**Assessment Report – FURSCA  
May 2012**

**Step 1: Department/Program Mission**

The original investigation, interpretation, and presentation of knowledge is one of the highest forms of learning. The Foundation for Undergraduate Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity fosters exploration and discovery by students and the integration of research into the way we teach and learn. The Foundation defines “research” as a set of activities leading to new knowledge or creation and supports scholarly projects in which students are the principal investigators. The Foundation exists to endorse, encourage, and support undergraduate research and research opportunities throughout the campus community, particularly in academic departments, institutes, and centers, and recognizes the importance of diversity in academic thought, methodology, and the presentation of research results.

**Step 2: List goals/outcomes**

1. Foster student/faculty collaborative scholarship in a diverse range of disciplines.  
2. Help students to understand the research methods and tools.  
3. Have students become articulate in their communication skills by learning how to effectively develop proposals, collect data and disseminate the results of their projects.  
4. Establish a culture of scholarship and allow students to present the results of their work in a variety of different venues.

**Step 3: Identify program components**

*Outcome 1: Foster student/faculty collaborative scholarship in a diverse range of disciplines   
•* Student Research Partners Program: for first-year students – pairs a student and faculty member together to work on a project related to the faculty member’s research. The student receives hands-on experience with research in a specific field. (Very selective – small number of students participate)  
• Semester Research Grants: Students may apply for up to $500 per semester to support their own research or other creative project. Students must work closely with a faculty advisor though projects are not limited to a particular discipline. The grant may be used towards supplies, printing costs, software, etc…  
• Summer Research Fellowships: Our largest, most visible, and most successful program. Students work with faculty on campus for the summer to conduct research/scholarship for up to 10 weeks (again, in all disciplines). Students receive a $330/week stipend, and must work closely with a faculty advisor.  
 *Outcome 2: Help students to understand research methods and tools.  
•* All students work closely with a faculty mentor within their discipline.  
• When applying for Semester Research Grants or Summer Research Fellowships, the FURSCA committee evaluates the applications. The committee works with the students to have them clarify and explain the research tools and methods that will be best for the project. *•* During the summer, students who are taking part in the Summer Research program are required to attend weekly research meetings. All disciplines present at the same meeting. Students are made familiar with how research is performed in all disciplines across campus.  
• Every Spring semester, the Elkin R. Isaac Student Research symposium showcases student research across campus. The participants are nominated by their faculty sponsors after having participated in independent research that results in the significant synthesis of new knowledge. The research must have been performed under the direct supervision of an Albion College faculty member, or in a College-approved off-campus program.  *Outcome 3: Have students become articulate in their communication skills by learning how to develop effective proposals, collect data and disseminate the results of their projects*• Semester Research Grants and Summer Research Fellowships: Students are asked to write a 1-3 page proposal that outlines their plans for their research project. Required components include background information, methodology and proposed outcomes. Students work with faculty mentors to learn the techniques and successful strategies for developing these proposals. In addition the FURSCA Committee carefully reads and evaluates each proposal on its merits. In order to make this a learning experience, the committee may ask for rewrites and clarification of the proposals before the funds are awarded.   
• End-of-summer reports are required from all summer students. These reports include a brief outline of the outcomes of the summer and short reflective piece on the summer. In addition, individual faculty mentors require more detailed reports on the summer’s activities.  
  
*Outcome 4: Establish a culture of scholarship and allow students to present the results of their work in a variety of different venues*• In addition to the Elkin R. Isaac Student Research Symposium (discussed in Outcome 2), students whose research is supported by FURSCA can apply for up to $600 to defray the costs associated with presenting their work at a research conference outside of Albion College.  
• During the summer, students who are taking part in the Summer Research program are required to attend weekly research meetings. All disciplines present at the same meeting. Students are made familiar with how research is performed in all disciplines across campus.

**Step 4: Select methods/data sources and instruments**

1. In order to best see how FURSCA is fostering faculty/student collaborative research, the number of grants given to the different disciplines is recorded and analyzed each year.

2. At the end of the summer research session, we ask students to submit 1-2 page progress reports detailing the progress that they have made on their projects.  Students are also asked to provide any personal comments that they want to about the summer session.  These student reports that are written at the end of the summer are used to assess student writing skills and gauge progress on research projects. In addition, students were asked to fill out an anonymous survey of the Summer 2011 FURSCA program. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix A, along with the complete table of responses in Appendix B.

