

# **Steps to Ensure a Successful Research Partnership**

**(Adapted from "How to Mentor Undergraduate Researchers"  
by Carolyn Merkel and Shenda M. Baker,  
published by the Council on Undergraduate Research)**

- Identify ways to socialize the student into the culture of your discipline, lab, project, etc. What is proper lab etiquette? What are the roles and responsibilities of the various members of your research group? Who can answer what questions? How does one keep track of information/data collection?
- Provide the student with background reading to help them understand how their piece of the project relates to the larger project.
- Make it clear to the student who can answer what questions in your absence and make sure the members of your research group understand their roles and responsibilities for the UROP student.
- Set-up regularly scheduled meetings if not weekly, then biweekly. Take a few minutes during each meeting to ask how the student is doing outside of your project.
- Make your expectations clear from the beginning, this includes deadlines, best methods to communicate with you, hours of work, the level of detail you require in reports, lab notebooks, timelines, etc.
- Let the student know when you want them to check in and how much freedom they have to problem solve on their own and be independent.
- Provide opportunities for the student to take on increasing responsibility and more difficult tasks and responsibilities when they have demonstrated competence.
- Make time to discuss with the student the ethical issues they may encounter from the fabrication of data to who owns the research, intellectual property, confidentiality, etc.
- Let students know there will be ups and downs in the research process and that there are many tedious moments in research, failures, etc. as well as the exciting moments.
- Make some time on occasion to talk to the student about life outside the research project, how things are going in their classes, personal goals, adjustment to campus, etc. This means a great deal to a student when you take an interest in them as a person.