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Academic Development Towards High-Impact Undergraduate Research and Inquiry

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Scholars around the globe have demonstrated that undergraduate research and inquiry (UR) significantly improve student learning (e.g., Healey, Jenkins, & Lea, 2014; Brew, 2013; Healey & Jenkins, 2009; Osborne & Karukstis, 2009; Turner, Wuetherick, & Healey, 2008; Huggins, Jenkins, & Scurry, 2007). Like any research in academic disciplines, UR may embody diverse practices and be named differently across both disciplinary and international contexts (Healey, Jenkins, & Lea, 2014). It may take the form of supervised undergraduate theses embedded in degree programs, inquiry projects within individual courses, or stand-alone mentored inquiry experiences.
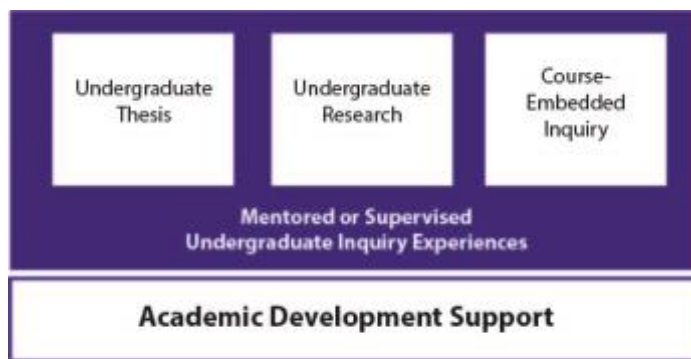
Nevertheless, UR – in all its forms – contributes to student learning, retention, and engagement (Kuh, 2008), and ethnic minority, first-generation, and low-income students are significantly more likely to graduate if they participate in mentored UR (Brownell & Swaner, 2010; Gregerman, 1999; Locks & Gregerman, 2008). UR also fosters deep learning of critical thinking, effective communication, and complex problem-solving, which are among the most valuable skills undergraduates develop during university studies (Hart Research Associates, 2015). Yet in many university contexts UR disproportionately serves students from advantaged backgrounds, those with high grades, and those with the confidence to pursue selective opportunities (Osborn & Karukstis, 2009).

Kuh and O'Donnell (2013) contend that the deepest engagement in UR occurs when students participate in all aspects of the research process in close working relationships with academic staff. Scholars also have examined academic staff mentors' roles in supporting student learning in course-embedded UR models (e.g., Healey, Jenkins, & Lea, 2014) and undergraduate theses (e.g., Rowley & Slack, 2004), faculty perceptions about supervising undergraduate theses (e.g., Todd, Smith, & Bannister, 2006), and gendered relationships in undergraduate thesis supervision (Hammick & Acker, 1998). Despite merits of close student-staff collaboration throughout the inquiry process, university practices often distance students from full involvement in university research (Brew, 2006). Perhaps because of this distance, few investigations have focused on the academic staff mentor's or supervisor's role in supporting student learning across UR models, what constitutes a productive student-mentor dynamic in

UR, or how institutions and academic developers can most effectively cultivate mentored UR. In order to deepen student engagement and expand access to mentored UR, whether as course-embedded inquiry or as a co-curricular activity, the staff mentor/supervisor role must be better understood – and mentoring capacities must be supported and developed in staff across the disciplines, institution types, and national and international contexts.

This special issue examines what higher education knows about high-impact mentoring of UR and how academic developers can help staff prepare for and engage in these mentoring or supervising roles – for undergraduate theses, course-embedded inquiry, and other forms of undergraduate research and inquiry.

This special issue is intended to serve as a central resource for academic developers seeking to support new and continuing staff mentors and supervisors of UR by examining:

- Key characteristics of mentored/supervised UR that make the experience high-impact for students and/or high-impact for mentors/supervisors
- Ways that students' and academic staff mentors' and supervisors' identity differences affect the UR mentoring relationship
- Academic development practices that most effectively foster high-quality mentoring/supervision of UR

Timeline:
- Manuscripts due January 16, 2017
- Notification of decisions following *IJAD*'s peer review process by April 2017
- Revisions of accepted manuscripts due June 2017
- Print publication in early 2018 (Volume 23, Issue 1)

IJAD articles are 6,000 words or fewer including the abstract, figures, tables and references. Submitted papers should not have been previously published nor be under consideration for publication elsewhere. A guide for authors, Word template, and other relevant information can be found on *IJAD*'s homepage: www.tandfonline.com/ijad

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