

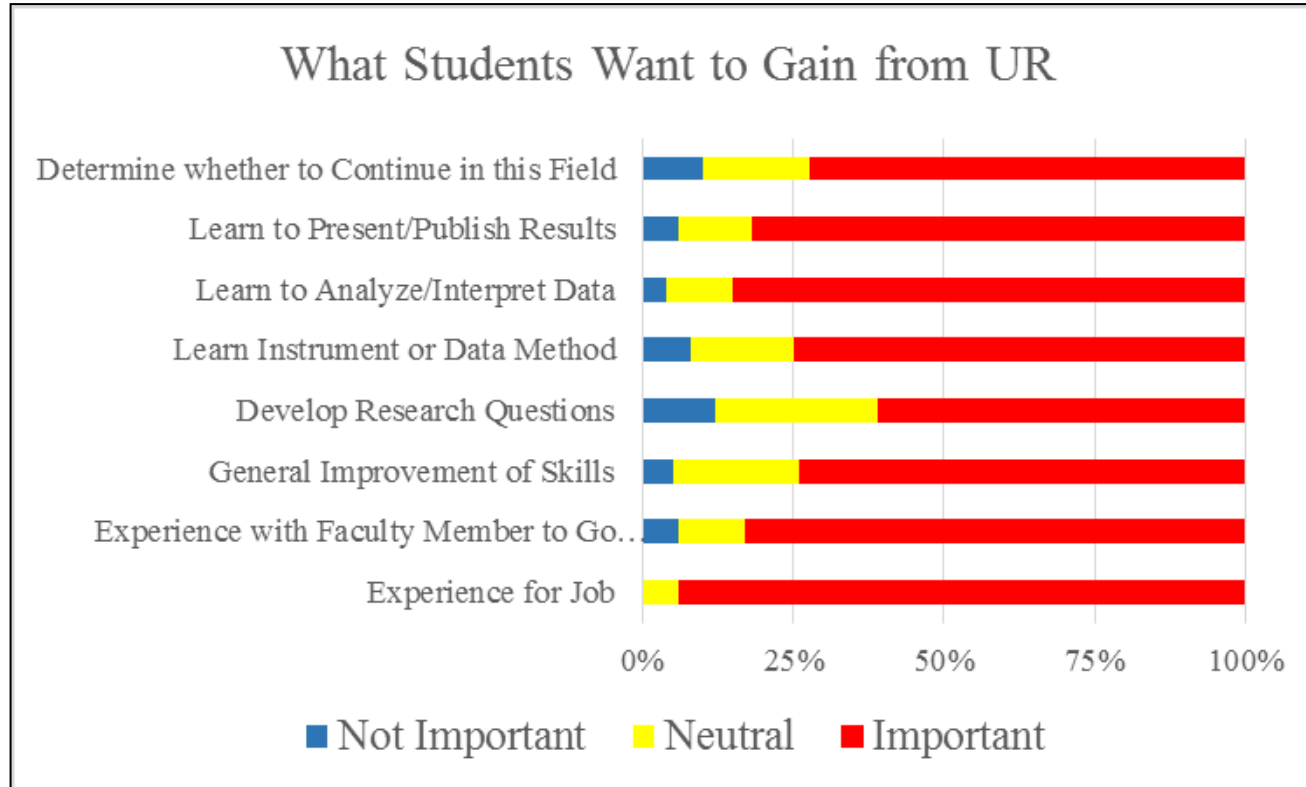
Robert H. Tykot¹, Sarah E. Bloom, Marie Bourgeois, Valerie Carson, Darlene DeMarie, Amanda Huensch, Chung Seop Jeong, Mile Krajcevski, Megan Voeller, and Kevin Yee (University of South Florida, Tampa)

