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Mentoring Students [1]

Professor Alex Cruz
Department of Environmental, Population, and Organismic Biology
University of Colorado Boulder

Philosophy

“I am a teacher at heart, and there are moments in the classroom which I can hardly hold the joy. When my students and I discover uncharted territory to explore, when the pathway out of a thicket opens up before us, when our experience is illuminated by the lightning-life of the mind – then teaching is the finest work I know.“ These words by noted educator Parker J. Palmer parallel my experience of what teaching is all about. The ability to explore uncharted territories and formulate new hypotheses and predictions happens not only in the classroom, but more frequently outside of the classroom when students are actively involved in “hands-on” scholarly work. It is under these circumstances that students have the opportunity to put into action what they have learned in the classroom setting and to gain not only experience but the confidence to consider different career options.

Activity

I am thus a strong believer in providing our students with a solid undergraduate education, reflecting not only a thorough understanding of the subject, both from a historical and a current perspective, but providing opportunities for our students to be involved in scholarly research. Thus, I consider mentoring students to be an important part of my teaching mission and my Presidential Teaching Scholar Activity. My goal is to enhance the undergraduate experience of students and to help them establish careers. I have been very active in providing research opportunities to our students, activities that enhance self-esteem, boost self confidence, and the ability to conduct original research. This experience increases the chances of students successfully applying to graduate school. An emphasis on the scientific research process enables the student to develop his or her own research in related or divergent fields in the future. My lab has had an excellent success in getting student projects published. Finally, I encourage students to present their results at professional meetings, at the EPOB research symposium, and for informal EPOB graduate-undergraduate student discussion groups.

In my career, I have mentored over 260 undergraduate students involved in scholarly research. In the last year alone, I sponsored 42 undergraduate students in independent research, honors, UROP, URAP, MASP, and the Hughes Biomedical Program. Last year one of my honors student, Lisa Cooper, was the recipient of the first ever Honors Program Senior Scholarship and the Achievement Rewards for College Scientists. Another student, Jennifer Jeffers, involved in independent research in my lab was one of two recipients of the Rolex International Underwater Scholarship.

Groups audience:

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Links
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