3. Evaluation of revised proposals. As mentioned in Learning Outcome 2 above, if a proposal is not accepted for funding, students are sometimes asked to “respond and resubmit” (R/R) the proposal. The percentage of proposals selected for R/R will be calculated and the resulting proposals will be evaluated for the ability of the student to respond to the concerns of the FURSCA Advisory Committee and their ability to write about their research project.

4. The number of papers published per year as a result of faculty-student collaborative research supported by FURSCA is used to gauge student engagement and awareness of the research methods in their chosen discipline.

5. Students have the chance to showcase their research at the yearly Elkin R. Isaac Research Symposium.  Many students list these presentations as an outcome in their research proposals.  We calculate the percentage of FURSCA-supported students who present at the Elkin R. Isaac Research Symposium presentations each year given by students to show progress towards Goal 4 (establishing a culture of scholarship) and as a way to gauge student involvement in their discipline beyond the classroom.

6. Another common outcome that students include in their research proposals is to write a thesis for either Albion College Honors or Departmental Honors. Calculating the percentage of FURSCA-supported students who deposit theses each year will show that students are becoming proficient in their written communication skills.

**Step 5: Analyze and interpret the data**

**1. Analyzing the number of grants given through FURSCA.**

Table 1 - Number of students funded through FURSCA's Summer Research Program and Semester Grants (Semester Grants include research grants and travel applications.)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Academic Year | Summer Students\* | Number of Semester Research Grants | Number of conference grants | SRP students |
| 1999-2000 | 62 |  |  |  |
| 2000-2001 | 62 |  |  |  |
| 2001-2002 | 76 | 58\*\* |  |  |
| 2002-2003 | 76 | 50\*\* |  |  |
| 2003-2004 | 84 | 45\*\* |  |  |
| 2004-2005 | 71 | 56\*\* |  |  |
| 2005-2006 | 62 | 45\*\* |  |  |
| 2006-2007 | 41 | 33\*\* |  |  |
| 2007-2008 | 45 | 77\*\* |  |  |
| 2008-2009 | 46 | 56\*\* |  |  |
| 2009-2010 | 45 | 59\*\* |  | 31 |
| 2010-2011 | 45 | 10 | 30 | 27 |
| **2011-2012** | **40** | **19** | **40** | **24** |

\* The summer students are counted in the summer after the academic year. So summer 2012 students are listed in the 2011-2012 academic year. \*\* This number is the sum of the research grants plus conference grants.

As can be seen, the number of grants given through FURSCA is steady. This year, the number of grants given during the semester was slightly greater than in previous years. In Appendix C, the breakdown of grants by division is given. As is usual, the number of grants given to students working in the Natural Sciences is predominant.

**2a. The End of Summer Reports (EOSRs)** written by FURSCA students at the end of their summer experiences provide a great deal of information about the success of the students' research projects, but more importantly, about the attitudes of the students themselves towards research.  The EOSR was instituted in 2006 as a requirement of the summer program.  Student participation has been quite varied as can be seen from the data in Table 2. Until Summer 2011, the content of the EOSR was quite vague. The students were asked to simply turn something in but there were few guidelines on what that was to be.

In Summer 2011, the students were asked to specifically answer five questions:

1. Do you plan on continuing your project?
2. Do you plan on writing a thesis?
3. Do you plan on writing a paper for outside publication
4. Do you plan on presenting at Elkin Isaac?
5. Do you plan on presenting at an outside conference?

These questions were chosen to help assess Learning OutComes (LOCs) 3 and 4.

Table 2: Percentage of students were turned in ESORs since the inception of the requirement.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Summer | Percent of students who turned in a EOSR |
| 2006 | 91% |
| 2007 | 77% |
| 2008 | 75% |
| 2009 | 98% |
| 2010 | 98% |
| **2011** | **91%** |

As can seen for Summer 2011, the number of students turning in the EOSR was lower than in previous years. The penalty for not turning in a report is the loss of future funding opportunities through FURSCA. Most of the students who did not turn in the report were senior students. Two reports were turned in several months late.

For this assessment report, the answers to Questions 1, 2 and 4 were evaluated. Of the 41 EOSRs that were turned in, 34 reports had the answers to Questions 1, 2 and 4.

