THE RESEARCHERS INITIATIVE

Established in 2007, the Researchers Initiative, a program within University Housing, introduces undergraduate students residing in the Urbana South Living-Learning Communities to various aspects of research by pairing them with faculty mentors. Living-Learning Communities are organized around any number of themes and provide curricular and co-curricular programming for a designated group of students living in proximity to each other. Such communities are designed to foster students’ shared sense of purpose related to the themes of their communities, which, in turn, sustains their sense of belonging and academic persistence. The Living-Learning Communities provide an excellent point of contact for first and second year students where an invitation to participate in research is integrated into their everyday experience. The Researchers Initiative extends the notion of community to include a community of researchers.

GOALS

When students are accepted into the Initiative, they work with faculty members on various projects broadly related to the theme of their specific Living-Learning Community or to their majors. Faculty members mentor students, act as role models, prepare them for graduate school, teach them technical skills, and help them develop theoretical frameworks to create research questions and designs and to interpret data. They also acquaint them with the process of research as a whole. The ideal is for students to continue working in the faculty members’ labs beyond the one semester afforded by the Initiative.

The Researchers Initiative is guided by the principle of providing information and access to research opportunities for a diverse student body. In addition to introducing undergraduate students to research, the Initiative facilitates their access to faculty members early in their college career. It is also designed as a retention tool, as sophomores are given priority. Finally, the Initiative can serve to deepen the students’ involvement in their own disciplines or expose them to research topics and practices outside of their disciplines.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Lydia Khuri, Psy.D.
Program Director for the Global Crossroads, Health Professions, Intersections, and Women in Math, Science, and Engineering Living-Learning Communities
p: 217.265.6276
e: mkhuri@illinois.edu
www.housing.illinois.edu/LLC

In This Issue:

The Researchers Initiative: 1
Goals: 1
Application Links: 1
Contact Information: 1
The Living-Learning Communities: 2
Program Administration: 3
Students and Faculty Involvement: 4
Assessment: 5
Perspectives: 6-10
Participating Faculty Members and Their Projects: 10-13
Poster Symposium: 14-15
Future Directions: 16

Application Links available fall 2013
Students apply at http://go.illinois.edu/ri_student_ap
Faculty members apply at http://go.illinois.edu/ri_faculty_ap
The Living-Learning Communities

Women in Math, Science, and Engineering (1996)

Women in Math, Science, and Engineering (WIMSE) is designed to foster community among women who major in traditionally male-dominated fields of study. Research shows that women benefit from a supportive network of fellow students who share similar academic interests. Academic courses and support, along with social programs, provide 135 women majoring in mathematics, science, and engineering with the resources to build a positive foundation for a future career. Nearly 50 percent of the women are enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, while about 40 percent are from Engineering. WIMSE occupies three floors of Trelease Hall, located in the Florida Avenue Residence Halls.

Global Crossroads (2000)

Global Crossroads, located in the Pennsylvania Avenue Residence Halls, is designed to challenge and motivate students whose interests, experiences, and aspirations have a strong international component. Both academic and co-curricular programs support the students’ sustained engagement across cultural differences. The community of 120 students has about equal numbers of international and domestic students. Just over 50 percent of the students have majors in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, followed by 22 percent from Engineering. Another five percent each come from the College of Business, Fine and Applied Arts, and Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences.

Intersections (2004)

Intersections introduces undergraduate students to diversity issues in the United States through the experience of living in a multicultural community and opportunities for academic engagement. Its purpose is to foster interpersonal and intellectual skills, and knowledge to live and work in a multicultural society. Intersections houses approximately 110 students and is located in the Pennsylvania Avenue Residence Halls. Since its inception, over half of the students have come from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, while about 20 percent come from Engineering. Another seven percent come from the College of Business and five percent from Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences.

