UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL MEETING
May 17, 2013
Room 101, Knight Library

PRESENT
Andrew Bonamici, Ron Bramhall, Ashley Buchholz, Sue Eveland, Dave Hubin, Madeleine Hudson, Jennifer Joslin, Josh Snodgrass, Karen Sprague, Karen McLaughlin, and Glenda Utsey

ABSENT
Susan Anderson, Paul Engelking, John Gage, Loren Kajikawa, Diana Salazar, Alison Schmitke, Ben Smood, Kerry Snodgrass, Beata Stawarska, Randy Sullivan, and Tom Wheeler

AGENDA
I. Undergraduate Research at the University of Oregon

MINUTES

* NON AGENDA ITEMS: NOMINATIONS FOR 2013–2014 COUNCIL CHAIR
The Chair opened the meeting with an announcement of the opening of nominations for the chair for the 2013-2014 academic year. Nominations are to be sent to Karen Sprague.

I. UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
The Chair invited the meeting attendees to introduce themselves around the table:

- David Frank, Dean of the Robert D. Clark Honors College;
- Marjorie Taylor, Director of CAS College Scholars Program;
- Kevin Hatfield, Assistant Director—Intellectual Connections, University Housing;
- Sue Eveland, University Registrar (eo Undergraduate Council);
- Jennifer Joslin, Director of Academic Advising (eo Undergraduate Council);
- Andrew Bonamici, Associate University Librarian, Media and Instructional Services (eo Undergraduate Council);
- Gail Unruh, Director of the McNair Scholars Program, Teaching and Learning Center;
- Audrey Cramer, Director of Academic Enrichment, Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence;
- Cathy Kraus, Executive Assistant in Division of Undergraduate Studies and Undergraduate Council recording secretary;
- Madelyn Hudson, Honors College (student representative to Undergraduate Council);
- Ashley Buchholz, College of Education (student representative to Undergraduate Council);
- Karen McLaughlin, Communications Disorders Program, College of Education (Undergraduate Council);
Roundtable Discussion
Following the introductions, the Chair explained the goal of the gathering to discuss undergraduate research activities and opportunities currently available on campus. He stressed that the meeting was a “jumping-off” point for future discussions. He noted that many people are discussing research within the context of General Education.

This meeting’s focus is on the synthesis of teaching and research and what it means for our undergraduates to be at a major research university. There are a few points worth making:

- We are really exceptional in our research and our teaching at UO. But these activities have not been integrated as well as possible. The effort is uneven across campus. We can do better through a concerted drive to integrate our efforts.

- When we talk of research, we are taking a broad definition of research, not just sponsored or scientific research, but research across a wide variety of disciplines across campus, including creative work and scholarship.

- We should also take a look at the broader view of changing education and the pressures higher education is under, especially at things like MOOCs, online classes from other places, and articulating the outcomes of residency requirements (an issue previously discussed by the Council).

The Chair reviewed seven interrelated issues of integrating research and undergraduate education (see handout) which he had previously sent to all the guests and the Council members:

1. The appropriate role of undergraduate education at a major research university and UO in particular

2. How we maximize the involvement of undergraduates in research (defined broadly to include not just sponsored scientific research but also research training opportunities,
creative work, and other scholarship) but with reasonable expectations that don’t place additional burdens on faculty, graduate students, and staff, or create false expectations among students

3. How we broaden participation of undergraduates in research beyond current strengths such as the Clark Honors College, McNair Scholars Program, and CAS Natural Sciences, among others

4. How we build on, connect, and better promote existing campus efforts in order to improve the student experience, reduce the burden on faculty, and do all this in the most cost-effective manner

5. Strategies to encourage and support faculty to incorporate the latest research developments into their teaching in order to provide an enriched classroom experience, and to link this with our general education mission

6. How we better communicate the importance (and the existence) of research at UO to our undergraduates

7. How we better articulate and communicate the importance of research in undergraduate education to stakeholders such as parents, the Eugene/Springfield community, and government officials

The Chair then laid out the goals he hoped the discussion would accomplish:

1. Increased awareness of how different units around campus are involved in undergraduate research; this should increase future cooperation and help to minimize duplication of effort

2. An appreciation for the need for a campus-level office (with adequate funding and staffing) to coordinate elements of the undergraduate research experience and champion this issue

3. Outline a plan for a central website that celebrates past research, provides information to current students about opportunities available in different departments/programs, and makes our undergraduate research visible and accessible to those outside the university

4. A plan for advancing this issue during the transition to an interim/new Provost and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies (i.e., How do we keep this issue on the table in the midst of so much institutional transition?)