Introduction

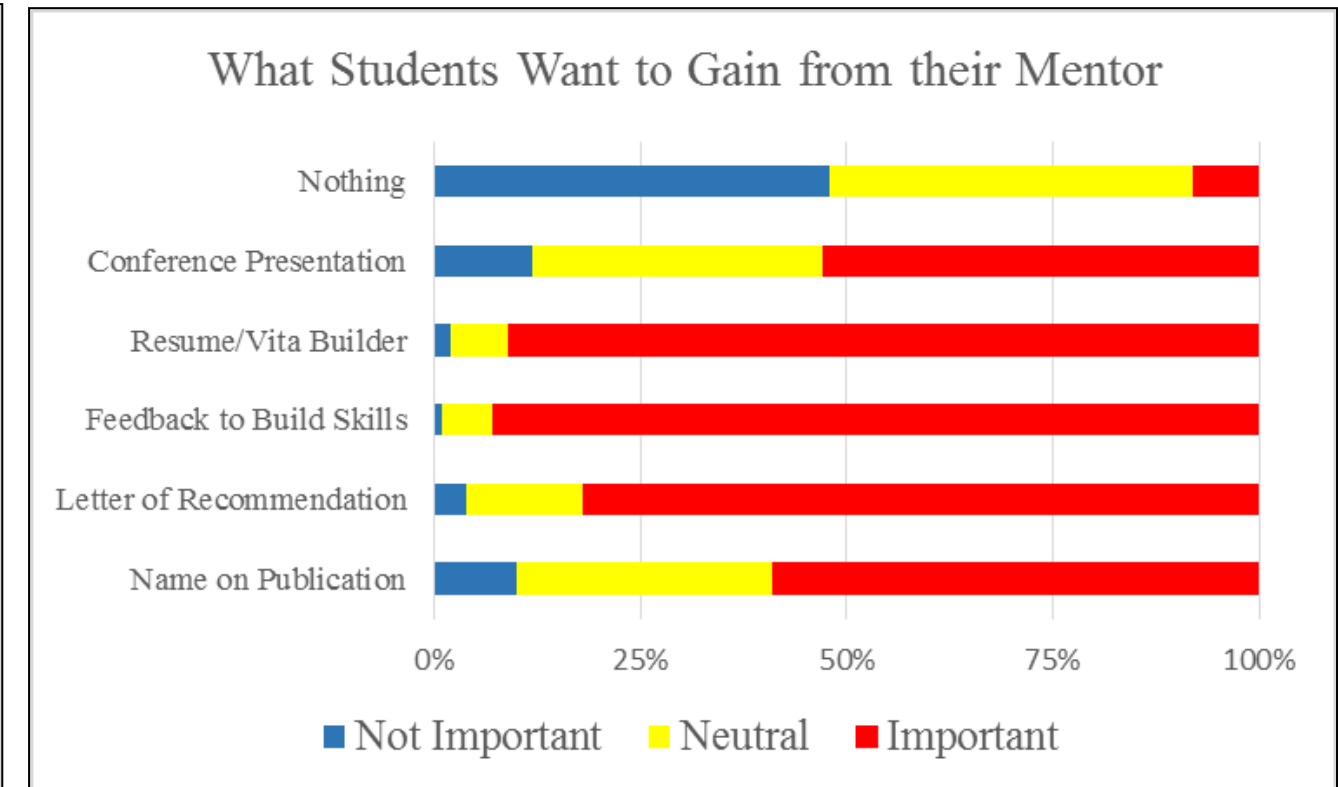
An online survey of undergraduate students from multiple colleges and departments at the University of South Florida was conducted about their perceptions of the existence and availability of research opportunities, the benefits of participation, and the relevance to their future careers. Two hundred and thirty-two students representing more than 40 different majors completed the relatively short survey, primarily juniors or seniors.

Student responses to the survey indicate that most were aware of undergraduate research opportunities, and thought that having this kind of experience would help them with their future employment. Forty percent have been involved in research projects, while eighty percent of the respondents indicated they plan to go on to graduate school.