1. Do you plan on continuing your project?
   1. 34 of 34 students reported that they were continuing the project.
2. Do you plan on writing a thesis?
   1. 30 of 34 students reported that they were planning on writing a thesis

4. Do you plan on presenting at Elkin Isaac?  
 a. 29 of 34 students reported that they were planning on writing a thesis.

As can be seen from the responses, a large proportion of the students are planning on presenting the results of their research (LOC 4) at the Elkin Isaac Research Symposium.

**2b. End of Summer FURSCA Assessment**. Starting in Summer 2010, the summer FURSCA students were asked to complete a survey assessing their learning and some aspects of the summer program. The complete survey given to the Summer 2011 students is given in Appendix A. In this survey, students are asked a variety of questions to gauge their learning gains during the summer. The results of this survey are shown in Appendix B. This survey directly addresses LOC2.

In the summer 2011 FURSCA program, over 90% of students who responded answered that they saw increases in “understanding how knowledge is constructed” and in the “ability to integrate theory and practice.”

Another question of the survey asked about the weekly meeting and their attitudes towards these meetings. Over 60% of the respondents were favorable towards the weekly meetings, 30% were neutral and 3% had negative feeling towards these meetings. As part of the summer program, at the first meeting, the FURSCA Director gave a short introduction to preparing effective presentations. The survey asked about the effectiveness of this presentation (LOC3). Over half of the respondents found this useful. Over 85% of the students surveyed had positive feelings towards the presentation and preparation process.

**3.  Evaluation of revised proposals.**

In order to participate in the summer FURSCA program, students must write a three page proposal in which they outline their proposed project. The proposal includes a budget, timeline and the proposed work. As part of the review process, the FURSCA Advisory Committee gives each proposal a score from 1 to 5. One means fund immediately with no revisions, two is fundable but a few concerns, three is revisions needed but fundable, four is serious revisions are needed, and five is not fundable. If a proposal is deemed to need revisions, the student is contacted with a list of concerns and asked to respond to these questions, either by revising the proposal or submitting a statement and resubmit the proposal for rereview. In the rereview process, the proposal is checked to make sure that the student has responded to all of our concerns. The review process takes place in February and March.

For Summer 2012 (review taking place in Spring 2012), there were 42 proposals submitted for funding. Twenty-five were funded without revisions and sixteen proposals were sent back for “respond and resubmits” (R/Rs). When the revised proposals were read, a majority of them (12/16) were much better proposals. The committee spent very little time discussing them. The four remaining proposals were clearer, but still had some issues that were not addressed in the R/Rs. The proposals were funded anyway, and students were told that while the proposal was better, they had still not addressed some of the issues.

**4. Number of papers published per year as a result of faculty-student collaborative research**. Web of Science allows one to search over a thousand journals in the sciences, social sciences and humanities.   A Web of Science search was done using the search term "Albion College" for 2011.  The search results were refined to include "articles", "reviews" and "paper proceedings".  Citations that detailed "editorial comments" and "meeting abstracts" were excluded from this analysis.  The data from these searches is shown in Table 2.

Table 3 - Number of articles cited on Web of Science by Albion College faculty and the number of those publications that include students listed as authors.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year | Total Number of Articles | Publications with FURSCA supported students | Percentage |
| 2000 | 11 | 1 | 9.09% |
| 2001 | 12 | 0 | 0.00% |
| 2002 | 14 | 0 | 0.00% |
| 2003 | 16 | 1 | 6.25% |
| 2004 | 24 | 5 | 20.83% |
| 2005 | 12 | 3 | 25.00% |
| 2006 | 12 | 0 | 0.00% |
| 2007 | 27 | 4 | 14.81% |
| 2008 | 26 | 5 | 19.23% |
| 2009 | 15 | 4 | 26.67% |
| 2010 | 19 | 3 | 16% |
| **2011** | **14** | **1** | **7%** |

The number of publications by Albion College faculty has been variable over the past 10 years, but the number of publications that include FURSCA-supported students has remained constant in the last six year, with the exception of 2006.  The drop in the number of students listed on publications can be correlated with the same drop in the number of students that participated in FURSCA in the 2005-2006 academic year.  There has been a dramatic increase in the percentage of publications in which FURSCA students are listed as authors since the inception of the program.  This can be seen as evidence that students are becoming more involved and conversant in their chosen research fields.  It is very encouraging for us to see that a large percentage of publications coming from Albion College have undergraduates associated with them.