5. Generate ideas for advancing this issue with the Development Office to identify strategies and opportunities for fundraising

6. Outline a plan for what the UGC can do next year to help make progress on this issue. One possibility is the formation of a working group with representatives from all CAS divisions
and the professional schools that will work with representatives from the UGC to further discuss and integrate diverse perspectives on the research-teaching synthesis across campus.

The Chair then invited each of the guests to talk about how their unit/department addresses the integration of research and teaching.

- **David Frank, Robert D. Clark Honors College**

  Frank opened his remarks by thanking Karen Sprague for her service as Vice Provost and her advocacy for research and scholarship in undergraduate education. Honors College is the oldest honors college in the country with a 4-year education program that has promoted research, scholarship and publishing theses of undergraduate honors students. There are 2,300 honors college graduates (since 1960) and their theses are archived in the college. 737 tenure-related faculty serve on campus and this year, 100 honors students will present and defend their theses. Each student will work with three tenure-related faculty members. This means we are engaging one-third of the faculty in undergraduate research through the Honors College. In the Honors College, we also engage with high-achieving students across campus through support of activities sponsored through the Division of Undergraduate Studies, e.g. the Undergraduate Symposium and the celebration of High Achievement Week. 32% of the undergraduate presenters in the Symposium were from the Honors College. The secret to promoting undergraduate education is inter-disciplinary conversations and small class sizes (the Honors College classes are limited to 19 students per class). The Honors College has also helped create a journal of undergraduate research. The key, though, is to involve research-active faculty with undergraduate students. The Honors College illustrates how that is done. The classes are research-oriented. Finally, the Honors College has been working with Karen Sprague to develop a process for preparing students to apply for and interview for distinguished scholarships, such as the Marshall Scholarship, Goldwater Awards, Mitchell Scholarship, etc. Many Honors College students also participate in the College Scholars Program in CAS, directed by Marjorie Taylor.

- **Marjorie Taylor, Director, College Scholars Program**

  Taylor described the College Scholars (CS) Program as providing enrichment and opportunities for top scholars coming to the University of Oregon. At recruitment events, parents and students want to know about research opportunities at the university. The program curriculum of the CS program only focuses on the first two years of the undergraduate experience. The goal is to provide students with the opportunities for research and enrichment and then help them segue into the honors programs in their majors. Not every great student will be in the CS program; some will find their own way into internships and research labs, or into study abroad. Another function of the CS program is to serve as a resource for high-achieving students to discover research and scholarship opportunities across campus. This is done through information events offered every quarter each year. At one event, a panel of research faculty talked about their research projects and a panel of students talked about how they got into the research labs and the internships they were working in. At another event, Dave Hubin talked about the distinguished scholarship opportunities and how students should plan to prepare and
apply for one of those awards. It would be very good to develop a centralized resource unit or department that can serve as a clearinghouse of information and provide connectivity between motivated students and research opportunities around the campus.

– Kevin Hatfield, Assistant Director—Intellectual Connections, University Housing
Hatfield presented results of research he had done for Karen Sprague in anticipation of the inaugural Undergraduate Symposium held in May of 2011. He had attended an AACU Conference on Undergraduate Research in January 2011. His research was on the undergraduate research profile of AAU Member Institutions and the integration of their undergraduate teaching with undergraduate research. He distributed a spreadsheet that showed the data results of three questions:

1) Did the institution have a centralized office and / or a significant trans-unit/college program of undergraduate research?

2) Did the institution have a university-wide journal of undergraduate research?

3) Did the institution have a campus-wide symposium or conference for the presentation of undergraduate research?

The criterion for benchmarking used was the Carnegie Classifications of Basic and Undergraduate Instructional Programs.

