Getting Started With Undergraduate Research-Faculty, Student Panel Notes
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Q: Can you do research in another area other than your major?
A: Engineering students have many cross functional skills. Don't limit yourself to your major you have many options

Q: What qualifies me for research? What if I have a bad GPA?
A: A person can do research even if they don't have a high GPA or other "disqualifies." Personal initiative is necessary on the part of the student to prove to the professor or faculty that they are committed and interested in the research. For example, ask if you can attend group meeting to learn more about the research group and discover ways that you can contribute to the group. This demonstrates your interest and that you have something to contribute. Go the extra mile.

Q: How did students on the panel find research?
A: -Sent out a bunch of emails and knocked on doors. Kept coming back and asking if there were openings, went to office hours. She met with professors in order to talk to them face to face.
-Illinois Scholars research program.
-Talked to one of the assistant deans facilitated finding a position with a professor. Start looking early and don't wait until the last minute.
-Went to group meetings after talking to one of the graduate students. Professors are open to having undergraduates sit in on group meeting. He applied to multiple research positions at OTHER schools outside of Illinois. Having research experience was a gateway to a research position at Illinois.
-Talked to advisor and mentioned interest in research and received emails when new opportunities came up.
-UROP program over the summer and was asked to stay on over the year/full time.
Dean Tucker - Networking through graduate students, TA's, etc can be path to professors and way to get noticed.
It is good to have a resume to show skills to professors. It demonstrates that you will be an asset in the lab.

Q: Is your research completely new work or do you work on smaller parts of other grad students projects?
A: -completely new work
-trained initially and shadowed grad students. Moved on to running own experiments
-if you want to have more independence express that the professor so that they are aware of your skills and qualifications
Q: What things should we do right and what should we avoid?
A: Things sometimes don't work in research. However, it is necessary to be able to accept criticism from other people.
- If things don't work the first time, learn about technique, design the experiments better, and interpret the data better.
- Be willing to take risks and fail. Work hard even though sometimes things won't work the way you expected. You are NOT being graded so it's more important to learn.
- Don't get frustrated. Sometimes bad data can reveal flaws or new insights that were not expected.

Q: What sparked your interest in research? What if I am unsure of what I am interested in?
A: - You have to do your own research and talk to people. Your interests may change and it's okay to switch groups if you want to.
- Sometimes you may not like a class or topic but the research can still be interesting. It's not what you might perceive it to be so TRY

Q: How would you compare a research to an internship?
A: - Internships show you how working in industry will be, research positions show you how graduate school will be. To find out what you like you'll have to experience both.
- Sometimes companies can offer research opportunities so the two are not mutually exclusive

Q: How do you see what research professors are working on?
A: - Department websites.
- See what classes you like and search out people who research those topics.
- Request a walk-through of lab space to see what people are doing.
- 199 seminar classes. Sometimes speakers in those classes are professors who talk about their research
- MechSE has 'fair' for research
Graduate Students are good ways to get into labs, see which labs take undergraduates, and make friends.