

MULTICULTURAL UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ART AND LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM

FIRST YEAR SCHOLARS ACADEMY

Background

In 2021, the First Year Scholars (FYS) Program first launched. This program affords first year students the opportunity to begin exploring academic areas of interest by selecting from a list of faculty designed programs tailored to help first year students thrive in an engaged handson environment. The First Year Scholars program brings its students out of the classroom and immerses them into a research experience their first semester. These opportunities include research labs, developing projects, data collecting, surveying, literature reviews, field work in the great outdoors and more. Students have an opportunity to develop close relationships with faculty members and graduate students who will be part of their entire academic career as well as engage with peers who are interested in the same field of study.

The FYS Program funds and supports faculty guides to play an active role in scaffolding research opportunities for first-time undergraduate students within their discipline area and provide active mentorship to students engaging in applied and basic research and scholarly activity. Faculty guides play an active role in mentoring first-year undergraduate students through all aspects of the research/scholarly activity process, including design of activities, nurturing proper techniques, data collection and analysis, reporting, and publication and presentation of research findings.

In 2021, 56 students were enrolled in the program. There were a total of 17 academies, with faculty represented from 6 colleges. In 2022, 64 students are currently enrolled in the program. There are 19 different academies across all eight colleges at Colorado State University with topics spanning from the influence of nutrition on beef cattle production to a College of Business diversity audit to growing engineered biomolecular crystals. Students must document 4-6 hours per week, attend monthly MURALS FYS Academy community meetings, design and implement a research/project plan (through mentorship with research faculty), and present at MURALS 2023. Following the successful completion of program requirements, students receive a stipend which recognizes their hard work and dedication.



¹ All demographic data reported was obtained from the Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Effectiveness.

2021 Student Outcomes

MURALS FYS participants had a 91% persistence rate² (n=55), whereas nonparticipant³ counterparts had a 90% persistence rate (n=4437). MURALS FYS scholars



2021 MURALS FYS Cohort

reported multiple benefits from participation, including:

- Connecting course material to program experiences
- Expanding perspectives and understanding of real-world issues
- Exposure to research methods, including identifying a research question, literature review, data collection, data clean-up & management, analysis, and synthesis of findings
- Building community with peers, faculty, graduate students, and staff

"I love that with this research I get to learn a new skill each week. It's super cool to get hands on experience and learn from others who are excited to teach and share their knowledge."

"One thing that excited me was actually doing these processes on my own. I really like having this hands-on experience and learning about how to do things that are commonly done in labs."

2021 Faculty Outcomes

FYS faculty and staff have reported numerous benefits to their involvement, including:

- Stipend
- Training on serving a diverse student population
- Opportunity to introduce first year students to undergraduate research
- Assistance provided to enhance current research

"Mentoring an economics major in experimental physics taught me to "drop the jargon", meaning I needed to engage her with pictures, drawings, analogies, etc., and design accessible hands-on laboratory activities that targeted specific learning outcomes related to the core project content without needing pre-requisite knowledge about the subject. I am taking this approach to the classroom and my research group of 7 PhD students and a postdoc."

"This program brings awareness and advocacy to equity in education, while developing the next generation of leaders in the movement. This is true impact!"

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? CONTACT BRIDGETTE JOHNSON! Bridgette.Johnson@colostate.edu

² Persistence rates by college and department are available upon request.

³ Non-participants are students who were racially minoritized, did not participate in MURALS activity at any time, and had a High school GPA of at least 3.5 or a spring EOT GPA (for the applicable MURALS term) of at least 3.3.