When the data in Table 3 is compared to the total number of students who are participating in FURSCA in any given year, it is discouraging to see that only a very small fraction of the research being doing by students is finding its way to publication.  This could be attributed to two factors.  1 - Not all publications are being represented by Web of Science.  Student publications such as Lux Fiat are not included in Web of Science indexing.  2 - Many of the research projects being funded are not suitable for publication in peer-reviewed journals.  Many of the projects being undertaken by students are not meant for outside publications.  Students are working on projects for theses, and conferences and not for publication.  Even though the publication rate by students is low, we believe that letting students design and write research proposals is strengthening their writing skills and making them more competitive for admission to graduate schools and in the hiring process.

Table 4 - Percentages calculated for data sources 3 and 4 in Step 4.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Graduation Year | Percent of FURSCA funded graduating seniors who give EI Presentations | Percent Elkin Isaac Presenters for the entire graduating class. | Percent Thesis Writers funded by FURSCA | Percent Thesis Writers for the entire graduating Class. | Total Number of Graduating Seniors Funded through FURSCA |
| 2000 | 91% | NA | 72% | 13% | 32 |
| 2001 | 81% | NA | 65% | 16% | 54 |
| 2002 | 67% | NA | 58% | 16% | 78 |
| 2003 | 66% | NA | 55% | 15% | 73 |
| 2004 | 62% | 23% | 49% | 15% | 85 |
| 2005 | 71% | 28% | 59% | 16% | 82 |
| 2006 | 63% | 25% | 49% | 12% | 72 |
| 2007 | 69% | 26% | 43% | 11% | 70 |
| 2008 | 71% | 24% | 44% | 14% | 78 |
| 2009 | 58% | 22% | 33% | 12% | 67 |
| 2010 | 63% | 29% | 55% | 13% | 54 |
| 2011 | 43% | NA | NA | NA | 54 |
| **2012** | **57%** | **29%** | **66%** | **14%** | **68** |

Data were collected by grouping students funded by FURSCA by graduation year.  Students are considered to be funded through four different means - SRP participation, travel grant receipt, semester grant receipt or participation in the summer research session at Albion College.  This list of students was cross-referenced with the list of students participating in the research symposium and those depositing theses.  Multiple presentations in the same year or consecutive years are not included in this analysis.  (NA = data not available for this analysis.)

**5.  Percent Participation in Elkin R. Isaac Research Symposium.** FURSCA has been supporting students at Albion College since the 1999-2000 school year.  Students apply for grants (semester and summer) by writing short proposals and submitting them to the FURSCA committee. Students are asked to include proposed outcomes for the dissemination of the product generated by the research grants.  One of the common proposed outcomes is participation in the annual Elkin R. Isaac Research Symposium held on campus.  As can be seen in Table 4, around 57% of graduating seniors funded through FURSCA participate in this symposium.

LOC4 addresses the ability of FURSCA to establish a culture of scholarship by supporting students to present in the annual Elkin Isaac research Symposium. As can be seen in Table 4, the percentage of graduating seniors who have been funded through FURSCA who present at the Elkin Isaac research symposium is remaining constant at about 60%. Overall, FURSCA students are more than twice as likely to participate in the Elkin Isaac Research Symposium.

**6.  Percentage Students Depositing Theses.**  Students are eligible for Albion College Honors or Departmental Honors if they write and deposit a faculty-juried thesis before graduation.  One way that FURSCA supports student achievement is by supporting students who are writing theses through either research grants or conference grants. Surveying these students directly supports LOC3. Approximately 50% of the students who are supported by FURSCA write theses every year.  This is compared to an average of 15% for the entire student body over the time surveyed for this analysis.  FURSCA-supported students are much more likely to write a thesis than one not supported by FURSCA.

As can be seen in Table 4, the percentage of thesis writers that had FURSCA support at some point in their Albion College careers is high for the 2012 graduating class. It is not clear why this is the case.