Results summary: In January 2011, there were 63 AAU member institutions:

- 59 of the 63 had a formal centralized office of undergraduate research that was coordinated across the colleges.
- 49 of the 63 had an annual or semi-annual university-wide organized symposium of undergraduate research. An additional 10 had symposia that were at the department / college level.
- 31 of the 63 had a university-wide journal of undergraduate research. An additional 13 had a department or discipline-specific journal of undergraduate research.
- Some institutions that seemed to provide very promising models of what UO was looking for in an undergraduate symposium are listed on the spreadsheet.
- Of the 8 comparator institutions for the UO, all 8 have a centralized office for undergraduate research; 5 of the 8 had a symposium for undergraduate research; and, 4 of the 8 have a system-wide undergraduate journal.

As of 2010, UO had department symposia, but not institution-wide. With the symposium in 2011, UO was taking steps to match its comparator institutions.
Audrey Cramer, Director of Academic Enrichment, Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence

Cramer pointed out that CMAE serves all students preparing for the Undergraduate Symposium by providing abstract writing workshops, poster writing workshops, and oral presentation workshops. She also edits the abstracts. Her group also works with students to explore their research interests. This includes templates on writing a one-page CV that can be shared with faculty; exploring the kinds of research faculty are doing; and on learning how to communicate and work with faculty. There is an emphasis on selecting a research interest that the student is genuinely interested in and can make a full year’s commitment to because of faculty time and training.

Another program that she works with is the Diversity Excellence Scholar Academic Research award (DES), with recipients being primarily students of color. Research shows that engagement in undergraduate research correlates to a higher retention rate among underrepresented students. Next year, a program for female students modeled on the DES program will be offered.

Students at the Undergraduate Symposium participated in “on-the-spot” interviews that were presented at a national conference on Women in Higher Education.

Next year the Undergraduate Symposium will be on May 15. Hopefully, abstract writing workshops will be held throughout the year before the symposium. A specific thrust of the academic enrichment programs in Housing and in CMAE is to capture the students’ interest in research in their freshman year and nurture that interest into the majors.

Audrey also announced the Undergrad Research web site, which is still under construction. It is hoped that the website will be in its final form by fall 2013.

Doug Blandy, Sr. Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Blandy began his comments by explaining that his office generally engages with colleges and schools around the conceptualization of research and creative inquiry. One initiative his office moved forward this year was a series of activities for faculty who are engaged in publicly engaged scholarship in relationship to our membership in Imagining America, which advances creative activity and scholarship in art, humanities, and design.

Blandy said he primarily wanted to talk about the orientation he brings based upon his experience in the School of Architecture and Allied Arts. There, research is not thought of as part of the academic experience, but research is the academic experience of undergraduates. That involves research as it might be thought of traditionally, but also as creative inquiry. This is linked with the desire to promote authentic learning. Students need to be engaged in the research process and in creative inquiry in an authentic way. Students need to have a sense that they are engaging with real-life problems in some way; that they are engaged in complex challenging learning environments; and that they are taking on authentic tasks that have
meaning in their own lives and in the lives of the people who are affected by the work that they [the students] are doing. Most importantly, they need to have the understanding that knowledge is constructed, either through the research they are engaged in or through creative inquiry.

An example is the Sustainable Cities initiative. Faculty are engaged with various cities in Oregon in any given year and they are working with city administrators and citizens within those cities to make changes towards a more sustainable environment. Another example is when students in Blandy’s Art and Society course engaged with citizens in Salem, particularly the Latino citizens of Salem, to better communicate to the city about those networks through which they communicate which the city was not engaging with and the city, knowing that, wanted to learn how to better engage with that community. In doing so, Blandy’s students on the ground communicated with citizens within particular neighborhoods to find out what those networks were.

Architecture studios partner with cities or organizations to identify studio activities that will often be passed on to those organizations or municipalities and which oftentimes do result in changes within those places. This is a model used in Interior Architecture and Landscape Architecture, as well.

Finally, Blandy has his own research group that is associated with his research work in China. He has two undergraduate Chinese students in that research group, one an artist and the other a Business major with a Community Arts minor, who are learning how to interpret China’s traditional cultural heritage in a web-based environment.