Health Professions (2007)

Health Professions brings together undergraduate students who are preparing for careers in the health fields. It provides relevant academic courses and support, career development opportunities, and skill-building programs for students to consider working with underserved populations. Health Professions houses approximately 110 students and is located on two floors of Oglesby Hall in the Florida Avenue Residence Halls. Sixty-seven percent come from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, with biology and chemistry most heavily represented. Ten percent of the students come from Applied Health Sciences. There are also students with majors in the College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences, as well as Engineering and other colleges.
Program Administration

who can apply
The Researchers Initiative is administered by the Program Director for the Urbana South Living-Learning Communities. Students residing in the Urbana South Living-Learning Communities are eligible to apply to the Initiative. Any faculty member of the University who can supervise undergraduate students in research endeavors may participate.

how to apply
Both the student application and faculty request forms are available online in the fall. Students rank and provide explanations as to why they wish to work with their chosen faculty members. Faculty members fill out a one-page form indicating their research projects, what types of work they would like the students to do, and any other relevant criteria.

how students & faculty are matched
In mid-fall, the Program Director reviews all applications and matches students with faculty members based on these factors:

• Clarity and cogency of students’ responses
• Students’ ability to meet faculty requirements regarding meeting times, etc.
• Giving as many students as possible their top choices
• Priority to sophomores
• Relative balance of number of students from each of the four Communities
• Faculty preferences for particular students

After students and faculty members are notified of their matches, students are required to meet in person with the faculty member. Faculty members have the final say in whether or not they will accept a particular student in their labs. If accepted, students then must fill out formal payroll paperwork before they can begin work. All paperwork is completed in the fall so students can start work at the beginning of the spring semester.

how many hours students can work
Students can work up to 75 hours for the semester but must work a minimum of 35. How the hours are broken down depends on the faculty member’s needs and the student’s schedule. The hourly pay is the standard University rate for undergraduates ($8.50/hr.).

how the RI is funded
Funds come from the Program Director’s discretionary academic budget, provided by the Office of the Provost.
Students and Faculty Involvement

Student Participation
Students must:

• Apply and be accepted to participate in the Initiative.
• Rank their preferences for the faculty members with whom they wish to work.
• Confirm with the USLLC Program Director that they have met with their preferred faculty member.
• Provide proper documentation for the I-9 form, which is required for employment.
• Attend an orientation on expectations for participation and how to use library resources.
• Attend 1-hour workshop on creating and presenting research posters.
• Attend two to three check-in meetings with USLLC program staff.
• Participate in a mini-symposium to present a poster of their work.
• Participate in an exit interview with the USLLC Program Director at the end of the semester.
• Meet faculty members’ expectations for attendance at meetings/events, work hours, and quality of work.
• Provide weekly updates to faculty mentor detailing completed work, work to be done, and questions.
• Work at least 35 but no more than 75 hours.

Faculty Participation
Faculty members are asked to commit to the following:

• Fill out one-page faculty interest form.
• Review student applications (not required).
• Confirm in fall semester that you and students have met face-to-face and agreed to work together.
• Engage in consistent face-to-face contact with the student, such as one-on-one or research team meetings.
• Respond to students’ weekly updates.
• Give clear expectations regarding type and quality of work.
• Provide verbal feedback to students on quality of students’ work.
• If comfortable, share more personal stories related to own academic and career path.
• Suggest events on campus that would augment the students’ learning.
• Where appropriate, introduce students to others to facilitate students’ academic career.
• Attend Mini-Symposium, Sunday, April 13, 2014, 4-6pm.

“I learned about the research method of grounded theory, also how you have to manage your own biases and try to understand things from the subjects’ perspective. I’ve actually enjoyed this!”

Neetika, Intersections | Psychology
Assessment

Students meet one-on-one with the Program Director throughout the spring semester to discuss their progress and they participate in an “exit interview” at the end of the semester. The Program Director also interviews faculty members about their experiences with the Initiative and solicits recommendations for improvement.

Student Outcomes

To date, 82 students have completed the Researchers Initiative. Most students identified that working with and getting to know faculty members and working in a team environment were the best parts of participating in the program. Many also noted that they became familiar with the research process as a whole. Several continued to work with their particular faculty mentor and others pursued additional research opportunities. Many noted a general increase in interest in pursuing research and/or graduate school. All students reported that they appreciated learning about new subjects or enhancing their knowledge of their particular areas of study. Finally, they identified gaining the following research skills (not all students learned all skills listed):

- Literature review and organization
- Navigating University Library website
- Using academic search engines
- Using Refworks
- Writing annotated bibliographies
- Data collection, analysis, and organization
- Conducting ethnographic interviews
- Transcribing interviews
- Coding qualitative data
- Coding quantitative data
- Categorizing thematically
- Critical thinking
- Developing research questions
- Designing experiments
- Differentiating relevant from irrelevant data
- Making meaning of data
- Understanding research process as a whole
- Communicating respectfully with research subjects
- Empathizing with research subjects
- Becoming familiar with purpose of the Institutional Review Board
- Becoming familiar with safety protocols
- Organization
- Managing time better
- Improving typing skills
- Performing more precise work
- Honing technical skills
- Learning new file formats
- Learning software programs
- Learning how to set up experiments
- Administering research protocols

“This was my first time participating in a research project. I liked learning about the philosophical aspects of the project—why the research was being done. The group of people doing the research are really interesting—it was a window into social sciences approaches. I also learned about the life of a graduate student.”

