COLLEGE RESEARCH ADVOCATES
Goals, Roles and Responsibilities

Overview of the Position of College Research Advocates

Each College of Philadelphia University will *designate* a Research Advocate. This will be a full-time faculty member who will receive one course release each semester (_ / _ load) or stipend of $__,__ per semester. The term will be for 2 academic years, with no more than 3 terms. College Research Advocates will report directly to the College's Executive Dean. Advocates will be required to attend monthly College and University level Academic Resource Council meetings (CARC and UARC) to inform committee members of needs and strategies to enhance or develop faculty and student research experiences.

The three College Research Advocates will meet as a group at a minimum frequency of once per month to share progress in each college, co-develop strategies for creating and fostering a culture of research across the University that would involve, at a minimum, planning campus wide workshops to support faculty and student training and engagement in research experiences, identifying and disseminating research funding opportunities to faculty and students (in conjunction the Center for Teaching Innovation and Nexus Learning), and planning an annual 'PhilaU Research Symposium' that highlights and recognizes faculty and student research. Specific examples of mechanisms to support these directions are listed below.

The overall goal/role of each College Research Advocate is to facilitate and nurture faculty members in the process of building research trajectories that support their professional development while creating and enhancing meaningful learning opportunities for student engagement in research.

Rationale for Creating Research Advocacy Positions

Student involvement in authentic, meaningful research grounded in real-world issues is considered to be a high impact practice educational practice for achieving excellence in liberal and professional education (Kuh, 2008; Lapatto, 2010). Research-based learning involves students, either singly or more often collaboratively, applying knowledge and skills to address pressing, real-world problems under the mentorship and direction of faculty, staff and/or graduate students. The research process is inquiry-based, engaging students in creating, questioning, and revising knowledge, while honing skills in critical thinking, collaboration, communication, reasoning, synthesis, and resiliency (e.g., Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008).

Research-based inquiry incorporates all four tenets of Philadelphia University's Nexus Learning approach to educating our students, one that amalgamates learning that is active and engaged, collaborative, real-world, and infused with the liberal arts. The research experience, though highly effective as a pedagogy, can be daunting to construct because of the time and effort needed to for faculty and staff members to act as mentors and facilitators. Moreover, the paucity of real-world, easily accessible and implementable research opportunities on campus has limited its full potential on our campus. The role of the Research Advocate will be, in part, to identify areas where research opportunities can be formulated.

Responsibilities of Research Advocates

As these are new positions, the specific responsibilities on the Research Advocate will change with time. The following bullets of responsibilities are therefore divided into "*Early Implementation Stage*" (Years 1 and 2 after creation of these positions) and "*Institutionalization Stage*" (Beyond Year 2)

Early Implementation Stage

- Define what 'research' within each College is and provide examples that span the disciplines/majors within each College. The notion that 'research' must be limited classic 'laboratory' or 'field' based inquiry must be dispelled to be more inclusive of the unique research experiences that may be afforded by each discipline.

- Convey the importance of undergraduate research as a high impact, value-added component of a student's education at Philadelphia University.

- Provide information to faculty members regarding the roles, duties and responsibilities of being research mentors and identify on- and off-campus resources to facilitate undergraduate research projects.

- Identify and provide information, direction, and possible collaborations for existing and future research funding amongst single or multiple faculty members. Research Advocates will be critical in identifying and facilitating faculty member collaboration (within and between the Colleges) in research projects.

- Assist faculty members, especially early-career individuals, in defining a research trajectory and seeking internal (e.g., Nexus Learning Grants, Faculty Scholarship/Research Grants, etc) or external grants.

- Establish an annual on-campus "PhilaU Research Symposium" where students and faculty present their research in poster and platform (oral).

- Establish an award(s) for best research poster and platform. Present these at the annual on-campus event.

- Identify and provide information, direction, and possible collaborations for existing and future research funding amongst single or multiple faculty members. Research Advocates will be critical in identifying and facilitating faculty member collaboration (within and between the Colleges) in research projects.

- Define the outcomes for those students engaging in 'research'. Explore various techniques for outcomes assessment specific to research engagement and implement these. Establish a means of tracking the impact that engagement in research had on students' learning, career goals, preparedness for career, and post-graduation lives. Utilize pre- and post-surveys and other assessments (e.g., research-specific Student Assessment of Learning Goals (SALG)) to provide measures for success of this high impact learning.

- With collaboration with Philadelphia University's Center for Teaching Innovation and Nexus Learning, provide tools/training for both faculty members and students to utilize for successful research experiences.

- Begin to address the issue of faculty 'buy-in' and compensation for mentoring research students (reduction of teaching load, extra compensation, etc).

- Formulate means of inclusion of research into existing courses or explore creation of new courses or extra curricular opportunities for research. Establish a College or University wide goal of inclusion of research experience into every major, possibly through a capstone course akin to Contemporary Perspectives (or recognizing that it already exists and formalize it).

Institutionalization Stage

- Creation of a University wide "Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program" whereby students seeking an authentic, meaningful research experience can find information on accessing those on- and off-campus research experiences.

- Create a webpage ("Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program") to highlight the research interests of the faculty members, list and describe the potential research projects available each semester, provide information on the on-line application process students interested in research must submit

(e.g., one page description of proposed research project with budget, if applicable; mentors permission, etc).

- Oversee the application process for research projects, the placement of students with mentors, and track progress through a mid-project report and a final report or poster presentation.

- Establish an on-line "Undergraduate Research Journal" to showcase the research projects across the Colleges. Alternatively or additionally, establish a view book highlighting student research.

- Establish an annual competition for student research grants that would provide incentive for students to conduct novel research with faculty members and would provide some 'equipment/supplies' funds to conduct research projects.

- Provide information on the various off-campus, wider dissemination processes for the research (e.g., local, regional, state, or national conferences, peer reviewed journals such as the *Journal of Young Investigators*) for those projects of 'higher caliber'.

Cited Works:

Barron, B., & Darling-Hammond, L. 2008. Teaching for meaningful learning: A review of research on inquiry-based and cooperative learning (PDF). Powerful Learning: What We Know About Teaching for Understanding. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kuh, G. 2008. High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Lopatto, D. 2010. Undergraduate research as a high-impact student experience. Peer Review, 12(2).