Three examples of undergraduate students doing research at USF



Most important: experience
Least important: research questions



More important: skills and resume
Less important: presentation and publication



The most important keywords in our survey were Opportunity and Experience

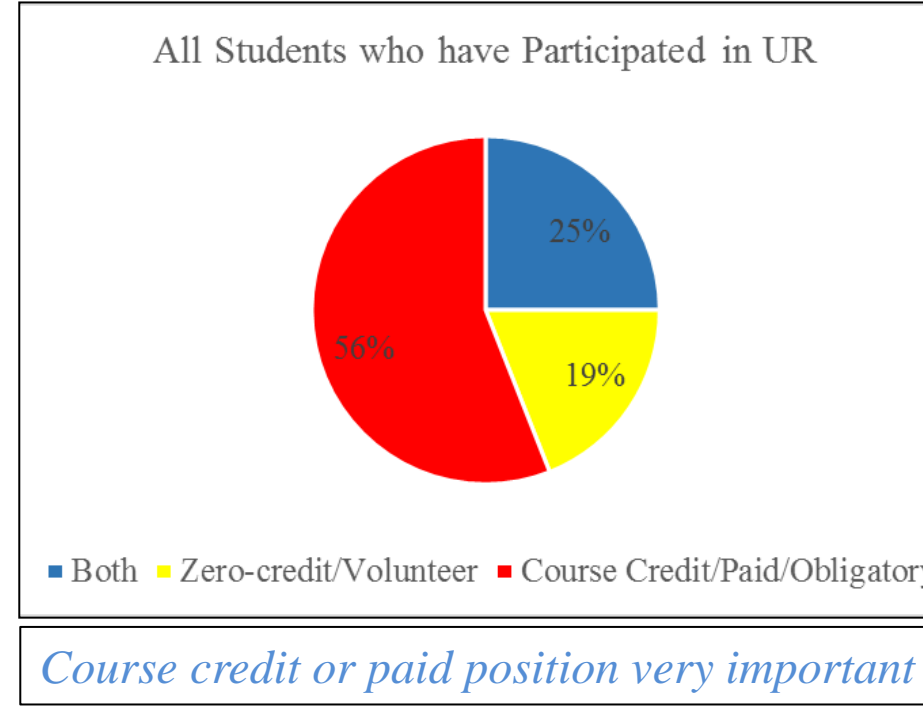
Why Do Undergraduate Research?

Most of the students responding to this survey saw multiple advantages in doing research, including having this experience when seeking employment, learning about specific methods and instruments, and how to analyze and interpret the data produced. Students also saw having a mentor as useful for helping them build skills, as an experience to mention on their resumes, and as a resource for letters of recommendation.

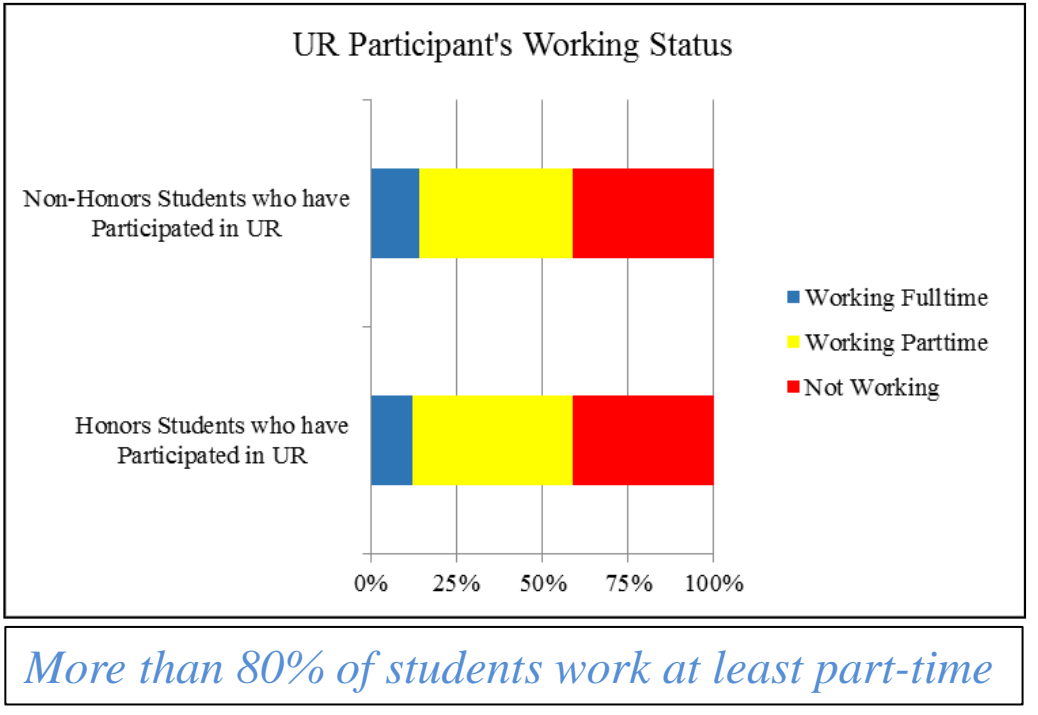
Not as important were the specific research questions being addressed, presenting at a conference, and publishing the results. The diverse range of participation among students is notable, however, with the vast majority getting course credit or being paid for their involvement in research. Only 19% were not getting course credit. No difference was observed between full-time and part-time students.

