

Using Research to Enhance Undergraduate Economics

I will talk about the different research, funding and teaching opportunities that I have employed to work with students from diverse groups.

Also I have sent a student to AEA summer training program & minority fellowships and will talk about the experience. The student who participated in the summer training program was able to benefit from the course program that was offered and also meet like-minded students. The network effect for the student was large as the student developed a network of other students from minority backgrounds that are interested in graduate studies. As part of the program the student was able to learn more in the courses offered, develop a network and work on his research skills.

At Wesleyan there are a number of avenues to involve students in undergraduate economics research. I have recruited students from minority backgrounds into these different research programs: (1) Research internships (2) the Quantitative Analysis Center (QAC) summer program and (3) Thesis work.

(1) Research internships

During the academic year students can get involved in research projects with a professor and the professor and the students jointly apply for the research internship. Throughout the year the student will work on a hands-on research project, which is developed by the professor but can also be developed jointly between the student and the professor. The recruitment into this program can be by application or also the professor can actively seek out qualified and interested undergraduate students.

(2) QAC summer program

This summer program, hosted at Wesleyan University, provides one of the first steps to learn several statistical software packages and to do research with a professor. The student develops the technical skills in the morning and in the afternoon works closely with the professor on an economic research project. This project is often an ongoing research project of the professor, but could also help the student develop their own research, building on the summer program.

(3) Thesis work

This is a year-long research project conducted by the student on a topic of their own choosing.

In addition to these avenues for research students also can get involved into teaching through a teaching apprenticeship program. Here, I have also actively recruited students from diverse backgrounds to help them develop and learn teaching skills. In particular, I tried to help them establish their presence in the classroom and potentially interest them in a career as professor or teacher.