Hannah, WIMSE | Molecular and Cellular Biology
Perspectives

Student perspectives
The following excerpts are from interviews conducted by Shreya Gupta, student assistant for the Urbana South Living-Learning Communities, where two students reflect on their work and provide advice on how to get research experience:

Learning outside your major: Jelyssa Cooper | Chemical Engineering

Jelyssa worked with Professor Helen Neville, in the spring of 2012, on the project Transnational Examination of Black Racial Identities. Jelyssa has a tremendous thirst for knowledge and experience and has primarily worked with quantitative data. This was the first time she worked with qualitative material, noting that it taught her to think about the meaning of data. She applied this to her studying, as well; it is important to understand not simply how to do something technically but to grasp its conceptual foundation and purpose. Coding qualitative data also taught her to be patient.

How has the Researchers Initiative helped you?
The program has allowed me to look into study abroad programs. The project I worked on made me think about other perspectives after reading transcripts that would be read by various audiences. This made me pursue a trip to Australia.

What skills did you learn and how have you used them in your career goals?
Learning how to read a manual and how to apply the right words to get across the idea of the text. Using language that is unbiased and gets the correct interpretation across, these skills help to read and interpret better.

Was it a good experience?
Yes it was a great experience and gave me exposure to another field of study. It is a good place for students start off their research career.

What qualities should a perspective undergraduate have?
Work skills/ethics: do the work in large blocks of time, if necessary. Understand the material. Know what you are actually doing. Commitment to the job; learn something no matter what.

What is the best way to get research?
Get in contact with your professors. Knowing them and them knowing you is a big deal! Use a 3rd party to get research, it’s a reliable way to get research. Emails are good but not always very effective.

Any advice for undergraduates?
Stay connected to professors and keep them up to date with your lives. Try to go for internships and other projects even if you’re not the perfect candidate, you never know.
The benefits of on-going work: Daniel Wolf | Molecular and Cellular Biology

Dan, who also participated in research outside of his major, worked with Professor Deana McDonagh in spring 2012 on the Disability + Relevant Design Project. He is a molecular and cellular biology major and intends to go on to medical school to become an orthopedic surgeon. In working with Dr. McDonagh he came to realize that many of the instruments surgeons use are not well-designed. This set him on a course of thinking beyond the skills of a surgeon to consider the tools and environment in which surgeons work.

What was your overall experience with the Researchers Initiative?

It was great! I worked with Dr. McDonough on designs for products made for people with disabilities. I got to work with both engineers and design students which was unique since I usually work with hard science majors. Dr. McDonough is fantastic! She focused on Empathic Modeling, which is how to approach a problem and how to help to provide a solution.

What skills have you gained and do you use them in your everyday life?

I learned how to use online data bases well, such as Pub Med and other medical sites. I also learned how to edit a book and do it well. Further I got exposure to the social model of disability, not just the medical model of disability. I saw new perspectives. I can apply these skills day to day.

What qualities should a perspective undergraduate researcher have?

Time management skills, dedication, follow through on the task at hand, personal interest and contribute to the project. Don’t do the project if it’s just a resume builder.

What is the best way to obtain a research position?

Look at what you are interested in and email those professors and look online for announcements about open positions. Be sure to send a formal email with appropriate information in it. DON’T GIVE UP! Be persistent and you will eventually find something.

Feedback about the RI program?

It definitely has set me apart from others; gives me a unique twist. In order to improve the program I would try to add more projects aimed at the communities directly. For Health Professions, there should be a lot more projects just because it is all science related and those labs are easier to find rather than engineering based ones.

Are you still continuing your work with Dr. McDonough?

