ORCA Grant Workshop

2011-2012

Office of Research & Creative Activities
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- Brigham Young University faculty member
- ORCA Grant mentor for over 30 projects
- Current ORCA Grant reviewer for the College of Life Sciences
What is an ORCA Grant?

- $1,500 awarded to students with outstanding mentored research proposals
- Each year about 33-40% successful
- Selected evenly from all colleges
- Funds for equipment, travel, wages, and other expenses incurred during research
- Should culminate in a publication or an academic presentation
Undergraduate Research:
Taking your education to the next level.
Before we go on:

- Do not be intimidated
- True or False: Students younger, dumber, and less prepared than you have gotten ORCA grants and completed great projects.
  - TRUE. I have mentored some of them.
Step 1: Know the Program

☐ Go to orca.byu.edu

☐ Read the ORCA Grant Overview, Successful Proposals from last year, and Eligibility & Conditions

☐ Read all of the instructions carefully
Step 2: Find a Mentor

- More important than a good project is a good mentor.
- Offer your help and resources to his or her project. Mentoring you is extra work for the mentor, so make it worth the time.
A good student researcher...

- knows what’s going on in the lab before meeting with prospective mentor
- comes prepared with questions and ideas about your mentor’s research
- is enthusiastic about the project, keeps regular contact with mentor
- does lots of outside research on the topic
- is respectful of his or her mentor’s time, privacy and own research agenda
Step 3: Planning the Project

- Brainstorm alone and then with your mentor
- Be familiar with the larger context
- Prepare a list of scholarly sources
- Choose a specific publication venue or conference for your finished project
- Outline your project
Step 4: The Proposal

- Outline the proposal. Make sure it looks like you’ve thought about it. Then have your mentor look it over. You can polish later.
- Complete many drafts, craft it carefully.
- Read it out loud, have others in the lab look at it.