

Vargo Teaching Chair Project Description

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2023 Vargo Teaching Chair

Unveiling the Impact of Undergraduate Research: Exploring New Horizons in the Department of Pharmacology's Pilot Study at the University of Alberta

Abstract

Undergraduate research is a valuable learning opportunity that equips students with practical skills, interdisciplinary skills, knowledge, and a passion for further education. I propose to develop a research-based learning platform to systematically document and assess undergraduate research activities in the Department of Pharmacology, which could be extended to other departments and faculties at the University of Alberta. The Department's current research-intensive program provides an appropriate pilot platform in which to establish clear criteria and measurable undergraduate research output indicators that could be implemented across the institution. The platform will track and assess undergraduate research engagement and outcomes, the development of graduate attributes, and Indigenous engagement in undergraduate research initiatives. It will further investigate the effectiveness of research experience for women and underrepresented groups and assess long-term applicability beyond graduation. I will apply my experience and expertise in undergraduate program development to review existing models to develop a research-based platform for tracking research activities, using surveys and focus groups to gather data. The results of this study will be available to guide curriculum development and refine program offerings within the department and later across campus. The project aligns with the University of Alberta's Strategic Plan 2023-2033, emphasizing **experiential and work-integrated learning** with an embedded commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and the incorporation of Indigenous perspectives.