Why Not Do Undergraduate Research?

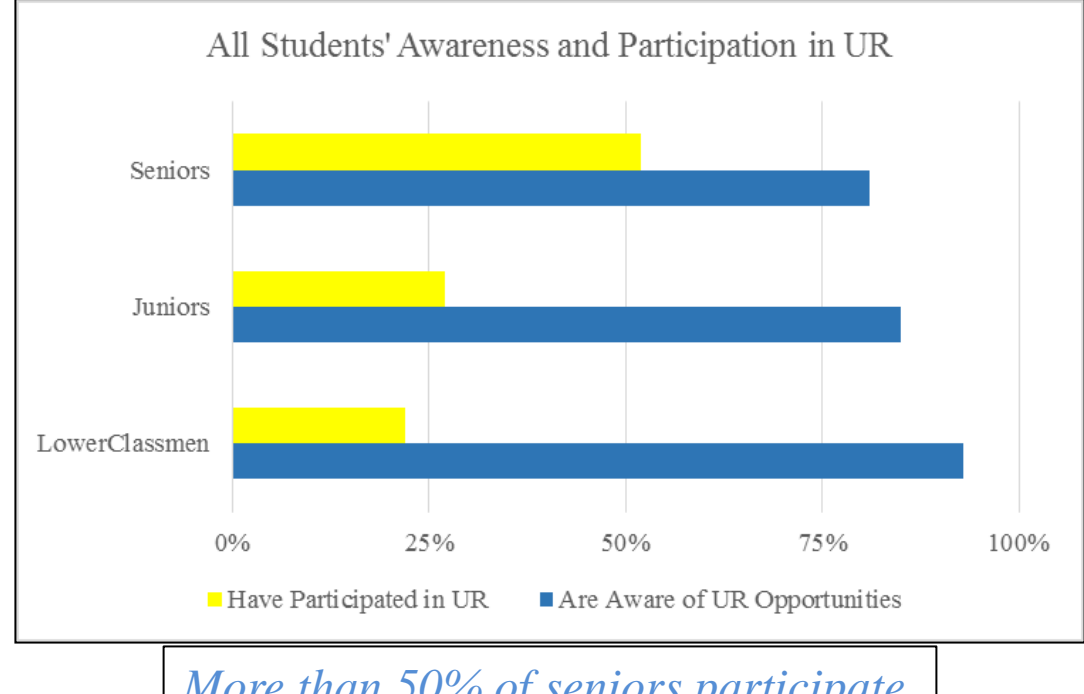
Significant differences were noted in the awareness of and participation in undergraduate research at USF based on student class, not surprisingly with seniors the most involved. At all class levels, a much higher percentage of students in the honors college program were involved in research. There is little difference between full- and part-time students.