Another thing that is very important to consider as we think about research and creative inquiry is the new ways in which this material is being communicated. Certainly, communication primarily through text is important, but equally important is to think about how to communicate research and do creative inquiry in a multi-media environment and how text and video can work together in this regard.

Marilyn Linton, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies

Linton began her comments by pointing out that undergraduate research is a very effective tool for retention and a best practice, particularly for underrepresented students. Linton talked about the FIG [Freshman Interest Groups] Program which she directs. The program serves about one-third of the entering freshman class and is only offered in the fall term. It is the first stepping-stone towards undergraduate research.

The Program works very closely with the Subject Specialists in the library who are the central point of assistance for the FIG projects students work on. Everything is connected to a Subject Specialist. The FIG faculty and the Subject Specialist decide on a project the FIG students will work on. There is a presentation of virtual and actual library resources focused on the project that the students will be doing. This introduction teaches students how to evaluate sources, to begin to learn science [subject] literacy, and to get to know a librarian personally and
understand that the librarian can help them continue with their research project and what research might mean in terms of the over sixty FIGs being offered in all different schools and departments. This also helps advertise such opportunities as the Undergraduate Research Awards sponsored by the library. FIG students are first-term freshmen, but they can aspire to distinguished scholarships, to writing papers that can be published and used in competitions for other academic awards.

Linton cited to an article about FIGs on the Teaching Effectiveness Program homepage (http://tepblog.uoregon.edu/blog/index.php/yes-and-uso-freshman-interest-groups-break-boundaries-forg-teach-connections/) written by Lee Rumbarger, Director of the Teaching Effectiveness Program in TLC, which shows the enthusiasm of faculty teaching in the FIG Program and their commitment to teaching freshmen. There are also citations of FIG Assistants who testify to the intimidation freshmen initially feel about being in a class taught by a research faculty. What happens in a FIG is that that intimidation becomes an inspiration through the connections that are made between the FIG students and the faculty. Students begin to see and appreciate what faculty are doing in terms of their research.

FIGs really represent a cycle of opportunity for the students-and the faculty. Every FIG is composed of two regular lecture classes. Then, there is a FIG Seminar taught by one or both of the FIG faculty teaching the two lecture courses. The seminar also has an undergraduate assistant who has already had at least one of the lecture classes. The FIG faculty will recommend a student to be a FIG assistant (and very often that student works in the faculty’s lab). Then, the FIG assistant introduces the students in the FIG to the lab, along with the faculty member. When that FIG assistant graduates, there will be another FIG assistant that may go into the lab. Faculty are often very strategic about going through the process and showing the FIG students their lab as an opportunity to recruit good undergraduate students into the lab.

Kimberly Espy, Vice President for Research and Innovation

Espy opened her comments by noting that any effort to develop undergraduate research certainly needs to be tied not only to the undergraduate experience, but also to the “research side of the house.” She agreed that the impact of connecting students to the research experience early on is important. One of the things not talked about, however, are the benefits of undergraduate research to faculty. Studies have shown repeatedly that undergraduate research benefits the faculty member with respect to “P&T” [promotion and tenure]. That is true in the science disciplines, but it is also true in disciplines where individual scholarship is the norm.

She noted that she came from an institution that had a very robust central [research] program that complemented what was going on in units and was quite effective. That program supported over 1000 students who participated for two years (but, who weren’t paid for the entire time), had much the same symposia and journal but complemented the things that were going on in CAS and other colleges.
She would push back on the word “research” in that on the UO campus there seems to be a peculiar sense that “research” equals “science.” That is not the case. Research universities are not called “Science universities”; they are research institutions. She indicated that the data cited by Hatfield in his report would probably show that today, 61 of the 62 institutions reviewed have an organized undergraduate research program, with the one exception being the UO. We have a lot of work to do.

In thinking about how we proceed, there is obviously a lot to coordinate and a lot to better organize. There are a lot of opportunities to capitalize upon that distinguishes the University of Oregon, but we should also be thinking through how we can learn lessons from others. The single biggest funders of research on our campus are interdisciplinary centers and institutes. It might be worthwhile to include representatives from these centers and institutes in this discussion.

