Establishing a Student Research Day:
A Library–Campus Collaboration

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To develop Farmingdale State College's first interdisciplinary research event, the library collaborated with several campus departments to establish Student Research Day. Inspired by its acquisition of a poster printer, the library proposed the implementation of a student poster session, sought out campus partnerships to garner student involvement, and secured event funding through a campus grant. Specifically, the library formed a strong partnership with the Research Aligned Mentorship (RAM) Program. This program provides extra benefits and research opportunities to students who are selected from a lottery of minority, low income, and/or first-generation college students. Through its collaboration with the RAM Program, the library facilitated specialized instruction, assessed students' confidence levels in conducting research, and successfully hosted a large-scale research event, the first of its kind at the college.

INTRODUCTION

In 2018, the Farmingdale State College Greenley Library collaborated across a number of campus departments to develop the college's first interdisciplinary Student Research Day. The inaugural Student Research Day featured poster presentations from 86 undergraduate students across a variety of disciplines. The planning and program engaged numerous entities across campus, including faculty sponsors, a poster evaluation committee, and more than 150 attendees including members of the community.

Originating as a two-year agricultural school, Farmingdale State College (FSC) transitioned to a four-year baccalaureate institution in the 1990s and has been working towards fostering a culture of student research (Cavaioli, 2012; Farmingdale State College n.d.b). The Greenley Library takes an active role in teaching information literacy and research skills to students and believed it was an ideal time to propose a student research event/poster session. University funds were available through a competitive

campus-wide call for grant proposals. The library was already planning to acquire a poster printer and it was an ideal time to seek out campus partners to garner student involvement and secure event funding. Specifically, the library worked with the Research Aligned Mentor (RAM) program. RAM provides additional academic support and research opportunities to students who are selected from a lottery of low income, first-generation college students, and/or members of historically minoritized communities (Farmingdale State College, n.d.c). Through its partnership with RAM, the library facilitated specialized instruction, assessed students' confidence levels in conducting research, and successfully hosted a large-scale research event, the first of its kind at the college.

This chapter will discuss (1) a review of the literature in regard to the benefits of undergraduate research conferences, (2) using grant funding to develop an institution-wide research event, (3) implementing a poster printing service in an academic library, (4) developing collaborative relationships with departments outside the library, (5) the Greenley Library's experience developing Student Research Day, and (6) recommendations for best practices in planning and executing a successful undergraduate research event.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Benefits of Undergraduate Research Conferences

Since the late 1980s, many institutions have held events to feature undergraduate student scholarship (Caprio & Hackey, 2014). These events can range in size from departmental level to campus-wide, and typically highlight student research and creative endeavors by providing students with venues to present their work (Knies & Mac Gregor, 2015; Potter et al., 2010). Increasing in frequency in recent years, undergraduate research is viewed as both an "emergent pedagogy in higher education" and a "high-impact educational practice" (Caprio & Hackey, 2014, p. 261; Wiebe, 2016). By expanding student experiences beyond class-based assignments, students' participation in conferences provides motivation to develop professionally and to improve their employability, rather than merely securing a course grade (Hill et al., 2018). Further, undergraduate research conferences that are utilized as teaching experiences "disrupt the normal circuitry of the educational exchange" and enhance student learning (Gumbhir, 2014, p. 299; Whitehead & Sadler, 2018).

There is a wealth of literature providing evidence that students benefit from undergoing undergraduate research experiences, positively impacting student retention, graduation rate, graduate school attendance, and future careers (Carter et al., 2016; Hayes-Harb et al., 2020; Potter et al., 2010; Wiebe, 2016). Research experiences are known to contribute toward students' increased autonomy and their ability to think analytically and learn independently (Carter et al., 2016; Whitehead & Sadler, 2018; Wiebe, 2016). These opportunities also equip students with collaborative learning experience, communication and organizational skills, feelings of competence, and enhanced faculty-student interactions (Potter et al., 2010). Institution-sponsored undergraduate research conferences "give students a safe environment in which to test and disseminate their work" and provide a formal occasion to promote dialogue and collaboration between students, faculty, and other attendees (Whitehead & Sadler, 2018, p. 19). Fostering a sense of community between students and faculty, conferences equip students with skills that contribute toward their future employability and professional development (Douglas et al., 2018; Thorogood et al., 2018). Seen as "inspirational, yet pragmatic" educational experiences, research events encourage

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