Undergraduate Research Student Interviews

Group 1 – Non-science Students (6-7 students)
June 12, 2006

All of the students indicated that they had visited the Undergraduate Research Web site prior to the meeting. Students most frequently visited the site as prospective UGR students, and after being accepted to one of the programs tended not to visit the site as often, and then only when needing to complete a task.

Many of the students indicated they got to the UGR Web site by first going to the MU Web site and doing a search for "Undergraduate Research." One student read Patrick Dell's profile on the MU Homepage rotating photo feature and got to the site by clicking on the UGR link in the profile. She was encouraged by Patrick's story and decided that she could also do undergraduate research.

Students visited the Web site to:
- Read abstracts from past forums
- Get information about job opportunities and programs

Students currently receive most of their instructions in paper form, but would prefer to get it online or via e-mail.

The students in the group indicated that they like to see profiles of students who share the same research interests as they do. These profiles made them feel more comfortable, confirmed they were in the right place and reinforced that they could do projects similar to those undertaken by the students profiled.

The students liked the ability to view abstracts and past research project information.

Problems and Suggestions for Improvement:

One student thought a greater distinction should be made between the MURS and LS UROP program applications, as it was a bit confusing.

Students expected to find links to Undergraduate Research on department Web sites. They also indicated it would be appropriate to find a link to Undergraduate Research under the "Research" section of the main MU Web site.

Several students encountered problems when trying to find a faculty mentor. Many faculty didn't know about the UGR program.

Students requested that important deadlines appear in MU Info. When asked, this group indicated they regularly read MU Info.

Would like a list of accepted researchers and projects.

Do read blogs, but only if specifically relevant to their own research interests.

Travel grants – know they are available but haven't used them.

Might be nice to have a list of program alumni and what they're doing now. This would provide good evidence of the value and potential outcome of participating in undergraduate research activities.

Group 2 – Science Students (3 LS UROP students)
June 22, 2006

*Note: These three students were part of the LS UROP program so tended to use the LS UROP site as the primary source of information as opposed to the UGR Web site.

Most students got to the UGR Web site by going to MU Homepage and searching for "LS UROP" or "Undergraduate Research."

Many came to the site looking for information on programs. They indicated that they had no real purpose other than finding information. (casual exploring) They felt the information available on the site adequately answered their questions and was the right length. In addition to the program descriptions and job listings, the information about finding a faculty mentor was most useful.

Suggestions for Improvement:

Confused by job opportunities. Suspected that not all jobs were listed. Wanted complete list in one location (without clicking through).

Expected to find a list of professors who are accepting students. Difficult to click through all of the department sites to look for faculty members who share same interests.

Generally liked LS UROP navigation "tabs" or buttons, but thought UGR site had too many links. Wanted brief, concise information that didn't take long to read.

Wanted a listing of conferences outside the university when clicking on the conferences and events tab.

Like to get information via e-mail and Web to save paper and so that it is portable and accessible from home, campus, the lab.

Would like to see sample applications and tips sheets on the Web instead of going to workshop.

Would not watch 20 minute video on creating a poster presentation. Would rather have sample PowerPoint files as reference.

Didn't notice the audience links at the top, but when clicked on the "Students" link, found the information very helpful "This is exactly what I expected to see on the Web site."

Would like a list of people who have done LS UROP projects (alumni) who would be willing to talk to students – answer questions.

One student commented that UGR site looked like a "shopping" site. Wanted more photos of students actually doing their research.