



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

One goal. One Community. Limitless impact.

The Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) was established 1988–89 as an innovative program to improve the retention and academic success of diverse students by enabling first- and second-year students to participate in faculty research. We now also give community college transfer students the opportunity to engage in over 1,100 cutting-edge research projects alongside faculty, research scientists, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students in all academic disciplines and all U-M schools and colleges.

Undergraduate research as a pedagogy engages students in immersive, engaged learning while integrating the teaching and research missions of the university to enhance undergraduate education. The program plans to enhance its existing work and develop new programs for both entering students and more advanced students in all fields. Over the past 30+ years, UROP has served as a national model of access, diversity, and equity in undergraduate research with the most high-impact practice across institutions of higher education, according the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

UROP is dedicated to creating valuable and memorable research experiences for undergraduate students. The demand for student research experiences continues to grow each year, and many students clamor to be part of our exciting research community. UROP also assists students with travel to a national or international research conference, summer research fellowships, access to specialized workshop training programs, and small research grants for student-initiated projects. Studies show that undergraduates exposed to intensive research experiences learn valuable research skills, gain mentors and role models, and clarify their academic and professional goals, which serves them well in any career they choose to pursue.

UNDERGRADUATE SUMMER RESEARCH INITIATIVES

While participating in undergraduate research during the academic year is a wonderful opportunity for students, time is limited to develop an independent project that can lead to publication, thesis work, or other outcomes. Also, there are students who are not able to take time during the academic year to conduct research. Summer research allows students to immerse themselves in a project, to benefit from more consistent faculty mentorship without distractions, and to get a glimpse of the life of the scholar researcher. Gifts to support summer research would also enable us to support more international research opportunities, either through existing exchange programs or new program models. Funding would support 50 to 60 students to conduct full-time summer research either at the University of Michigan or with U-M faculty collaborators around the world. The ability for students to experience intense and sustained academic engagement could lead to a wide range of outcomes, from more students completing honors theses to publication in peer reviewed journals to global research experiences and also clarification of interest in and goals for future graduate work. Gifts of \$5,000 support an individual student's summer research experiences, with \$300,000 needed annually to support a summer cohort.

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH PROGRAM

Funding for this program would enable us to develop new curricular initiatives to link classroom learning with community-engaged research opportunities in multiple sectors, including non-profits, governmental organizations, and even entrepreneurial ventures focused on community economic development. Working in collaboration with our community partners, we could enhance this program by developing courses and workshops to provide students with additional skills and knowledge that could be applied to their work in the community and also enhance their academic coursework. Funds would be used for both course development to engage our community partners, housing stipends to enable students to reside in Detroit for our Summer Detroit Community-Engaged Research Program, and stipends for 25-30 students annually to conduct full-time summer research for community-based organizations in southeast Michigan, with a special focus on Detroit. Through these engaged learning opportunities, students would learn to apply and develop research skills in a real world context, conduct critical research to help non-profit community-based organizations and other organizations better serve their constituents, be exposed to professional needs and opportunities, integrate these experiences with their academic work, and explore future academic and professional pathways. Annually funding needs to support a group of students is \$150,000-\$200,000.



UROP focuses on the skills, perspectives, and resources that diverse students bring to higher education by encouraging students towards a life-long appreciation for discovery, building understanding across differences, and critically examining information in the world around them. The benefits of recognizing the resources and capital diverse students bring to research is not just beneficial to the student, but advances the world of research as these cultural worldviews inform and create scholarship that might not otherwise be considered.

MICHIGAN'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE SUMMER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Although many talented Michigan students begin their education at community colleges, the number transferring to U-M or any four-year institution to complete their degrees is low. Funding for summer research fellowships for community college students—which includes veterans, first-generation college students, those seeking training for new careers, and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds—would help us to increase the number of students who transfer to U-M and complete their education successfully. Our program, which began 15 years ago and is the only one of its kind in Michigan, has been recognized by the Council of Undergraduate Research and the State of Michigan as an exemplary model. Additional funding would provide more opportunities for Michigan community college students to conduct research on the U-M campus up to one year prior to transferring, thereby increasing the likelihood that they will transfer and be successful at a four-year institution. A gift of \$150,000 annually will support housing and stipends for 50+ students, as well as programmatic and staff support for peer advisors who are successful community college transfer students.

MINI-COURSES ON COMPLEX RESEARCH PROBLEMS

We know that undergraduate research can have a significant positive impact on student academic engagement and retention of diverse students, and can create pathways to graduate and professional school. However, many students, and especially those from under-represented backgrounds, often are not initially interested in research or do not see it as relevant to their long-term goals. Therefore, we plan to develop a series of research-based mini-courses focused on topics of interest to diverse student populations. The proposed courses would focus on topics such as obesity, poverty, economic development, urban issues, mental health, African and Latino Studies, and health care disparities, and would introduce students to researchers from across campus who are working in these areas. For example, the topic of obesity has been of great interest to UROP student researchers—24 of whom are conducting research on topics ranging from Exercise and Vascular Complications (Kinesiology), Health Care Policy Innovations (Economics), Cognitive Control and Decision-making (Psychology), Unraveling the Mystery of Childhood Obesity (Pediatrics), Adhesion Molecules in Obesity and Atherosclerosis (Medical School and MCDB). By helping students see the connection between research and community issues, they will become engaged in research and explore fields they may not have considered. Annual funding of \$50,000 - \$100,000 will enable us to roll out these courses.

STRATEGIC FUND

Each year, expendable funds are a vital means of addressing urgent needs or initiatives, providing key resources, and increasing our ability to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. Contributions of all sizes to the UROP Strategic Fund are critical to our ongoing development and enable students and faculty to take advantage of time-sensitive research and educational opportunities.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

2020 UROP Community College Summer Research Fellow Yasmeen Berry was the first student from Henry Ford College to receive the nationally competitive Barry Goldwater Fellowship for undergraduate college sophomores and juniors who intend to pursue research careers in the natural sciences, mathematics, and engineering. She credited her participation in UROP with making the accomplishment possible.

“I am extremely grateful for the extraordinary research experience I gained from UROP, both as a CCSFP Fellow and a Mellon Scholar. The majority of my research listed in the Goldwater application came from my UROP experiences and made me eligible to even apply for this type of opportunity.”

In 2021 Berry transferred to LSA, where she is working toward a bachelor’s degree in biomolecular science with a minor in sociocultural anthropology. She remains active in UROP as a student researcher and as the program coordinator for the Mellon Research Scholars, a U-M Transfer Bridges to the Humanities@Michigan partnership between UROP and Henry Ford College to develop opportunities to broaden access and participation in scholarly work related to the humanities.

“The program allowed me to form really great connections that I still hold today in research, and start building that network before I made the transition [from Henry Ford College to the University of Michigan],” Berry said. “I wanted to give back to the program and find ways to increase opportunities for individuals that are currently in the shoes I was in at that moment.”

WAYS TO FUND YOUR GIFT

Your gifts of cash, pledges, or appreciated securities change lives. Wills, estate, and planned gifts allow you to create a lasting legacy that will enable the best and brightest minds to experience a liberal arts education, solve problems in a changing world, and yield ideas and innovations that will make a difference in Michigan and around the globe.



Yasmeen Berry

CONTACT INFO

LSA Advancement // College of Literature, Science, and the Arts
101 N. Main Street, Suite 850 // Ann Arbor, MI 48104

P. 734.615.6333 // F. 734.647.3061 // <https://lsa.umich.edu/urop>