

Essential Steps for Connecting with a Faculty Mentor

- Before you approach a professor, do your homework. Review the Web site of the department where the faculty member works, familiarize yourself with her/his profile on UR-Linked and/or his/her professional Web site, look up recent publications or performances. In general, you need to have a strong understanding of that person's research, scholarship, or artistic work.
- Make sure you can clearly articulate your interests and why you would be ideal undergraduate researcher, scholar, or artist to work with. The director of undergraduate research, Dr. Jane Greer, can help you with this.

Contact a faculty member--e-mail first!

- Connect with the faculty member you have identified by e-mail first. Your e-mail should be professional and positive. Address the faculty member as 'Prof. X' or 'Dr. Y.'
- Include a sentence or two stating how your interests and the topics you would like to explore align with the faculty's members research agenda or artistic agenda. Show your enthusiasm and commitment.
- Be sure to edit and proofread your e-mail so you make a positive impression.

Ensure a successful first meeting with a potential faculty mentor.

- Prepare for your meeting. Review your own skills and experiences (courses, jobs, personal background) so that you can articulate what you might bring to the research/artistic team. Review the faculty member's curriculum vitae and/or publications.
- Introduce yourself and address the faculty member as 'Prof. X' or 'Dr. Y.'
- Be prompt and professional.
- Ask the professor what will be expected of you.
- Be realistic about how much time you have and what you can commit to the project, keeping in mind your course work, job, and family obligations.

Keep in mind . . .

- Undergraduate researchers, scholars, and artists often start "at the bottom" As you work your way up, you learn valuable skills and develop critical

habits of mind.

- Remember that successful individuals have failed more times than unsuccessful people have even tried. A faculty member may not have a place for you on his/her project team right now, or he/she may feel that you would be better matched with a colleague. Even by having a preliminary meeting with a potential faculty mentor about becoming an undergraduate researcher/scholar/artist, you have taken an important step in expanding your horizons and building your professional network.