Workshops at the Florida Undergraduate Research Conference:

**How to write an effective personal statement**

Dr. Jon Gottesman  
Director, Office of Biomedical Graduate Research, Education And Training  
University of Minnesota

Writing the personal statement is often the most stressful part of a graduate school application. This breakout session will provide answers to questions that many applicants have. What are admissions committees looking for? How do I make myself stand out? Examples of statements will be provided to highlight common errors to avoid and good practices to employ. Considerable time will be reserved for questions from attendees.

**DEMYSTIFYING GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL AND THE ACTIVE PROCESS OF APPLICATION**

Richard S Pollenz, PhD  
Professor and Associate Dean  
University of South Florida

What is graduate or professional school and why would you want to put in another 2-6 years when you only just completed the undergraduate degree? In this interactive workshop we will break down the answers to these questions and provide action planning documents that allow you to determine if this option should be a priority for you now. Discussion topics include: How does graduate school differ from professional school (MD, PharmD, DVM), the different types of degrees available; what does it cost and what is the expected return on investment; how to determine the up and coming fields; how to choose a school and how to best market yourself to potential faculty mentors and the importance of taking an active approach to your admissions. Attendees will be provided an action planning document and will have an opportunity to engage with a speaker who has been a faculty in higher education for over 20 years at both a medical school and a major research university.
SUMMER OFF-CAMPUS RESEARCH EXPERIENCES
Dr. Kimberly Schneider
Director, Office of Undergraduate Research
University of Central Florida

Summer is a great time to participate in research and there are numerous programs available to students away from their home institution. Summer programs are available at 100s (maybe 1000s) of universities and research institutions. Opportunities are available nationally and internationally and many provide a stipend, travel costs, housing, and/or board. Applications open in late fall and deadlines occur from early January through the end of March. Opportunities exist for all majors but more are available for students in the science and engineering areas. Fall and spring semester opportunities also exist. This workshop will provide an overview of these opportunities, information on how to create a strong application, and resources to help students through the process.

Student Leadership in Undergraduate Research Programs
Bailey Hofmann
CURBS President
University of Florida

Being undergraduate researchers, we are always trying to find a way to make us stand out and have more experience with research and leadership. The UF Center for Undergraduate Research staff is small and they wanted to involve undergraduate students in programming designed by and for undergraduates. For the undergraduate volunteer, this provides significant leadership opportunities. The UF Center for Undergraduate Research Board of Students is a three year old, self-perpetuating student group that boasts over 2600 members on its Facebook Page, a number that has doubled each of the last two years due to their activities. Students will describe the services they provide to CUR and how being involved with CUR has impacted their undergraduate experience.
RESEARCH JEOPARDY: HOW TO AVOID ENDANGERING YOUR ACADEMIC AND CAREER GOALS
LOUANNE HAWKINS, KELSEY EAGEN, CHRISTOPHER LEONE, AND JUDITH OCHRIETOR
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA
How do you determine if a faculty-mentor might be a good fit for you? What can you do to facilitate a mutually advantageous relationship with a mentor? How do you handle a problematic relationship with a faculty-mentor? Learning to identify, establish, maintain, and - when necessary - end a mentor-protégé relationship is invaluable as students navigate a path through academics to a career. Many of us haphazardly plunge into a mentored research experience without thoroughly investigating expectations and obligations. These hit-or-miss affiliations can be beneficial or can be extremely detrimental. Rather than leave this important connection to chance, join us for this Jeopardy style game as we consider ways in which we may enhance our chances of finding an exceptional mentor and examine the best ways to negotiate this complex relationship.

STUDENTS AS UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AMBASSADORS: PERSPECTIVES FROM TWO UNIVERSITIES
Ashley Ostroot and Brian Cooney (Florida Atlantic University)
Arjun Patel, Thomas Carpino and Samantha Mensah (University of Central Florida)
At both the University of Central Florida (UCF) and Florida Atlantic University (FAU), a select group of students are chosen each year to become research ambassadors for their universities. Together, they work towards increasing involvement, inclusion, and the quality of research at their respective institutions. In addition to improving their university’s overall research and educational reputation, these ambassador groups also give the selected students the opportunity to develop leadership skills, acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the research environment, and make a positive impact on their peer community. Despite the growing success of these programs, research ambassador programs do not exist at many Florida collegiate establishments. Furthermore, many of the highly qualified prospective applicants are unaware that such an opportunity exists, or could potentially exist, within their academic environments. The
overall goal of this workshop will be to discuss the critical role that undergraduates can play in fostering research involvement, inclusion, and quality at their respective universities. In addition, student research ambassadors from both UCF and FAU will share their own experiences as research leaders and discuss their respective frameworks and activities that their ambassador groups have adopted to strengthen the research environment at their institution.

Making the Transition: Getting Involved in Undergraduate Research as a Transfer Student
DANIEL HUBBARD, DAVID PEREZ, JASMINE RICHARDSON, AND LATIKA YOUNG (FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY)

As a transfer student, it can be difficult to figure out how to get involved with undergraduate research at your new institution when you are still trying to get used to a new campus, new procedures, and new professors. Yet, if you wait too long, you might miss out on crucial deadlines for a range of opportunities, like honors theses, research funding, and national fellowships. In this workshop, we will discuss the unique benefits and challenges of engaging with research as a transfer student; most importantly, you will hear the perspectives of three recent transfer students at Florida State University who transferred from institutions around the state. This workshop will be useful regardless of institution to which you plan to transfer and you will leave with specific tips to help facilitate your own successful transition to a four-year institution.
Med School – Admission & Survival
REL
Registrar, M.D. Program
College of Medicine
University of Central Florida
This session will provide you the information that you need to become a successful applicant to medical school programs. We will discuss not only the requirements, but the “other” things that you should be doing to get the interview. A current medical student will also discuss medical school life and what adjustments you may need to consider during the intense medical school curriculum.

Avoiding the Dark Side: Cases in Research Ethics
Rachel Messer and Jennifer Soberon
Florida Atlantic University
Although research ethics are often discussed in black-and-white terms such as what is “right” and what is “wrong,” sometimes it is hard to judge the light side from the dark side. Join us for an interactive presentation where the force guides you along the perilous path over to the light side of Research Ethics. We will briefly discuss the historical background of unethical research and the need for ethical research guidelines. Then you can ask yourself, “What would I do?” as we examine cases of unethical research practices across a variety of disciplines, including modern cases of unethical research in areas such as social media. Other topics of discussion will include ethical research methods, authorship, and the use of human and animal subjects.

Preparing your Application for Research-based Prestigious Awards and Fellowships
Catherine Wrobel and Michelle Howell
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
The Goldwater Scholarship and NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program are two examples of Prestigious Awards that can bring winners national acclaim as well as monetary rewards for graduate training. These awards are very competitive and awarded to students who are pursuing careers in STEM research. Although they are exclusive, the process of applying for these awards can be enlightening and lead to future opportunities. In this workshop, students will spend some time brainstorming ideas for their personal statements and learning tips for preparing their applications.