**Step 6: How will the data collected be used for decision-making, strategic planning, etc.**

1. **End of Summer Reports and Summer Surveys**. Already the information collected in the first data source has lead to changes being made in the format of the reports from the students. We are currently revising the guidelines for the EOSRs to make them more useful for assessment purposes.

The summer surveys have been useful for the two summers that we have been administering them. We have been able to show that there is no difference in satisfaction with the summer program between the different disciplines. Comments from the students will help us to design a better summer program.

2. **Publications with Student Authors**. The information collected in this section was extremely encouraging and useful. There has been an increase in the percent of publications with students listed as authors that we feel is correlated with the number of students supported by FURSCA. This information will be used as leverage when talking to the administration and faculty to encourage their support of this program.

3. **Percent Participation in Elkin R. Isaac Research Symposium and Percentage of Students Depositing Theses**. The drop in the numbers of theses and Elkin Isaac presentations by FURSCA students is something that we are going to work hard to remedy. We plan on asking faculty sponsors to encourage the students to do Elkin Isaac presentations. As part of this, the committee is looking at ways that we can increase student accountability and compliance with their stated outcomes. We are starting to keep track of a student's stated outcomes from year to year and see if they are making progress towards their goals. This is a difficult task and will require faculty sponsors help in keeping track of these numbers. We may also start asking students to turn in a copy of their thesis to the FURSCA office if it was supported by FURSCA funding. These will be part of long-term longitudinal studies on the effectiveness of FURSCA funding.

**Appendix A  
Summer 2011 Student Survey**



What is your field of scholarship? (choose one)

*  Fine Arts (Art and Art History, Music, Theater)
*  Humanities (English, Foreign Languages, Philosophy, Religious Studies)
*  Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Math, Physics)
*  Social Sciences (Anthropology, Sociology, Economics, History, Political Science, Psychology, Speech Communication)
*  Other: 

How many weeks did you participate in the summer program?

*  1-4
*  5-8
*  9-10

Have you participated in research/scholarship prior to this summer?

*  No, I have not had a prior research experience.
*  Yes, during one academic semester (typically ~4-8 hr/wk).
*  Yes, during multiple academic semesters (typically ~4-8 hr/wk).
*  Yes, during a summer research program (typically full-time for at least 5 weeks).
*  Yes, during a prior academic semester (or semesters) and a summer.
*  Yes, during prior years and/or several summers.
*  Not applicable / Prefer to not answer

Think about the expectations you had about the summer research experience before it began. Use the scale below to evaluate your current feelings.

*  The experience was worse than I expected.
*  The experience was a little worse than I expected.
*  The experience met my expectations.
*  The experience was a little better than I expected.
*  The experience was much better than I expected.
*  Not applicable/Prefer not to answer.

Expectations If you answered worse or a little worse above, please let us know what didn't meet your expectations.

Think about your faculty mentor. Evaluate their performance.

*  I feel that my mentor was not a good teacher and mentor.
*  I feel that my mentor was below average as a teacher and mentor.
*  I feel that my mentor was about average as a teacher and mentor.
*  I feel that my mentor was above average as a teacher and mentor.
*  I feel that my mentor was an outstanding teacher and mentor.
*  Not applicable/Prefer not to answer.

Faculty mentors If you ranked your mentor below average or worse, please tell us why.

Evaluate your overall sense of satisfaction from your experience by choosing one statement below.

*  I am very dissatisfied with this experience.
*  I am mildly dissatisfied with this experience.
*  I feel neutral about this experience.
*  I am mildly satisfied with this experience.
*  I am very satisfied with this experience.
*  Not applicable/Prefer not to answer.

Experience If you were dissatisfied with the summer FURSCA experience, please provide feedback below.

Benefits In this section of the survey you will be asked to consider a variety of possible benefits you may have gained from your experience this summer. If for any reason you prefer not to answer, or consider the question irrelevant to you, please choose the "Not applicable / Prefer not to answer" option.

|  |  | No gain | Small gain | Moderate gain | Large gain | Not applicable/Prefer not to answer |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Clarification of a career path |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Skill in interpretation of results |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Tolerance for obstacles faced in research process |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Understanding of how knowledge is constructed |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ability to integrate theory and practice |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ability to analyze data and other information |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Self-confidence |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Learning to work independently |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Other Program Components Please rate the effectiveness of the following parts of the FURSCA summer program. You will have space below to provide written feedback below.

|  |  | Negative | Neutral | Positive | Prefer not to answer/Not applicable |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Preparation of proposal |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Proposal revision process |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Discussion on effective presentations |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Preparation of your oral presentation |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Weekly meetings |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Presentation Feedback Did you request the comments from your presentation evaluation?