Yes, I am helping edit her upcoming book and we stay in contact.
Professor Oswald takes an egalitarian approach to running her research lab, inviting the two Intersections students she mentored spring 2013 to participate in the process of theory-making. She had them learn about grounded theory and then set them to transcribing interviews. From there the students developed their own theories about the meaning of the subjects’ experiences. Their work, in turn, contributed to the overall interpretation of the data from Dr. Oswald’s project, LGBT Families and Communities in Non-metropolitan Areas.

Below are her responses to an interview with Shreya Gupta, student assistant for the Urbana South Living-Learning Communities, where she offers her perspective on the value of research experience for undergraduates.

Why is it important for undergrads to get research experience?

*It helps expose students to prospective careers in the future. It educate students as consumers so they know what they are being “sold” and helps them dissect the information and see the purpose of it. “Hands on” experience is key.*

What do you think are the most important skills they gain from research experience?

*Attention to detail, care and attention to work at hand. Ability to see the bigger picture and the greater cause of the project.*

How are these skills used in the future such as grad school or other career path?

*Opens doors for the future, such as grad school; you become a better consumer of research. Adding value to the human experience— the goal of research, it’s fun!* 

How do you like to be approached by prospective undergrad researchers?

*Through a 3rd party—this allows for a bit of “quality control.” Know what the professor does, what the projects are about and the goals. Actually have a sincere interest and passion for the project not just as a resume builder.*

What are the qualities you’re looking for in an undergrad researcher?

*Be trust worthy—do the work well and with good quality. Follow through on the commitment. Value the project not just as a resume builder as a bigger impact on the human race. Know your goals and reflect it in your work; make it personal. Have your own ideas to bring too. Good writing skills. Know how to communicate with people in a group* 

How many semesters of research is it good to have?

*Rule of thumb, there really isn’t one since it depends on the school but around a year is usually good. The best way to judge is the progress of the project: seeing some aspect of the project through.*
Any other advice and thoughts

Students should have a “want” attitude not a “should” attitude towards research. Be on time. For letters of recommendation, know the professor, have a relationship so you can get a better letter and they have something to say. Ask ahead of time and what materials they need. Get your letter writers to write the letter earlier, so you are still “fresh” in their mind. Bottom line: [faculty look for] thoughtful, curious people who want to learn and don’t just for the degree, but are driven by passion and excitement in what they are doing.

Why Faculty Participate: based on interviews of faculty mentors by the Urbana South Program Director

Why did faculty members participate in the Researchers Initiative?

Faculty were motivated by their own passion to help students develop as thinkers and, more broadly, as human beings. Beyond this general interest, however, they stressed that it was important to help individual students find their own particular passion. One faculty member enthusiastically noted she loved “watching students inhabit the role of co-researchers and take on an authoritative voice.” Another commented she was rather dismayed to find that many students enrolling in her classes had not had independent study or lab research experience. Faculty also noted they enjoyed providing research opportunities beyond what students often think of as the stereotypical experience—working alone in a wet lab or in front of the computer. A couple of faculty shared their commitment to supporting women and students from underrepresented groups in the sciences and social sciences.

In addition to helping students develop intellectual and technical skills, several highlighted the importance of interpersonal skills related to professionalization and the ability to collaborate with others. Many faculty members welcomed the students’ own perspectives and experiences to generate or interpret data. One offered that having students from outside his department countered the tendency for everyone in the same major to think the same way. Others encouraged the students to develop ways of organizing data in support of multiple projects. Finally, a practical reason led faculty members to participate: having students do such work helped projects move along or simply get under way.

How do faculty members approach working with undergraduates in a research setting?

Even though the faculty members have different styles of engaging students and running their labs, two themes emerged. First, they took a developmental approach. Second, they emphasized the collaborative nature of research. In terms of the first theme, faculty took the time to talk with the students to find out what they were interested in, what their career aspirations were, what skills they possessed already, and what they could reasonably accomplish in the time given. One faculty member actually talked with her graduate students who would be supervising the undergraduates directly so that they could come up with a list of useful and appropriate tasks. They then met with the undergraduates and revised the tasks so that the work would be beneficial to everyone.

Some faculty members emphasized the importance of giving students discreet projects which still fit with larger, on-going projects. While some started with a big challenge right off the bat, others took smaller steps. Both approaches were intended to help the students build confidence in themselves. In the first instance, the faculty member commented she thought students are capable of handling a lot more than they are given credit for. In the second, a more methodical approach suited the faculty members’ style to build upon small successes. All seemed to approach mentoring with the assumption that the students are capable and that they can meet high expectations.
What advice do faculty members have for other faculty in working with undergraduates in a research capacity?

