



Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates

Spring & Fall Undergraduate Research Festivals

What are these festivals?

- SURF and FURF are events where undergraduate students share the research, scholarly, and/or creative work they have been doing, either as an independent project or with a faculty mentor. Students can present at SURF and FURF as many times as they'd like!
- They take place every December (FURF) and April (SURF) in the UCC (Old Capitol Mall). They run from 4:30-6:30PM, usually on a Wednesday.
- There is no application to present – we want everyone to participate - you just have to register! But remember, by registering, you are making a commitment to attend the event for the full two hours and present your work. If you have class during this time, please get your instructor's permission to miss class BEFORE registering.

What happens at these events?

- Posters are usually used as a visual to aid this discussion, but we are open to other options! Posters are a common format used at professional meetings.
- To present, students stand by their posters and talk with people, briefly, about the work that they're doing. So it is more of a short conversation with interested passerby more than a formal, in-depth presentation.
- Students will stand by their poster for either the first hour (4:30-5:30) or the second hour (5:30-6:30), and are free to talk with other students during their free hour.

Who can present at these festivals?

- ANY undergraduate student who is involved in research, scholarly and/or creative work (art, dance, music, etc.)
 - Don't think that just because you don't do work that is traditionally presented as "research" that you are not able to present your work.
 - This is your chance to tell the UI community why and how you're doing what you're doing, why it is important in your field, why you chose the methods you did, etc. Tell us the story!
- This can be work done independently – often for a senior thesis or project, an independent study project, or a research practicum class.
- This can be work done with a faculty mentor on a part of their work (just make sure to ask them first!)
- Projects DO NOT have to be completed to be presented. Works in progress are great (as research is never really finished)!

Why should I present at these festivals?

- **PRACTICE!! You can always speak in a more technical way, but learning to talk effectively and articulately about your work to people outside of your discipline, is an essential skill for a researcher and scholar. Students have said...**
 - *It gave me a chance to actually present my work to the public and practice giving a poster talk. I had a lot of fun talking with the people that stopped by and think I did a very good job explaining my work.*
 - *It was good experience talking about my work in a succinct manner to a wide ranging audience. As the night went on I could tell that each time I explained my work, my explanation flowed more naturally and I was able to add parts that were relevant and remove parts that were overly complicated or too esoteric.*

- **These are laid back, relatively low stress environments for you to practice talking about why your/your lab/your faculty mentor's work matters, why it is important, and why people should care/be interested. Students have said...**
 - *I think signing up for SURF was great practice for presenting and talking about my research. I learned more about my project by having to tell other people about it. And, it even exposed some gaps in my knowledge--not only do I know more about what I know about my research, I know more about what I don't know (which is just as if not more valuable to know)!*
 - *FURF helped me to understand my own research, in a way. I didn't realize just why I was doing it until someone asked me directly. I surprised myself with my answers!*

- **Often times, students are able to present at professional conferences or attend other professional development events like master classes and summer workshops – use SURF/FURF as venues to practice for more discipline specific events. Students have said...**
 - *I think it definitely helped me prepare for upcoming and more intimidating poster sessions.*
 - *Presenting at FURF also prepared me for my final presentation/defense in a couple of weeks. I was able to articulate the main points of my project more succinctly after talking with people.*

- **Presentations always look great on your resume or CV! It shows that you are able and willing to go out and talk about what you do!**

- **Awards! The top three presentations in each discipline group receive an award (Distinguished, Outstanding, or Commended) – another great thing to add to your resume/CV!**
 - Arts
 - Humanities
 - Engineering/Mathematics
 - Natural Sciences
 - Social Sciences

Who attends SURF and FURF?

- Fellow undergraduates
- Graduate students
- Faculty and staff, University administrators
- Family and community members
- Anyone! These events are free and open to the public!

FURF and SURF are co-hosted by:

- Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates
- University Honors Program
- Office of the Vice President for Research
- Office of the Provost