Staying Involved in Research

You’ve found a research/creative work option on campus - Congratulations! Now, you need to know what options you have to get the most out of your research. Here are some things to keep in mind as you continue on:

Get course credit:

- ICRU offers courses that will ensure your work shows up on your transcript. You can register for any of the following courses through MyUI:
  - URES:3992 This is a 0-credit hour course with no associated fees or tuition. Choose this option if you are volunteering or being paid for your work. (Students are not allowed to receive both academic AND financial compensation for the same experience.)
  - URES:3993 This is a variable credit registration of 1-4 credit hours that is graded on a pass/fail basis. Tuition and fees apply. (1 credit hour = 3 hours of work per week.)
  - URES:3994 This is a variable credit registration of 1-4 credit hours that is graded on an A-F basis. Tuition and fees apply (1 credit hour = 3 hours of work per week.)
- Keep in mind that if you want to earn honors in your major, there are other options that may be better suited to you. Contact your major department to find out what your best choice is.
- These courses are eligible for Honors Experiential Learning credit. Simply fill out the Research Experience Verification Form to have your credits applied to your transcript.

Communicating your research/creative work:

- ICRU offers various events throughout the year that focus on giving students the tools necessary to communicate their research to a broad variety of audiences. Join the ICRU listserv or keep an eye on the webpage for some of these events:
  - Fall and Spring Undergraduate Research Festivals (FURF/SURF)
  - Marshall Undergraduate Research Conference
  - Pitch Your Project
  - Research in the Capitol
  - Brief workshops
- Your mentor will most likely be eager to help you learn how to present your research. Express interest in conferences – both at the UI and away -, poster presentations, teaching newer lab members, and even presenting at lab meetings and journal clubs. The best way to learn is through experience!
- Always remember to keep track of the events that you participate in; have physical proof, if at all possible. These types of experiences look fantastic on graduate school applications or employment résumés.
Funding resources:

- Research finances are tight across the board, so learning how to find funding can be a valuable asset. ICRU offers the following funding sources:
  - Summer ($2500 in 2017) and Academic Year ($2000 in 2017) Fellowships
  - Travel Awards ($500)
  - Excellence in Undergraduate Research Awards (Fellowship + $1000 travel award)
- Your research experience can help you apply for scholarships, fellowships, and grants at the University, state, and national levels. ICRU can help you find these opportunities.

Applying to graduate school or employment:

- You may or may not be aware of it, but your research/creative work is giving you valuable skills that make you a competitive applicant for graduate programs and employment opportunities. Aside from focus-specific knowledge that you gain, consider these skills as you develop your research path and begin to use them to promote yourself:
  - Communication skills
  - Ability to work in a group or individually
  - Leadership skills – teaching, communicating, responsibility, dependability
  - Techniques learned and honed
  - Creativity and problem solving
  - Mentorship
  - Community involvement
  - Critical thinking and interpretation processes
  - Writing (papers, grants, etc.)
  - Collaborative work
- All of these skills, and many more, are vital on applications. Be sure to have specific instances of each that you can bring out in an interview or cover letter.
- ICRU frequently offers small informational sessions for students interested in specific graduate colleges. Watch for these, as they will offer you information on preparing for and applying for graduate school, as well as introduce you to key faculty involved in the application process.
- Always remember that you are a valuable asset to the group that you are working with. Maintain strong working relationships, always put in your best effort, and walk away with multiple glowing letters of recommendation.

ICRU, your faculty, and the University all want you to succeed. Never forget that the entirety of the faculty and staff are here for your education and success. Be confident that you can ask anyone for advice or help at any time.

If you find that you have further questions, please contact ICRU by email (icru@uiowa.edu), by phone (319-335-8336), or in person (401 BHC). You can also visit our website for more information (uiowa.edu/icru) or to get in touch with an ICRU Student Ambassador.