If you answered "Yes", were the comments helpful?

Comments Please include any additional comments you have about the FURSCA summer program here. Please include suggestions for future summer programs.

**Appendix B  
Summer 2011 Student Survey  
Summary of Responses**

Summary See complete responses

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What is your field of scholarship? (choose one) | |
|  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Fine Arts (Art and Art History, Music, Theater) |  | 5 | 13% | | Humanities (English, Foreign Languages, Philosophy, Religious Studies) |  | 4 | 11% | | Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Math, Physics) |  | 21 | 55% | | Social Sciences (Anthropology, Sociology, Economics, History, Political Science, Psychology, Speech Communication) |  | 6 | 16% | | Other |  | 2 | 5% | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Have you participated in research/scholarship prior to this summer? | |
|  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | No, I have not had a prior research experience. |  | 23 | 61% | | Yes, during one academic semester (typically ~4-8 hr/wk). |  | 1 | 3% | | Yes, during multiple academic semesters (typically ~4-8 hr/wk). |  | 4 | 11% | | Yes, during a summer research program (typically full-time for at least 5 weeks). |  | 3 | 8% | | Yes, during a prior academic semester (or semesters) and a summer. |  | 4 | 11% | | Yes, during prior years and/or several summers. |  | 3 | 8% | | Not applicable / Prefer to not answer |  | 0 | 0% | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Think about the expectations you had about the summer research experience before it began. Use the scale below to evaluate your current feelings. | |
|  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | The experience was worse than I expected. |  | 0 | 0% | | The experience was a little worse than I expected. |  | 1 | 3% | | The experience met my expectations. |  | 20 | 53% | | The experience was a little better than I expected. |  | 9 | 24% | | The experience was much better than I expected. |  | 8 | 21% | | Not applicable/Prefer not to answer. |  | 0 | 0% | |

Expectations

## Expectations Comments

## "In terms of producing works, I am satisfied with my experience.

## I have been doing testing of oxides and underglazes all summer which is not part of what I expected from the experience even though the experience has given me more knowledge of the material I work with. Although I produce fewer number of work because of the extra testing that I had to do, I am very satisfied with the ceramic process part of the proposed project.

## I answered a little worse than i expected because I needed more time to start researching into the meaning and symbols involved in my work. I will start the research part independently after finishing up Fursca."

## This question was confusing; do you want to know if my goals/expectations for this research period were met, or how I felt, overall, about my summer research experience?

## Section title

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Think about your faculty mentor. Evaluate their performance. | |
|  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | I feel that my mentor was not a good teacher and mentor. |  | 1 | 3% | | I feel that my mentor was below average as a teacher and mentor. |  | 1 | 3% | | I feel that my mentor was about average as a teacher and mentor. |  | 4 | 11% | | I feel that my mentor was above average as a teacher and mentor. |  | 8 | 21% | | I feel that my mentor was an outstanding teacher and mentor. |  | 24 | 63% | | Not applicable/Prefer not to answer. |  | 0 | 0% | |

Faculty mentors

I don't think that advisors should be able to have more than two student researchers. I felt like my advisor only was able to help a 3rd or less of the time. Also, I think the faculty should choose there researchers more wisely. One of the other students that I had to work with was not capable of the own expectations that he set for himself in his project and heavily relied on the other students and our faculty mentor. This drew a lot of our facultys time away from the other projects. My mentor was constantly late to appointments or would not show up at all during our planed times. She offer...

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Evaluate your overall sense of satisfaction from your experience by choosing one statement below. | |
|  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | I am very dissatisfied with this experience. |  | 0 | 0% | | I am mildly dissatisfied with this experience. |  | 0 | 0% | | I feel neutral about this experience. |  | 2 | 5% | | I am mildly satisfied with this experience. |  | 7 | 18% | | I am very satisfied with this experience. |  | 29 | 76% | | Not applicable/Prefer not to answer. |  | 0 | 0% | |

Experience Comments

* Since I have not done this kind of research experience before, I got to realize how much time and effort research projects really take. I felt at times that I was behind on my work, but it seems that most people don't completely finish their research during the 10 weeks time. It just takes much more time to understand all the information and figure out everything.
* The students participating in the program are underpaid. One could get a room and board paid for with $5,500 stipend at a majority of other universities or colleges. We are Albion students, it is bad enough that we have to accumulate outrageous loans, the least you could do is provide the college's poor living conditions for free.

