

UROP Curiosity Lab

Finding & Connecting with Potential Project Mentors

Agenda

- Find a Potential Mentor
- Campus Culture
- First Contact Email
- Connecting with Potential Mentors
- Resources
- Contact
- **Next Session:** Campus Undergraduate Research Programs

Find a Potential Mentor

CU Boulder is a research institution where the faculty teaching your classes are engaged in a very high level of research, creative and entrepreneurial activity.

We encourage you to start conversations with the people around you and consider finding a mentor working in an area of interest to you.

It's always a good time to build relationships!

Details:

<https://www.colorado.edu/urop/exploring/curiosity-lab/self-paced-resources/connect/find-mentor>

Overview

1. Think about your academic & creative interests and what makes you curious.
2. Consider what you care about and the change you want to make.
3. Connect with the people in your communities using the resources here.

Where to Look

Department websites have faculty profiles with information about each individual's research expertise and current activities, but the process of browsing can be time-consuming, and you can miss people working outside the department—or in roles other than faculty, like professional researchers.

Databases like CU Experts and PROFILES can make the process of searching more efficient and comprehensive.

Details:

<https://www.colorado.edu/urop/exploring/curiosity-lab/self-paced-resources/connect/find-mentor/where-look>

Databases & Lists

- **CU Experts**
- **CU Anschutz's PROFILES**
- **Department Websites**
- **CU Boulder Libraries**

Using CU Experts

CU Experts is a research and expertise database that is searchable by department, research areas, international activity, and many other factors.

From the CU Experts homepage, click on "People" in the top menu to search the CU Boulder campus community. Clicking on an expert's name will take you to their profile page, which provides a summary of their research activities and other details.

Details:

<https://www.colorado.edu/urop/exploring/curiosity-lab/self-paced-resources/connect/using-cu-experts>

Contact Information

You can find links to an expert's email, website and social media under "Contact Info" on their profile page.

Visit their website to learn more about their work and discover the other members of their research team, such as graduate students and current undergraduates. If the website link is broken, trying searching their name in your browser.

Searching in the Database

Clicking on a concept listed in the search results will allow you to explore that topic throughout the CU Boulder campus community.

Clicking on a department will allow you to explore all of the concepts tagged in that particular academic unit.

Details:

<https://www.colorado.edu/urop/exploring/curiosity-lab/self-paced-resources/connect/using-cu-experts/using-cu-experts-one-page>

Filter Search Results

Use the menu on the left to filter the results of your search by organization, research area, international activities, taught courses and/or received honors/awards.

Navigating Faculty Websites

Most faculty maintain a personal website about their work either as part of a university website or external platform.

Visiting these websites not only provides more information about their work, but finding the names of the others on their team can provide helpful points of contact.

Details:

<https://www.colorado.edu/urop/exploring/curiosity-lab/self-paced-resources/connect/connect-potential-mentors/first-contact-email>

Tip

If you don't hear back from the primary investigator (PI), you might consider contacting graduate students or even the undergraduates listed on the site.

Campus Culture

The CU Boulder Events Calendar can be a powerful tool to discover opportunities to engage with the academic life of the campus.

Using filters, you can find a wide range of events showcasing research and creative activities that also provide opportunities to socialize with the community of scholars.

Details:

<https://www.colorado.edu/urop/exploring/curiosity-lab/self-paced-resources/connect/find-mentor/campus-academic-culture>

Custom Events Digest Email

Get a personalized list of events in your inbox every week! Digests can be customized to match your preferences for upcoming events. You choose the day of the week, and when that day comes, your inbox will have upcoming events that you know you'll be interested in. Digests are a great way to stay informed and engaged without having to proactively check the calendar.

<https://calendar.colorado.edu/digester/summaries/new>

First Contact Email

I'm an undergraduate studying major(s)/minor(s) and currently exploring opportunities for undergraduate research/creative work.

I learned about your work (e.g. in arctic ecosystems on the department's website) and would appreciate the opportunity to talk with you about it.

< Explain your motivation. >

Details:

<https://www.colorado.edu/urop/exploring/curiosity-lab/self-paced-resources/connect/connect-potential-mentors/first-contact-email>

Motivation

1. What interests you about and/or what questions do you have about their work?
2. How does their work advance your academic and professional goals?
3. What do you bring to the potential partnership, noting relevant strengths, previous experiences, courses taken, and current activities?

Connecting with Potential Mentors

Before meeting with a potential mentor, you should learn about their work and consider what you want from your experience.

Read at least one of their recent publications, which are usually listed on their website.

Take time to write questions you'd like to ask when you meet your potential mentor and bring them to the meeting.

Details:

<https://www.colorado.edu/urop/exploring/curiosity-lab/self-paced-resources/connect/connect-potential-mentors/preparing-meet>

Ready Your Resume

Work with Career Services to discover your strengths, so you can discuss your personality and learning styles more effectively. Then, get your resume ready for positions in Boulder and beyond.

Meeting with Potential Mentors

As you meet, you should be prepared to discuss their work and ask about their expectations. Your success will depend on:

Your understanding of...

- what the project entails.
- shared expectations.

Your ability to...

- work with others.
- manage your time.

Details:

<https://www.colorado.edu/urop/exploring/curiosity-lab/self-paced-resources/connect/connect-potential-mentors/meeting>

Set Goals

- Get to know them and their work.
- Learn about required skills, training, etc.
- Discuss preferred communication methods.
- Establish shared expectations.
- Look ahead on your calendars.

Resources

CU Boulder's Academic Titles:

<https://www.colorado.edu/facultyaffairs/faculty-personnel-actions-career-milestones/faculty-appointments>

CU Denver's Guide to Finding Research Mentors:

<https://www.ucdenver.edu/docs/librariesprovider134/default-document-library/tips-to-finding-a-quality-mentor.pdf>

Council on Undergraduate Research's Student Resources:

<https://www.cur.org/resources-publications/student-resources/student-resource-center/>

UROP's Guide to Using CU Experts:

<https://www.colorado.edu/urop/exploring/curiosity-lab/self-paced-resources/connect/using-cu-experts>

UROP's Guide to Connecting with Potential Mentors:

<https://www.colorado.edu/urop/exploring/curiosity-lab/self-paced-resources/connect/connect-potential-mentors>

Contact

- **Website:** <https://www.colorado.edu/urop/>
- **Email:** urop@colorado.edu
- **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12274488/>

Next Session:

Campus Undergraduate Research Programs

We'll provide a survey of the undergraduate research programs on the CU Boulder campus beyond UROP, noting how each relates to UROP funding and timelines.

Upcoming Sessions

- **Mon., Nov. 2, 2026, 4:40 - 5:10 pm**
- **Tues., Nov. 3, 2026, 12:30 - 1:00 pm**