

HOSTED BY

Available online at [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

ScienceDirect

journal homepage: <http://www.elsevier.com/journals/international-journal-of-nursing-sciences/2352-0132>

## Original Article

# Beyond one term of mentoring: A new approach to the research mentorship of undergraduate students



Julius Kitutu<sup>\*</sup>, Maura McCall, Rebecca Findle, Khadejah F. Mahmoud, W. Brian Greene

School of Nursing, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, USA

## ARTICLE INFO

## Article history:

Received 24 December 2015

Received in revised form

20 January 2016

Accepted 2 February 2016

Available online 10 February 2016

## Keywords:

Mentorship

Research

Nursing

Undergraduate

Education

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The Undergraduate Research Mentorship Program (URMP) at the University of Pittsburgh (UPitt), School of Nursing (SoN) was envisioned and implemented in the 2008–2009 academic year to expose undergraduate students to research early in their college educational experiences. Moreover, the URMP is a method to retain current students and attract new high school applicants to the SoN.

**Methods:** This article presents (1) the program's conceptualization, objectives, implementation, and outcomes using descriptive statistics and (2) the strengths of the URMP as well as the opportunities gained and lessons learned through conducting the program.

**Results:** The program has shown success in attracting students to get involved in research. To date, 63.3%–75.7% of participating students reported gaining various research skills from the URMP. Additionally, URMP students have reported participating in conferences and creating close relationships with their mentors; indeed, 97% of these students are interested in pursuing a graduate education. Moreover, the majority of URMP student participants (85.7%) have reported that not only the research experience met or exceeded their expectations, but also they were very satisfied with the research experience.

**Conclusion:** Through the URMP, unlike a traditional didactic class, students can benefit from experiential learning, incentives to participate, and a mentoring relationship without the added pressure of obtaining grades at the end of the term.

Copyright © 2016, Chinese Nursing Association. Production and hosting by Elsevier B.V.

This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

<sup>\*</sup> Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [jmm@pitt.edu](mailto:jmm@pitt.edu) (J. Kitutu).

Peer review under responsibility of Chinese Nursing Association.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnss.2016.02.004>

2352-0132/Copyright © 2016, Chinese Nursing Association. Production and hosting by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

## 1. Background and context

A great deal of emphasis has been placed on the degree to which undergraduate nursing students are involved in the research process. According to Vessey and DeMarco [1], nurses are vital to the implementation of evidence-based practices, which is needed to meet the demands of the ever-evolving healthcare environment. In addition, both the American Nurses Credentialing Center [2] and the Joint Commission [3] have recommended not only the development research-generated practice as a best practice, but also the integration of evidence-based practices into hospital settings. As a result, it has become increasingly more common for clinical nurses to develop research skills and practice [4]. Although most nursing baccalaureate programs concentrate on preparing students to be research consumers by requiring them to take a research course, which helps them understand and appreciate research [5], the research training offered through these courses is sometimes insufficient and not adequately integrated into clinical practice [1]. In addition, these nurse educators identified the need for innovative approaches that transform teaching–learning interaction from traditional instruction (i.e., passive, teacher-centered learning) to a more *ambitious* instruction (i.e., active, student-centered instruction) [1,6]. Such approaches may enable students to have a more active role in their learning process. As a result of these calls for ambitious instruction, honors programs in schools of nursing have been established to enhance the research experience among the most distinguished and innovative students; however, some qualified students may choose not to join an honors program due to the high competition and workload. Moreover, because most of these honors programs generally require a high GPA to participate, not all students are able to participate, despite their interest in research.

Therefore, teaching and learning opportunities needed that can expose a large proportion of nursing students to the research experience without the stress associated with requiring or maintaining a high GPA for participation.

To meet this need, various schools of nursing in the United States have established various sorts of undergraduate research programs. However, there is little literature available that concerns the outcomes of such programs [1,4]. Consequently, the purpose of this article is to (1) describe the conceptualization, objectives, implementation, and outcomes of the Undergraduate Research Mentorship Program (URMP) at the University of Pittsburgh (UPitt), School of Nursing (SoN) and (2) present its strengths as well as the opportunities gained and lessons learned through conducting the program.

The existing literature reveals various definitions of *mentorship*. Some studies refer to mentorship as supervision [7], while others describe it as a partnership [8]. According to Lev, Kolassa, and Bakken [9], mentoring occurs “when a senior person or mentor provides information, advice, and emotional support to a junior person or student over a period of time.” On the other hand, Goepfinger et al. [8] define mentoring as “a voluntary partnership between a nursing student desiring direct research experience, the mentee, and a nursing faculty member with research expertise and skill in

professional education, the mentor.” Accordingly, from the perspective of a mentor, mentorship may include offering advice, providing emotional and psychological support, being a role model, facilitating future intellectual and career development, and attending to any other mentee needs [9]. Thus, mentoring can be defined in different ways, depending on the environment of action. As a result, approaches in mentoring not only may differ from one institution or organization to another, but also are often created within a particular institution or organization to address its particular needs.

According to Smith [10], there are different types of mentorship programs in terms of curricula, and students can be exposed to the research experience during academic programs in numerous ways. For example, students can (1) enroll in research seminars/courses, directed research study/laboratory courses, and summer research opportunities, (2) engage in the Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU), funded by National Science Foundation, and (3) volunteer to work with a research mentor. In some cases, these programs may offer financial incentive or credit—or both—for participation [11,12]. Table 1 presents the features of the most common research experiences: students may enroll in a course for credit, attend a summer program, or enroll in a 4-year program (e.g., the one described in this paper).

As can be seen in Table 1, the mentoring of undergraduate students by faculty has been viewed as a vehicle for undergraduate research engagement, with most undergraduate research experiences occurring either as part of an academic-

**Table 1 – Comparison of types and features of mentorship opportunities.**

Courses	Summer programs	4-year programs
- Grade required for the student	- Intensive learning but short lived, usually 6–8 weeks	- One-on-one mentoring
- Objective-based and measured at the end of the term	- May require a grade option	- Long-term relationship between mentor and mentee
- Minimal individual attention (depending on the number of students enrolled)	- The outcome is expected at the end of the summer term	- There is no pressure for grading
- Sometimes meant to fulfill the curriculum requirement for the major		- Slow paced learning of research processes
		- Interaction with other research team members/scholars
		- Requires sacrifice from the mentee because compensation is minimal, in terms of amount paid per hour
		- Goes beyond teacher-student relationship

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/2652757>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/2652757>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)