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Getting Started in Undergraduate Research
Why do research?
Why do research (cont.)?

An elated Jenna having caught dinner in Sukamaju Village.

Isabella by Micha Ullman's Book Burning Memorial. August-Bebel-Platz, Berlin, Germany.

Nova retrieving her muscle samples from -80°C liquid nitrogen tank.
Two kinds of research:
1) Apprenticeship

• help with a professor’s research
• make connections
• gain skills
• lab v. non-lab disciplines
Two kinds of research:

2) Independent

- carry out a project of your own design
- Choose the topic, go deep
- Be first author
- Challenge yourself
How to get units for your research
(to stay sane, and *shine*)

**Honors thesis**
- Graded, in your major (ex. H195A and H195B)

**Independent Study**
- Ungraded, social science/humanities (199)

**Research Units**
- Ungraded, sciences, engineering, psychology (99 or 199)
Finding a mentor: 3 routes

- Apprenticeship programs
- Through classes:
  - go to office hours
  - mobilize contacts
- “Strategic doorknocking”
1) Find faculty with interests close to yours via web search, networking, faculty expertise DB

2) Check the “grapevine” – what is s/he like to work with?

3) Read an article, then meet with top candidates
   Agenda:
   • Apprenticeship: ask about their work
   • Independent: solicit feedback on your idea
   • Both: establish your credibility: resume, recommendations/reference, transcript

4) Pop the question! Make clear
   • “Contract”
   • Why s/he is best match

AND/OR via email:
Do research, establish credibility, stage 4
Resources for finding and working productively with mentors, asking for recommendations, and more

http://research.berkeley.edu/  
“resources” page
Why participate in a formal research program?

- Peer support
- Staff support
- Structure
- $: travel, more time for research, equipment, supplies, debt reduction
- recognition!!
- Extras: GRE prep, Grad admissions help, public speaking and publication opportunities
How programs vary

- Eligibility:
  - GPA
  - demographics
  - year in college
  - discipline/s or topic
  - future plans
- Apprentice/Independent
- Timeline: summer, academic year
- Commitments
- Amount of $
- Which extras
- size of cohort
- Amount and type of guidance, and from whom

**At least one program for everyone!!**
How to apply—application components

- Deadlines mostly **mid- to late January**
  - Apprentice: motivation, qualifications
    - Transcript
    - Essay
    - Sometimes recommendations
  - Independent: plan, motivation, qualifications
    - Proposal + supporting documents
    - Transcript
    - Recommendation/s

Both:
- Read web site carefully
- contact staff
- show drafts to everyone early and often!
- apply to multiple programs
Where to find the programs?

RESEARCH.BERKELEY.EDU

Programs at Berkeley for Berkeley students: Search by

• program name
• deadline
• discipline
• GPA
• citizenship
• college
• financial need

Programs away from Berkeley for Berkeley students

• Commuting distance (UCSF, CHORI, etc.)
• Paid summer apprenticeships at other Universities
Please ask me lots of questions!