing summer research opportunities to 50 undergraduate students. Students interested in science, technology, engineering, math (STEM) or social sciences were selected from a pool of over 170 applicants. The eight-week summer program began June 4. Supported by the University's Division of Academic Affairs and managed through the Graduate School, the 50 scholars will work on new and original research projects in order to gain exposure to cutting edge research topics in their discipline.

"Part of the value in attending a research university as an undergraduate is being able to learn in an environment that allows you to take part in the process of discovery," explains University Provost Dr. Joan Lorden. "The Charlotte Research Scholars program will give participants an intense immersion experience in research working with faculty, graduate students and other professionals on topics that they might otherwise only read about."

Each scholar will receive a \$4,000 stipend. The scholars hail from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the College of Engineering, the College of Computing and Informatics, and the College of Education.

These young researchers will work closely with members of UNC Charlotte's faculty on research projects in their area of study. Over 125 UNC Charlotte faculty members requested to become part of the program in assuming the role of mentor to the students. "Doing research is a skill, and can be further developed by participation and mentoring," says Dr. Srinivas Akella, Associate Professor in the Department of Computer Science. "By exposing our undergraduates to the fun of doing research, we enhance our ability to recruit trained, top-notch students for our graduate programs. Undergraduate students often do amazing things because they don't know what cannot be done!"

University faculty were enthused not only by the program, but by the student's desire to do research over the summer. "I actually had four students apply to the program because they all wanted to have the opportunity to stay working in the lab finishing projects that they've already

started working on during the year," says Dr. Michael Walter, Assistant Professor, Organic/Materials Chemistry at UNC Charlotte. "I'm expecting that these students will work hard on challenging chemistry problems and help make a real contribution to our overall lab research. I also hope that they have a good time, and continue to gain insight into what it is like to perform research in a professional setting."

Fellow faculty member Dr. Dan Rabinovich, Professor of Chemistry, has been mentoring his student since her high school days. "The project that Lizeth (Hernandez) will be involved with this summer and the professional development opportunities made available through the CRS program will provide valuable tools to broaden her research experience and refine her interests for further graduate studies in chemistry," says Rabinovich. "She would not have been able to do research on a full-time basis this summer without the financial support from the Charlotte Research Scholars (CRS) program."

In addition to research activities, scholars will participate in weekly professional development training in order to build skills critical to professional success. Sessions such as responsible conduct of research, developing a competitive research fellowship application, preparing an academic resume, professional communication tools and an introduction to the graduate school application process including tips and techniques for taking the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) are already on their schedule. The program concludes July 25 at 9:00 am with a Research Symposia in the Student Union, where the scholars and students participating in the other research programs on campus will present their research results. The Research Symposia is free and open to the public. For more information on the symposia, contact [Dr. Dennis R. Livesay](#), Associate Professor, Bioinformatics & Genomics, Director of the Bioinformatics & Computational Biology Ph.D. program and Coordinator of the CRS program.

In future summers, the CRS program plans to expand its efforts beyond the STEM and social sciences to include the humanities and other disciplines. The program is yet another catalyst for continuing the University's tradition of growing research opportunities at UNC Charlotte while encouraging outstanding students to enroll in graduate programs at Charlotte's urban research institution.

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