Espy noted that she has been pushing the president and provost on this issue. They have approved a small proposal for a centralized pilot project out of the Office of Research and Innovation.

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**Julie Newton, School of Journalism and Communication**

Newton thanked Karen Sprague for her tireless advocacy for undergraduate education and research. She also underscored Doug Blandy’s comments on undergraduate research and the idea of how to conceptualize research. Any kind of creative practice is research; it is creative problem-solving. A major goal we should have as a university is re-defining how we think about research.

Research is core to the mission of the School of Journalism and Communication. In the mission statement, reference is made to the integration of theory and practice. Practice is research and research is a practice. Any good media work relies on strong research. 75% of the coursework of SOJC students is outside of the school, in the arts and sciences. Now, courses can be taken in the other professional schools, as well.

Within the major itself, at least 20 credits involve courses in critical conceptual analysis and scholarly research. The other courses that might be skill-based are always rooted in strong research practice. Journalism, Advertising, Public Relations, and Media Studies majors all rely heavily on all the different methods of research: field work; focus groups; surveys; quasi-experimental designs; historical research; all of those activities. Many of those students are working directly with research-active faculty. Students working with Mark Blaine, who has an $80K grant from the Forestry Service, literally did fieldwork gathering data for the Forestry Service. Within SOJC, there is a topics course in Research Methods and another course in Strategic Communication Research Methods. Students in those courses, through the professors’ research work, actually work with real clients and are out in the field doing original research that is then applied to a client issue or problem. SOJC faculty are very involved across the campus in interdisciplinary work, much more so than other Journalism schools across the country that are more insular in their practice.
One more thing SOJC does that might be considered campus-wide is promoting student research for participation in national competitions.

— Gail Unruh, Director of the McNair Program

Unruh began his comments by noting that at the UO, we seem to be doing a good job of promoting undergraduate research, but we don’t all know what other units/schools are doing. This is the 14th year for the McNair Program and it has been sponsoring symposia for students in the program for all those 14 years. It has published a research journal since 2005. One of the things that has happened of late, with the inauguration of the Undergraduate Symposium, is that there are more opportunities for more students to present their work to a much broader audience. It might be even more useful for students to have more opportunities to present their work off-campus, to go the regional and national conferences, such as the National Conference for Undergraduate Research. This conference actually includes areas such as music, theater, art, and dance as well as other humanities and sciences. McNair is a bit different in that the coursework for the program occurs over the summer. Getting students to conferences in different ways and presenting their work in much broader venues is a very important aspect of the whole research process.

The McNair Program is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education as one of eight TRIO programs. The goal of the program is to prepare students to pursue PhDs. As part of that, students from all majors in any given year go through the basics of research proposals, abstracts, presentations, the whole nine yards, including ways to take apart an argument and then assess its structure, looking at academic writing in a professional sense.

Since 2006, 16 former students have earned their PhDs; another 18 have advanced to candidacy. The whole process of getting research “out there” has had a dramatic impact on how well students can connect and how well they can take ownership of what they produce.

Students from Honors College, the College Scholars Program, various department honors programs, and general students have participated in the McNair Program. One problem is that a lot of the good undergraduate research work that is performed by students is not publicized or promoted well by the university and becomes relegated to capstone projects in students’ senior year. By recognizing and promoting and publicizing undergraduate research work earlier in the undergraduate career and pushing it to the national conference presentation level, good work can receive the recognition it deserves.

— Peter O’Day, Director of Summer Program for Undergraduate Research (SPUR)

O’Day explained that the Summer Program for Undergraduate Research (SPUR) is an umbrella program for a handful of programs aimed at getting students involved in research:

- Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) is funded by the National Science Foundation. Students are brought from other universities to the UO. They work in UO labs and interact with UO faculty and UO undergraduate research students.
The R25 program is funded by the National Institutes of Health and it supports visiting students and about a dozen UO students.

Alaska-Oregon Research Training Partnership, a new program, is funded by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences. Four students from the University of Alaska are brought to the UO to interact with faculty and post-docs, but also with undergraduate students doing research.

