



# Undergraduate Research Conference Assessment

Public

**Name of Assessment:** Undergraduate Research Conference Assessment

**Project:**

**Name(s) of Person(s)  
Responsible for  
Assessment Project:**

Role
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**Providing** Academic Enrichment Program

**Department:**

**Other**

**Units/Departments**

**Involved in**

**Assessment Project:**

## Program, Service, or Event Related to Assessment Project

2013 Undergraduate Research Conference

UC San Diego's annual Undergraduate Research Conference, held each May, recognizes the outstanding scholarly work produced by our undergraduates. Faculty members nominate students whose work they consider worthy of recognition. This year was the 26th annual conference.

Goals of the conference include:

- Providing experience in presentation of a research paper
- Promoting interaction between students and faculty at the research level
- Encouraging more undergraduates to pursue doctoral degrees and careers in research and college teaching

The conference format is discipline-specific roundtable discussions where five to seven students present their papers, with faculty members serving as moderators. Students have 15 minutes to present their papers and five minutes to answer questions.

At the conclusion of the conference, all students receive a certificate as a research scholar.

## Assessment Project Description

In the past, our annual evaluations of the URC focused on overall student satisfaction with the conference. Although the feedback was overwhelming positive, it did not measure our specific SLO's for the conference. The goal of this assessment is to measure whether or not the conference is fulfilling its goals in encouraging students to pursue futures in research and fostering the skills that will help them to do so. We will use the information from this assessment to guide our planning of future conferences.

Student Questionnaire

## Unit/Program Specific Goals and Learning Outcomes

### Goals

The Undergraduate Research Conference will

1. Positively impact the student participants' understanding and perception of the process of research and themselves as researchers
2. Help students develop skills that will benefit them in their future educational and career goals
3. Create a community of scholars
4. Help students develop communication skills, specifically the ability to effectively communicate in a Q&A setting

**Relationship to Student Affairs:** Communicate Effectively, Advance a Plan for Personal, Academic, and Professional Success

### Learning Outcomes:

**Assessment Project Start:** 4/27/2013

**Assessment Project End:**

6/30/2013

### Population/Sample

A total of 118 students filled out the survey out of 136 presenters; one faculty member neglected to pass out the forms to her student panelists, and a few students left before their panel completed. The students represented diverse majors and came from all 6 colleges. Most were Junior level or higher.

**Type of Assessment:** Student learning outcomes and/or behavioral outcomes, Satisfaction study

### Other Assessment

**Type(s):**

**Assessment Methods:** Surveys

### Other Assessment

**Method(s):**

### Data Collection Tools

A questionnaire was created using a four question, five-point Likert scale measuring the students' perception of how well the URC fulfilled its goals, as well as seven demographic questions. At the end of each panel, the faculty member moderating the panel passed out paper surveys to the student presenters. The forms were immediately filled out and returned. The information was then entered into Excel and SPSS.

 Student Questionnaire

### Data Analysis Methods

Descriptive statistics to measure the responses and regression analysis to see if there was any correlation within the students' responses to individual questions.

## Presentation of Findings

Findings will be presented in a written report for internal review of how well the URC meets its goals and as part of AEP's annual report to the VCSA.

**Progress:**  100%

## Link Assessment Project in Campus Labs Baseline

Source Name	Project Name
No items to display.	

## Summary of Findings

The conference rated very highly in all of the responses. Below are the summaries for each question (please also see the attached document for more details):

1. Participating in the URC has provided me with skills and knowledge that will benefit me in the future. Mean Score = 4.5; total agree or strongly agree = 97.4%
  - Strongly disagree: 0%
  - Disagree: 0%
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 1.7%
  - Agree: 46.6%
  - Strongly agree: 50.8%
2. I was able to meet and form connections with others who have similar interests at this Conference. Mean score = 4.04; total agree or strongly agree = 78.8%
  - Strongly disagree: 0.8%
  - Disagree: 3.4%
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 16.9%
  - Agree: 48.3%
  - Strongly agree: 30.5%
3. Participating in this conference helped me to see myself as a researcher. Mean score = 4.18; total agree or strongly agree = 83%
  - Strongly disagree: .0%
  - Disagree: 3.4%
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 13.6%
  - Agree: 44.9%
  - Strongly agree: 38.1%
4. As a result of this Symposium, I now feel more confident when speaking in front of a group. Mean score = 4.05; total agree or strongly agree = 78.8%
  - Strongly disagree: 0%
  - Disagree: 4.2%
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 16.9%
  - Agree: 48.3%
  - Strongly agree: 30.5%

We believe that the URC is fulfilling its main goals based on the responses to this assessment. The high rating of question #4 suggests that the conference is fulfilling Student Affairs Learning Outcome of helping student to learn to communicate effectively. The high rating of questions 1 & 3 suggest that the conference has a positive impact on Student Affairs Learning Outcome of helping students to advance a plan for personal, academic, and profession success, because it is helping them to envision themselves as researchers and giving them useful skills for the future.

When running a regression analysis on the students' responses to the evaluative questions with their responses to the demographic questions, the only strong correlation we found was a positive correlation between the time a student had been studying with his/her mentor had the response to question #4. This suggests that there may be a correlation between mentoring and the confidence a student feels s/he gained from the conference, but more research will need to be done.

 RawDatafromSurvey  
 Summary\_of\_Findings

### Impact of Assessment

The main purpose of this assessment was to measure how well the conference was doing in terms of fulfilling its goals in order to help us plan future conferences. Based on the response to this survey, we believe that the conference is on the right track. We now know that we can continue building on what is already a strong foundation, such as giving students more time to interact with others at the conference or providing more public speaking training beforehand.

The responses to the demographic questions suggest that we might want to do more research into the impact faculty mentoring has on student satisfaction. If we continue to find a positive correlation, we might be able to use this data to argue for more support for faculty-mentored programs not just in Student Affairs, but across campus.

### Lessons Learned

As stated before, the response to the conference was very positive, and so we now know that students do not just enjoy the conference (which is what previous assessments had told us), but seem to benefit from the conference in the ways that we had envisioned in the conference's SLOs.

In terms of the assessment itself, what we did learn was that open-ended questions about students' majors, graduation dates, and desired degree result in answers that are not easily coded into quantitative data. In the future, I will use multiple choice questions if at all possible when I am collecting data to be analyzed through quantitative data.

### Supplemental Information

 Conference Program

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