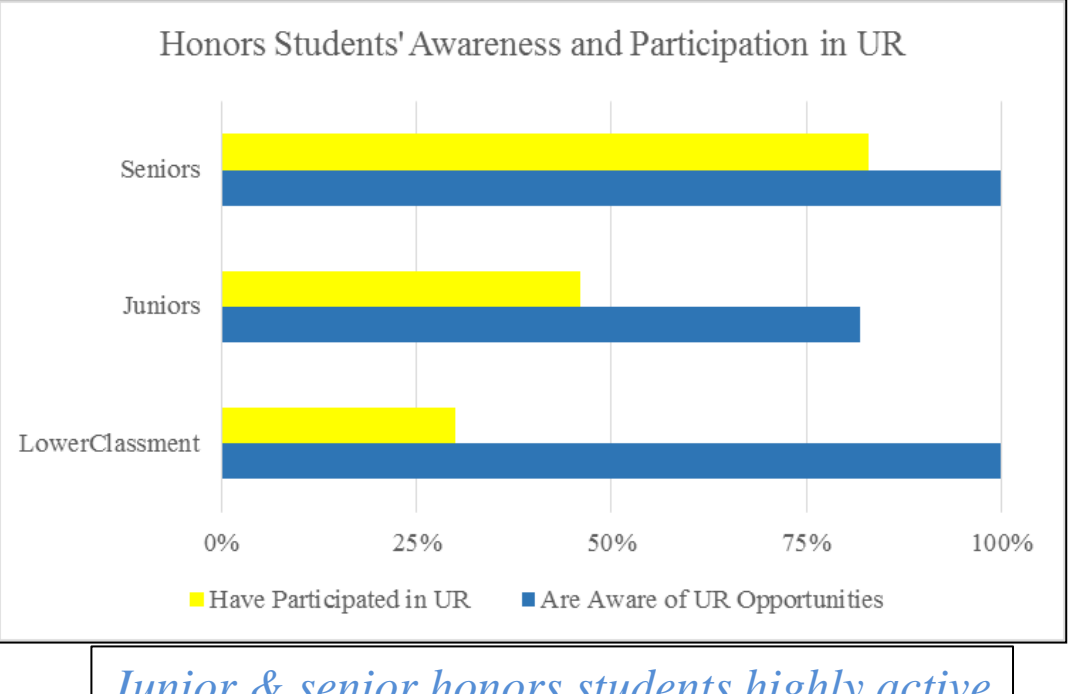
Course credit or paid position very important



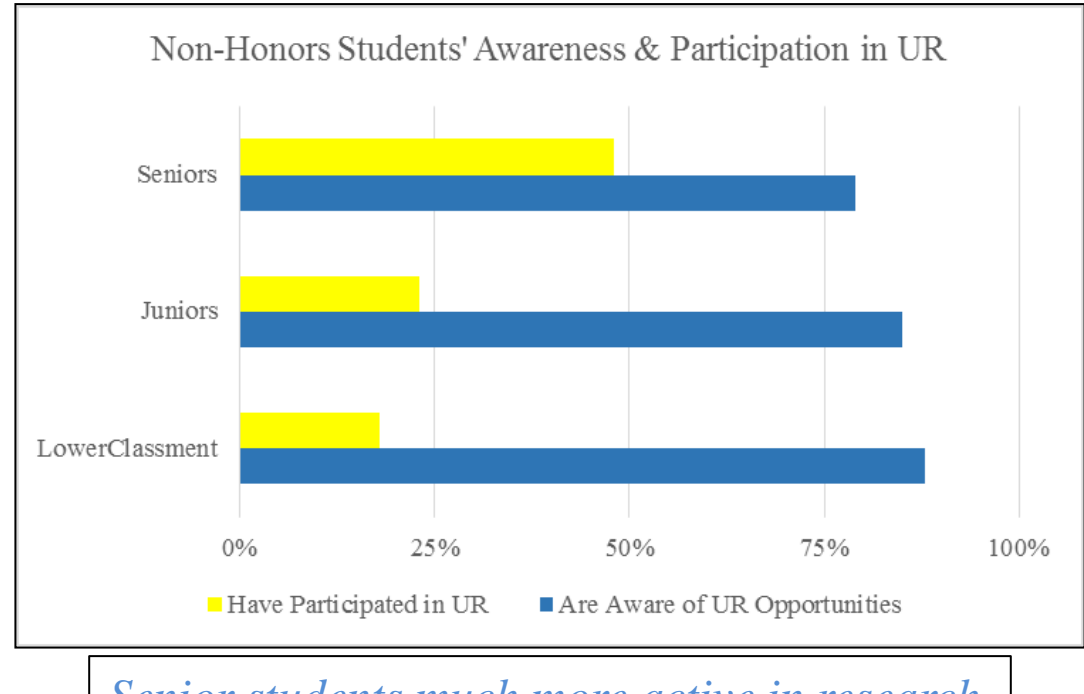
More than 80% of students work at least part-time