Some faculty members were quite comfortable taking on several students at a time while others preferred two or only one. On the one hand, a faculty member new to the RI might take on only one student. As he or she developed ways to work with students in the context of the RI, then additional students could be accepted. On the other hand, putting students in pairs or teams supported a sense of a research community and students could learn a great deal from their peers.

All of the faculty members emphasized introducing students to the ethos of doing research, as it revolved around asking questions, sharing ideas, persisting in tasks, and grounding current work in knowledge of existing work. One faculty member discussed sharing her own evolving thinking as a way to demystify how knowledge is constructed. Another suggested introducing students to others involved in the project, including those working outside of academia, as a way to “humanize” the project. Many concluded that having a clear list of tasks, goals, and expectations for students would be beneficial to both faculty and students. Additionally, helping students link their work to the “bigger picture” supported the students’ sense of purpose. Finally, staying in consistent communication with students, whether in lab group or individual meetings or via email, allowed faculty to monitor the students’ progress, gave students a chance to have their work acknowledged, and caught any concerns or questions from either party before they became problems.

**Current and Past Participating Faculty Members and Their Projects**

**Nancy Abelmann, Anthropology**

*Project:* Chinese and South Korean Students in Changing University of Illinois Demographics

**Mark Aber, Psychology**

*Project:* Students’ understanding of race as it changes in public school settings

**Aron Barbey, Speech and Hearing Science**

*Project:* Neural Mechanisms Underlying Human Intelligence and Their Disturbance in Psychiatric Illness and Traumatic Brain Injury

**Angela R Black, Kinesiology and Community Health**

*Project:* Pregnancy, Asthma, and Daily Life Management for African American Women
Tony Clark, American Indian Studies

**Project:** Settler Micro-aggressions: Dismissing, Marginalizing, and Trivializing the Allegations of Federally-Recognized Indian Tribes that Fraud Accompanied Transfers of Land from Indians to Non-Native Americans

Bethany Cutts, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences

**Project:** (1) Political and media action on childhood lead poisoning and gardening activity in the urban environment; (2) Branding ranchers: sophisticate analysis of survey data to understand grazing systems and their effect on ecology

Antonia Darder, Education

**Project:** The Role of Grass-Roots Initiatives in Reducing Disparities and Inequities in Education Related to Immigration, Identity, Language, Race, and Social Class

Jennifer Fraterrigo, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences

**Projects:** (1) Effects of non-native invasive plants on ecosystem function; (2) Response on non-native invasive plants to disturbance

Alma Gottlieb, Anthropology

**Project:** Diasporic Cape Verdeans with Jewish Heritage Negotiate Their Multiple Identities as Cape Verdean-Americans with Spiritually Mixed (Jewish/Catholic) and Ethnically Mixed (European/African) Ancestry

Chris Grindrod, Speech and Hearing Science

**Project:** Language and Communication in Stroke Survivors

Julie Hengst, Speech and Hearing Science

**Project:** Nature and Functioning of Repetition in Stuttering
Princess Imoukhuede, Bioengineering

Project: Statistical analysis of endothelial heterogeneity

Robin Jarrett, Human & Community Development & African American Studies

Project: Social Capital and Community Gardening: A Study of Inner-City Residents and Healthy Today, Healthy Tomorrow; Developing a Curriculum for a Series of Workshops with Low Income, Inner-City Mothers of Young Children

Deana McDonagh, Industrial Design

Project: Disability and Relevant Design: Inclusive Design Processes from Ideas to Product Uses

James Miller, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences

Project: Avian ecology in agricultural and urban environments

Ellen Moody, Anthropology

Project: Damascus Encounters? Transnational Affect and Global Transformation through short-term Christian Mission or Service Trips

Raksha Mudar, Speech and Hearing Science

Project: Behavioral and Electrophysiological Markers (EEG) of Cognitive Deterioration in individuals 65 years and Over and the Benefits of a Short Cognitive Training Program

Helen Neville, Counseling Psychology and African American Studies

Project: Transnational Examination of Black Racial Identities: Racial Life Stories and Archival Data of Racial Identity Attitudes of Black Individuals in Australia, Bermuda, South Africa, and the United States
Ramona Oswald, Human and Community Development  
**Project:** LGBT families and communities in non-metropolitan areas

Kathy A. Perkins, Theatre  
**Project:** Africans and Diaspora Theatre Artists

Lissette Piedra, Social Work  
**Project:** The Effects of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) on Depression and Parental Self-Efficacy in Latino Immigrant Mothers

Edna A. Viruell-Fuentes, Latina/Latino Studies  
**Project:** Dr. Viruell-Fuentes examines the disparities found in health services for immigrants. Her recent research projects have included examining the impact that migration has upon health in immigrant-sending communities.