REU Expanded program is being developed with the University of Chile, in South America. Six students from the UO would go to work on research at the University of Chile, and six students from the University of Chile would come to work on research at UO.

In SPUR, during the summer, students do 40 hours of high standard research each week. Two evenings a week, they attend professional development workshops. They learn to write abstracts and develop them over the course of the summer; they develop posters for presentations; they develop oral presentations; they have several sessions on responsible conduct in research; they have a workshop on getting into graduate school and deciding whether to go to graduate school; they have a workshop on diversity in academia. At the end of the summer, they participate in poster sessions and they have a full day of oral presentations. There is no journal and abstracts are not published, primarily because all the research the students are working on is not yet published [by the lead scientists]. There is extensive and evaluation of the SPUR Program.

O’Day shared some ideas for getting cutting edge research into the undergraduate curriculum. He cited two courses, both funded by the Williams Council (Alice Barkan’s course in molecular biology techniques (BI 401, Research in Organelle Biogenes) and Eric Selker’s course in molecular biology techniques (BI 501, Research in DNA Methylation). Both courses are designed by these faculty to teach undergraduates about the research going on in their labs and during the course, they have the students pursue ideas related to the ongoing research. The courses may appear self-serving, because students become interested in the research and often wind up working in the labs. This is a good thing, however, because these courses are pioneering and may be good for the entire faculty.

It is a problem getting undergraduates into research laboratories. There is a carrying capacity in the laboratories beyond which more students cannot be accepted. However, there are some labs that really can make use of the time, energy, and ideas of undergraduates. It seems that many faculty can benefit from rethinking how they organize and strategize their research enterprise and can try to include undergraduates.

O’Day also cited the Science Literacy Program which brings ideas of active learning into the classroom, replacing the lecture format. In that program, there are opportunities to bring in active research learning exercises.
At a meeting of PIs in the REU programs the problem of mentors, such as post-docs and graduate students (as distinguished from the PIs), really feeling put upon when they are assigned an undergraduate to work in the lab with them was discussed. There was talk of perhaps, as at the national level, doing something to reward mentors. It is uncertain how far this idea will go. NIH has come up with a creative solution, in the case of post-doctoral grants, by more likely awarding funding if the applicant has done teaching. Another idea is the Science Mentoring and Research Training (SMART) program in biology, which tries to get undergraduates involved in research by matching up a student’s particular interest with laboratories involved in research in that interest area. The effect is to broaden the awareness of undergraduate students to the fact that research is an integral part of their education and, although it is not required, it may lead to the goals they want to achieve.

Finally, the Undergraduate Symposium has made a really visible difference in recognizing the importance of the activity of undergraduate research.

– Ian McNeely, CAS Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education

McNeely opened his remarks by admitting ambivalence about the value of undergraduate research. He distributed copies of the most recent Cascade publication (http://cascade.uoregon.edu/winter2013/) from CAS which highlights undergraduate research in CAS. He applauded the efforts and activities which were raised, but noted they needed to be coordinated, sustainably funded in every instance, and heavily publicized. All that said, however, he had to ask if all of this should be a priority for the institution.

The College of Arts and Sciences is like a giant sausage-making operation. It teaches 20,000 students a year, approximately 10 times as many as the Honors College every five years. 40% of the instruction delivered is in classes of 100+ students. In the natural sciences, it’s 56%.

Faculty are overburdened already. They have stagnant wages. If we are going to ask them to do one more thing, should it be to accept a student into the laboratory where it may be an imposition? Is that, in every case, going to be an enhancement to their research rather than a distraction from it? On a personal level, McNeely agreed with the value of undergraduate work, admitting his most recent publication grew out of an undergraduate class he developed, and his first book came out of an honors thesis he had written as an undergraduate himself.

He said that he believed in the idea that teaching and research are indissolubly linked. But he wondered to what extent, given the limited resources at hand, if the institution could provide any more enhancements for the very top students who are already very well supported in some ways, and who have, if not well supported, showed the initiative of knocking on laboratory doors and got themselves accepted into a lab?