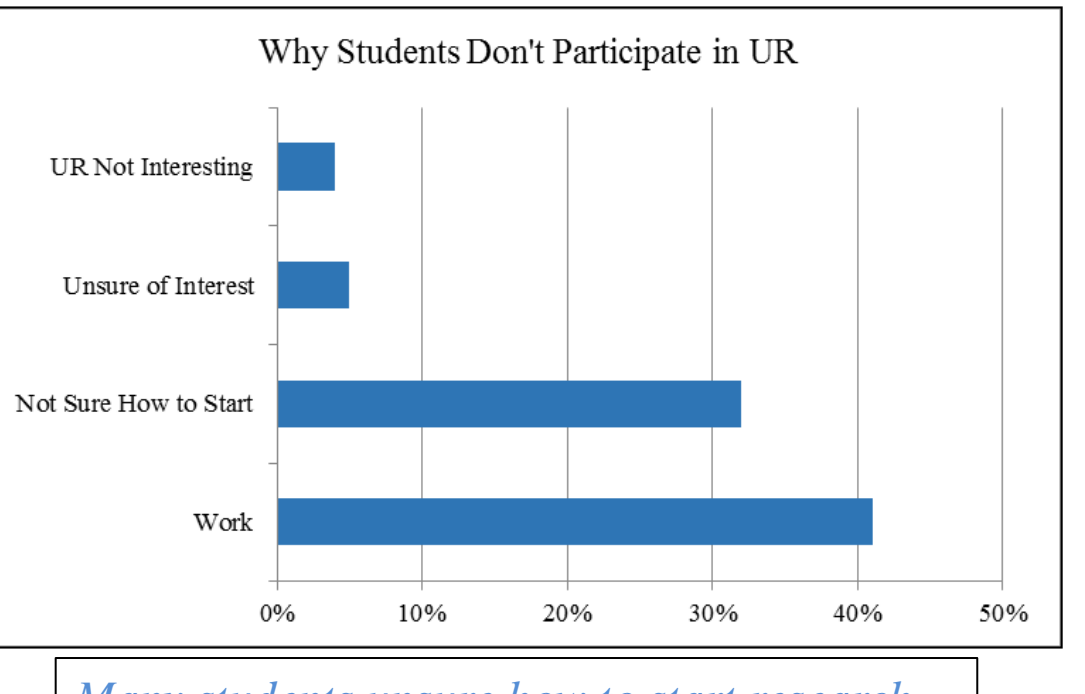
More than 50% of seniors participate



Junior & senior honors students highly active



Senior students much more active in research



Many students unsure how to start research

In The Future

Our survey data will be used to develop additional research opportunities and increase awareness of the benefits of participation in undergraduate research. A number of publications are now available about undergraduate research, STEM education, and integrating learning and research (see list below). Based on our survey, we hope to improve the opportunities and benefits for students at the University of South Florida.



Presenting their own research at conferences is a great opportunity and potential career experience

Most important is that among those students who have not participated in undergraduate research, many just were not sure how to get started, and potentially this can be resolved in the future. For a public university, it was not a surprise that many students would have work and other obligations in their way.

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