Benefits

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Clarification of a career path | Skill in interpretation of results | Tolerance for obstacles faced in research process | Understanding of how knowledge is constructed | Ability to integrate theory and practice |
| No gain | 8% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Small gain | 18% | 11% | 8% | 8% | 8% |
| Moderate gain | 42% | 21% | 18% | 26% | 26% |
| Large gain | 29% | 66% | 74% | 61% | 61% |
| NA/Prefer not to answer | 3% | 3% | 0% | 5% | 5% |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Ability to analyze data and other information | Self-confidence | Learning to work independently |
| No gain | 3% | 5% | 3% |
| Small gain | 11% | 13% | 11% |
| Moderate gain | 32% | 32% | 26% |
| Large gain | 55% | 47% | 58% |
| NA/Prefer not to answer | 0% | 3% | 3% |

Other Program Components

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Preparation of proposal | Proposal revision process | Discussion on effective presentations | Preparation of your oral presentation | Weekly meetings |
| Negative | 0 | 21% | 5% | 3% | 5% |
| Neutral | 29% | 21% | 34% | 8% | 29% |
| Positive | 66% | 50% | 53% | 87% | 63% |
| NA/Prefer not to answer | 5% | 8% | 8% | 3% | 3% |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Presentation Feedback | |
| https://chart.googleapis.com/chart?cht=p&chs=345x150&chco=0000e0&chl=Yes%20%5B22%5D%7CNo%20%5B16%5D&chd=e%3AlCa8 | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Yes |  | 22 | 58% | | No |  | 16 | 42% | |

Haven't received them yet.The comments were encouraging.Yes they were. It gave me more information on what I could have discussed or what most people focus on with my topic of research.Yes, they gave me things to consider improving for my public speaking skills.Yes, the comments were helpful, but I felt that they could have been better organized and more specific.The comments were helpful. I presented later in the summer and have not yet received the feedback. Just requested them todayThe comments were generally helpful. Interestingly, comments were all over the map concerning which parts o...

Comments

* Change the Thursday meetings. Make them more interactive? Something. They just get so boring.
* It would be great if future FURSCA students were allowed extra print credits during the summer. I know it is possible to write extra print money into a budget, however, I feel that it is curtsey to allow a research student to print a document free of cost. I also feel that it is hard to always know exactly how many papers you will read or to anticipate the length of a literature review.
* It would be really great if campus housing costs could be brought down. The only reason I had a challenging experience this summer was because the apartment I stayed in had a lot of technical issues and I could have stayed in an off-campus house for less to not recieve inernet access. I realize this is really a campus housing issue rather than a FURSCA issue though. My research experience was very good.
* I was very disatisfied with the proposal revision process. I was asked to revise my proposal and put in information that was already there, so that made me feel that my proposal had not been read thoroughly.
* I think FURSCA is a great program my only complaint is my professor had too many students working with him doing different projects. I feel we should have done one project since each project got less time since they all needed his help/people out in the field. I think it should be made very clear that the projects relate in there work and goals.
* "FURSCA is a wonderful program that I fully support and would suggest to anyone. That being said, I had several dissatisfying experiences with the FURSCA committee during my application process for my summer grant. Since I’m going to out myself by directly quoting the comments I received on my proposal, I’m going to go ahead and state that I’m an English Literature major.

The comments I received on the first draft of my proposal made it clear that whoever had reviewed my proposal had little understanding of how research in the humanities is conducted. If faculty from the humanities were on the review committee, they were clearly not represented in the comments I received. My first problem was the statement that “FURSCA does not usually fund such large times to write either a thesis or a paper. Instead, we support time to do research and study into a specific subject.” English majors in particular learn that writing is intrinsic to textual analysis and we must learn to write well and often in order to examine textual evidence, generate ideas, and draw conclusions and the writing of an actual paper or thesis. When I allotted myself four weeks of writing, I intended that time to be used to fully develop the ideas that grew out of my research from the summer.

