

Keynote Address Summary

Undergraduate Research: Lessons Learned from Students and Rattlesnakes

Presented by Dr. Terence M. Farrell of Stetson University

After a couple of decades working as a mentor to undergraduate students, Dr. Farrell was able to summarize his experiences in the form of a checklist that will help to maximize gains in professional development resulting from research experiences:

1. Use Regional Advantage
 - be aware of opportunities near your home university
 - for Dr. Farrell, one regional advantage was a national wildlife refuge about 10 miles from his home university
2. Study What Excites You
 - loving what you do makes the tedious portions and time commitment of research much more manageable
3. Find and Use Your Talents
 - recognize your strengths and capitalize on them
4. Take Advantage of Fresh Minds
 - the exchange of ideas among students and faculty during research discussions can inform the future direction of your work
5. There are no “Eureka” moments
 - simply put: research progress is the result of hard, steadfast, committed work
6. Find Collaborators with Similar Interests
 - time is so very limited and collaborators can greatly facilitate research progress, efficiency and productivity
7. Find Collaborators with Different Skills
 - increase the breadth of your research program by building an interdisciplinary team of collaborators
8. You are a Poor Judge of Your Own Work
 - always seek feedback and critique of your research
9. Keep in Contact
 - see your collaborators as a professional network that you maintain through the years
10. Enjoy the Next Path You Travel
 - be flexible with the directions that your research programs take and do not be afraid of change....savor it
11. Think about Why Research Failed or Worked
 - be introspective and assess what you did, why you did it and if you would do it again