

# Mellon Library/Faculty Fellows

FOR UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH



**The Mellon Library/Faculty Fellowship for Undergraduate Research** is a four year project dedicated to developing a community of faculty that believes information competence, research skills and the effective use of information resources are critically important learning objectives for undergraduates. Faculty fellows are committed to redesigning individual courses, developing teaching tools, and building curricula to meet these objectives.

*“This is the most stimulating experience I’ve had in years! . . . this is so exciting . . . I realized if I truly integrate library research into my learning outcomes for the course, the traditional means of assessment I’ve been using—like exams—are not going to work . . . I’ll have to find new ways to assess.”*

**At the core of Berkeley’s model** is the development of a long-term, sustainable campus collaboration between the Campus Academic Partners and the Mellon Library/Faculty Fellows for Undergraduate Research which will result in sharing skills and leveraging resources to redesign undergraduate courses and curricula that emphasize undergraduate research as a critical component of independent and self-directed learning. The Project strengthens the connections between undergraduate research, information literacy, and library collections with particular emphasis on lower division, large enrollment and high impact courses where students can develop foundation skills that will serve them throughout their academic careers.

## INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

The expanding information universe holds enormous potential for undergraduate learning and personal growth. The size and complexity of this universe presents serious challenges to librarians, faculty and undergraduates alike. Studies at Berkeley and elsewhere have found that students often do not possess the practical and critical think-

ing skills necessary to effectively navigate this information-rich environment or to evaluate what information they do uncover. While independent inquiry and research have become increasingly important in the undergraduate curriculum, the acquisition of basic information competencies is often not well integrated into teaching or coursework.

## CAMPUS ACADEMIC PARTNERS & FACULTY

A scalable model for developing undergraduate research skills within the curriculum that incorporates both the use of library collections and development of “information literacy” skills begins with campus instructors. Faculty oversee the curriculum and they are the primary agents of curriculum reform on the campus.

*“Learning at the outset that creating new knowledge is the object of the University and how undergraduate research fits into that . . . seeing the library and technology in news ways was eye opening.”*

Like other public research universities, Berkeley is challenged to provide the best possible learning experience in the face of the large enrollment courses that are inevitable in these types of institutions.

Providing research-based learning and the development of foundation skills for lower division students enrolled in these courses is a priority articulated in Berkeley’s WASC Educational Effectiveness Report. A core set of challenges—applying technology to support pedagogy, the role of graduate student instructors, designing courses which allow for a scalable and assessable research component, developing assignments that make use of library collections and support information skills development—all intersect in the learning environment of large enrollment courses and high impact courses (smaller in size but offered in multiple sections).

*“I want to feel that the wonderful work we are doing will not stop with our courses. We can talk through strategies for scaling up and out.”*

During the four-year Project, three cohorts of 15 faculty each will participate in a series of activities starting each summer with the annual Mellon Faculty Institute on Undergraduate Research that is designed to foster their role as agents of change within the teaching culture of the University.

Following the Institute, the Academic partners will arrange for Mellon Fellows to work with teams of librarians, instructional technology experts, pedagogy experts, and other academic support units to

- build a cohort of instructors dedicated to a new way of teaching, leveraging the University's research strength to enhance undergraduate education
- strengthen the community of faculty committed to undergraduate research and who encourage the use of libraries and library collections
- structure syllabi and assignments that incorporate the development of information competencies and research skills
- encourage experimentation with teaching and learning strategies
- influence the curriculum and instruction and improve student learning
- integrate the assessment of student learning into course development
- support a cohort of faculty who can serve as change agents for teaching within the academy.

The Project focuses on two strategies for creating a context and academic support structures that encourage curricular experimentation and change

- to support a campus collaboration of Academic Partners that can be a catalyst for change, working to provide support and create an infrastructure for faculty and instructors
- to encourage and nurture a community of instructors dedicated to this new way of teaching.

## **SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT**

Support for the project is provided through a \$749,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The project builds on a 2002 Mellon Foundation grant to the University of California,

Berkeley in the amount of \$138,000. The Mellon Pilot Project served as a catalyst for the creation of the Council of Academic Partners, supported the creation of the Mellon Faculty Institute on Undergraduate Research, supported 13 Fellows who redesigned their courses, and provided evaluation data showing how faculty transformed the way they teach and collaborate with the University Library.

*“I am really progressing in my ideas about revising my course... to understand where my students are “coming from,” what motivates them, and ... to better develop their thinking skills. Related to this is re-conceptualizing research as thinking.”*

## **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS**

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## **ACADEMIC PARTNERS**

University Library  
Graduate Student Instructor Teaching & Resource Center  
Office of Educational Development  
Division of Undergraduate Education  
Educational Technology Services  
Center for the Teaching & Study of American Cultures

## **WEBSITE**

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MellonInstitute>