The second comment that upset me was the entire third comment on my proposal: “As a separate point, the committee was confused about one point brought up in your proposal. At the end of the first paragraph, you indicate that the author’s view of motherhood in regards to the historical contexts have not been addressed, but from the secondary bibliography, the titles suggested to the committee that this has been addressed. Any clarification that you would like to put forward would be appreciated.” The ignorance apparent in this comment is appalling. Anyone remotely familiar with research in the humanities, especially English, would know that there are multiple ways to interpret the same book, event in history, or the same painting. The further implication of the comment is that the committee completely misunderstood the basic idea of my project or failed to closely examine my secondary sources: The examination of the cultural and historical role of motherhood in five of Toni Morrison’s novels. There was not a single secondary source listed that included all five novels in the same article. The only other option I’m forced to consider is that the committee thought so little of my ability to research (or, perhaps more incriminatingly, they type of research that I am conducting) that they thought I was merely going to synthesize the articles I read into one giant project. The review committee’s comments reflect a misunderstanding of the work that students and faculty in the Humanities conduct. I was confused and offended by the complete lack of knowledge about scholarship in literature.

* After reading the committee’s response to my proposal, I concluded that my project was being judged as a science proposal rather than as a humanities proposal. Knowing that there was a single Humanities professor on the committee deepened my sense of being mistreated, since that professor’s intimate knowledge of the field was clearly being overlooked by faculty less qualified to assess my proposal. If the FURSCA program is going to continue to support all academic fields, and not just the sciences, then something needs to change.

The problems I have outlined in my experiences are easily fixed. The committee should be more representative of the fields of study at Albion College and of the FURSCA mission statement which states that it “recognizes the importance of diversity in academic methodology, and the presentation of research results.” At the time of writing, the majority of the FURSCA committee is comprised of professors and student representatives from the sciences. If the membership of the committee cannot easily be altered to reflect a more representative disciplinary reality, then I would hope that the members educate themselves with areas of study outside of their own field. I would also advise listening to the professors who speak for the underrepresented academic fields.

Updating the FURSCA website would also help avoid potential misunderstandings over proposals. The information currently available is limited and could be expanded for the benefit of all. The example proposals are helpful, sort of. When I first read the proposal for Modern Languages, I had no clear idea of how my proposal should be shaped. An example proposal from each department might be more useful. A clear set of guidelines would be a valuable addition; not only for students, but potentially for the committee as well. If you won’t, under any circumstances, fund a project with more than two weeks of writing please write that on the website, but you should know that such a statement reflects an insulting disrespect for our faculty and what they teach us. There is also a clear form that a FURSCA proposal follows, which could also be presented on the website. The student must introduce his or her specific subject of interest, explain exactly why his or her research is necessary, and then further explain the project and any expenses in depth. This is simple information that could be easily included in the website to make future prospective FURSCA students more successful.

I would like to stress that updating the website will not remedy the type of opposition I faced when submitting my proposal.

If the committee has any questions about my comments, I would be more than happy to respond.

* + Audrey Huggett
* "My only other comment is in the preparation of a summer proposal. Although it is fairly well outlined online about what information needs to be included in the proposal (background, methodology, etc.), it was unclear to me whether these sections should be clearly outlined by a header, or mingled together as though the proposal were a cohesive paper, etc. Perhaps it is that case that as long as this information is included in the document, the formatting isnt as important; but I had wished this information was available somewhere for reference. Having .pdf files of past proposals (covering different disciplines) online would be of some help to students who are jumping into a research program for their first time.

Appendix C

Breakdown of FURSCA grants by Division

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Semester and Type | Fine and Applied Arts | Humanities | Science | Social Science | Total |
| Summer 2011 FURSCA Grants |  |  |  |  |  |
| Fall 2011 Conference Grants | 0 | 0 | 12 (75%) | 4 (25%) | 16 |
| Fall 2011 Research Grants | 0 | 0 | 9 (82%) | 2 (18%) | 11 |
| Spring 2012 Conference Grants | 0 | 3 (13%) | 17 (58%) | 4 (17%) | 24 |
| Spring 2012 Research Grants | 0 | 1 (13%) | 5 (62%) | 2 (25%) | 8 |