

Youngstown State University Chemistry Seminar Program - Winter/Spring 2006

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Our 11th Seminar of 2005-6



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***“What is the Demand for Undergraduate
Research? A Multi-Year Study of the
NSF REU Chemistry Applicant Pool”***

Abstract

The National Science Foundation's REU (Research Experiences for Undergraduates) program has been in existence since 1987 and is an effort to attract undergraduates to careers in science. Workshops for current Chemistry Site Directors were held in 1990 and 2001 to discuss the REU program and make recommendations. The 2001 Workshop also led to the creation of a Leadership Group (LG) tasked to pursue some of the recommendations and to otherwise advertise, promote, and strengthen the REU program in Chemistry. One LG task was to examine the "demand" for Chemistry REU positions. In a pilot year (2001) and for two consecutive years (2003-2004), records on applicants to the nation-wide set of Chemistry REU programs were collected, collated, refined, and analyzed to answer a number of questions including: (1) Do REU site directors all make offers to the same students? (2) How big is the pool of students seeking a Chemistry REU experience? (3) How broadly do students apply for Chemistry REU programs? (4) Do the applicants to REU Chemistry sites attend PUI or RII schools? The data provided will assist the discussion of whether the REU program should be expanded.