Where we need to focus on is what we should do to make an impact across the institution. If we define research as the creation of new knowledge, which is what our research faculty do…, he’s not sure how many undergraduates have that capacity or how much, in terms of
resources, we have to support that. If research can be defined more broadly, to encompass critical problem-solving, engagement with real world problems, then that is something that should go in every class we teach and that’s the one thing we can ask faculty to do, and that is one thing we should pay them to do more of, if they are able to and willing to do so. Where should we most responsibly focus our efforts to make sure that 20,000 undergraduate students are at least getting a flavor of that kind of experience? They are the ones who increasingly support the institution financially and we need to make sure that every student gets the benefit.

Discussion
The Chair asked for Council responses to the presentations:

- The campus is fragmented right now. Most people want to work with undergraduates, but they don’t know how to recruit for their laboratories; students don’t know how or where to go to find out about research opportunities and they don’t know what the process is. There is always one more thing happening. People don’t know everything that is going on. The starting point should be a centralized organization of all the good things and opportunities that are occurring right now. Faculty would also be excited about a centralized resource where they can go to discover and recruit undergraduates who might be interested in working in their labs or on their projects.

- The whole process is very fragmented. If we can coordinate all our efforts, the interest will grow. People will come to the centralized organization who wouldn’t have, otherwise.

- Some proceedings should be created, based on today’s discussion and take advantage of the videos and graphics available on current undergraduate research. These could be used to invite faculty involvement in discussing this issue and gain their engagement in finding resolutions. The publicizing of a centralized organization of ongoing opportunities should be presented in an online environment, such as the Undergraduate Research website that is being developed. It was noted that the library is helping to develop a WordPress website towards this effort which will accommodate individual and team interaction. This website will be invaluable for prospective students and a tremendous resource for current students. We just need a plan for publicizing the website and rolling it out.

- We don’t have a good sense of what the carrying capacity for undergraduate research is at the UO. Through a centralized coordination process, we would not only be able to link research opportunities (for both faculty and students), but we would also get a better sense of what the carrying capacity really is.

- Next year, the Williams Council will be sponsoring a project that further broadens the understanding of what undergraduate research is through Daniel Tichnor’s proposal to introduce what will be called “Wayne Morse Center Junior Fellows.” There are several related resources across campus, like the museums, the Wayne Morse Center, and various other centers that we may not immediately associate with research, but that represent research
opportunities or scholarly opportunities for undergraduates. Within the Economics Department, at one time, there were practica experiences for undergraduate students, where they went out and worked within industries. There still must be a coherent entry point into finding all these research opportunities for the undergraduate and for the undergraduate’s family to see. The array will be vast if we adopt a broader definition of research.

– Every student who graduates from UO should have a sense that they have done something, and this is achieved through the research experience.

– There is also a narrower understanding of research as occurring outside of the classroom and engagement in original research work under the direct guidance of mentoring faculty. We are a research intensive university, but the reality is there are many students who do not derive the benefit of the research activity on our campus because they are not aware of it and they are not influenced by it. This is a shame.

– The library UG Scholarly Research program deliberately shaped itself to allow students to focus on research related to a class they were already taking. The work is actually published in the Library Repository.

Where does the Council go from here?

– A definition of research may differ by disciplines. The Council might encourage departments to start exploring research opportunities they have. There might also be a “tiered” approach to research, defining minimum research experience (similar to the 40/40/20 education plan). The Council would serve as a good venue to bring together voices from across campus and the student voice to discuss these ideas.

– For accreditation purposes, the university has proposed a goal that, by every salient measure, it will move into the upper half of the AAU public institutions. One of the measures proposed is the percentage and numbers of undergraduate students engaged in research. If a student comes to a research university, that student should have the opportunity to experience the research aspect of that university.

– There is a practical and political aspect to this issue, too: significant funding has been lost; there is pressure for more oversight at the university; there is a sense that people don’t know what the university does; but to the extent that we can get more students directly involved in what it is we do, --and even as faculty members, it is not always in the public eye-- then undergraduate research activity becomes part of the public eye, and that benefits the institution, in a broader public sense.

The meeting adjourned.

The next UGC meeting is scheduled for May 31, 3:00pm in the Collaboration Room of the Knight Library.