BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Institutions of higher education have entered the 21st century under increased public scrutiny. Parents, tax payers and legislators are demanding greater accountability with respect to the number of students who begin a four year degree and complete it, as well as how long it takes a student to complete their four year degree. Undergraduate research can improve these statistics because students involved in undergraduate research: gain self-confidence, are more likely to complete their undergraduate education and are more likely to go onto graduate school compared to students who did not have a research experience. A few key reports have helped to propel undergraduate research into a center piece of the undergraduate experience.

The goals of our undergraduate curriculum include the development of critical thinking skills, understanding multiple modes of inquiry and the application of critical thinking skills to “real world” issues and problems. To accomplish these goals we must increase the opportunities for students to engage in mentored undergraduate research experiences. UNCG was ahead of the curve when it began offering undergraduate research assistantships in 1998 and it remains ahead of its peers as it established the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) in February 2006.

The primary purposes of OUR is to strengthen and expand the current undergraduate research program, add innovative programs involving undergraduate research supported by extramural funding and develop and implement an advertisement and promotion campaign to market undergraduate research. Our vision is that by the year 2010 we will be recognized within the state of North Carolina as a leader with respect to the array of programmatic offerings, the assessment of those offerings and the sustainability of the our undergraduate research programs.