Robert Warrior, American Indian Studies  
**Project:** Dr. Warrior is the Director of the American Indian Studies Program and the Native American House. His research and past publications have focused on Native American literature, poetry, intellectual history, and religion.

"I really liked the discussion around linguistics. Languages have different systems and people apply one language system to another but you have to think of them as separate."  
*TaNay, Health Professions | Undeclared major*

"I liked being able to come out with our own theories. [The professor] gave us an important role in the whole project."  
*Muyuan, Intersections | Psychology and Economics*
Researchers Initiative Poster Symposium

At the end of April, students present posters of their work which address the nature of the project, their tasks, and what they learned from participating in the research. This poster differs from a traditional research poster in that it asks students to reflect upon their experiences along with presenting the research project. However, students who produce posters for the Undergraduate Research Symposium, the University’s premier program to showcase undergraduate research, are encouraged to use them during the RI Symposium.

Faculty members are invited to attend the Symposium; their presence is deeply encouraging and meaningful to the students as they introduce their work in a public forum, perhaps for the first time. It also helps students develop a sense of a “researchers’ community.” A catered dinner occurs during the Symposium to celebrate the students’ accomplishments and informally continue the conversation. Students also receive a certificate of completion for the Researchers Initiative.

“I loved that I got to work with live cells and apply all this knowledge thrown at me in courses! It’s fun! I saw myself as pre-med but being in this lab made me contemplate whether I want to do medical school, research, or both.”

Michael, Global Crossroads | Molecular and Cell Biology

“I am a quantitative person and through [this project] I got to look at things from a different angle—looking at trends cross-culturally.”

Elizabeth, WIMSE | Biology
“[Participating] confirmed things I already know through scholarship but I learned about qualitative research, for example, how to construct interview questions. [As a result of working with this professor], I will be doing research this summer based on my own research proposal.”

Natasha, Intersections | Agricultural and Consumer Economics

“I really appreciate the Researchers Initiative. I got a ton of experience, and it helped cement that I made a great choice with my majors.”

Alex, Intersections | African American Studies and Sociology
**Future Directions**

Since its beginning, the Researchers Initiative has consistently increased the number of students and faculty participants and it has the capacity to continue this trend. Under its current structure and funding and given the trends in hours that students worked, the RI could nearly double in number of participants to 40. Beyond this number, the program would need to consider changes in how it is administered, staffed, and funded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Intersections</th>
<th>Health Professions</th>
<th>Global Crossroads</th>
<th>WIMSE</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*30 students were initially accepted into the RI. Two students who were accepted took mid-year positions as resident advisors so no longer lived in their respective communities. One withdrew from the university in the spring. Two could not be accepted into faculty members' labs because of the timing of the training. One withdrew because of other academic commitments.

Additionally, it would benefit the RI to provide greater guidance in how students could continue to work with their faculty mentors beyond the one semester. In particular, more formal discussions and documentation would support students being able to work with faculty to receive independent credit for research work.

Lastly, one of the RI’s strengths is that the program resides within the residence halls. Because the Program Director has contact with students beyond their participation in the Initiative and where they live, there is more opportunity for discussions around students’ needs and interests. It is also important to continue to emphasize the residential nature of the program which allows students to identify as a community of researchers and support each other in their research endeavors.

**apply to the Researchers Initiative**

The Researchers Initiative is open to students residing in Global Crossroads, Health Professions, Intersections, and Women in Math, Science, and Engineering Living-Learning Communities.

**Application Links available fall 2013**

Students apply at [http://go.illinois.edu/ri_student_ap](http://go.illinois.edu/ri_student_ap)

Faculty members apply at [http://go.illinois.edu/ri_faculty_ap](http://go.illinois.edu/ri_faculty_ap)