Mentoring Student Research

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Dr. Tim Curran is a beloved professor at Utah State University (USU). He recently won the Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies Department Undergraduate Research Mentor of the year. One student said, "One thing I value about Tim, is his willingness to help students. From the first day of class, he stressed the importance of making sure his students succeed." Not only is he a great professor inside of the classroom, but he also wants students to succeed outside of the classroom. If a student is interested in undergraduate research, Tim is a great mentor. He said that if a student has similar research interests and wants more experience with research, he is willing to let them help if he has research that needs to be done. He said that he does not always have research that needs to be worked on. Together with undergraduate students, he has published four research articles with one currently in progress. Not only is Tim a great research mentor, but he is also the faculty mentor for the Communication Studies Club.

Tim an influential undergraduate professor, and now is transitioning to the Co-Grad Coordinator for the Master of Communication Studies. For this position, he will be over orientation and mentorship. He will work with the incoming students to help them with the transition from undergraduate coursework and graduate school workload. He will be working closely with Kaitlyn Phillips who is the other Co-Grad Coordinator. One graduate student said, he will be a great mentor for incoming graduate students, I think Tim and Kaitlyn will both be able to pull from their strengths as the Co-Grad Coordinators.

After graduating with his undergraduate degree, Dr. Tim Curran followed the advice of a mentor and headed to graduate school in Montana. Tim then moved to Georgia to start his doctoral program at the University of Georgia. While there, he was helping with a summer research project on social skills and depression in African American Women in Atlanta. During that summer research project, Tim found his main research interest and has continued to research intergenerational transmission, mental health, conflict, and social skills.

Tim teaches Quantitative Research Methods, Health Communication, Family Communication, and Interpersonal Communication. Each of these classes is closely related to Tim’s expertise in the Communication Studies Field. During the Research Methods class each semester, they do a research project as a class. At the beginning of this semester, he gave his students a list of possible research variables and they split into four-person groups based on their research interests. One group this semester chose to look at the relationship between the research variables of taking conflict personally, fear of missing out, and loneliness. Each group wrote a rationale, discussion, limitations, and future research on the research variables they chose. Tim had previously gathered data through a survey that was given to students and completed voluntarily. He said that if any student wants to continue research, he is willing to help them through their process.

In the Family Communication class, they discuss theories and related variables and how they affect the family and health-related issues. This course is closely related to Tim’s research interests as he has recently published articles on mother-child dyads, family communication, and intergenerational transmissions. These all closely apply to the content related to this class. In his research, he looks at anxiety, loneliness, and parent-child conflict which are also closely related to family communication and the patterns and theories.

In Health Communication, they discuss issues related to his work as well. Throughout the semester, they discuss the culture and minorities and how they are impacted through health and communication theories. They also
learn about mental health and how it is affected by media and other health-related issues.

Tim has made an impact on many students' lives. Many students in the Senior Year Capstone course presented on concepts they learned from his class. They were grateful to have taken classes from him and appreciated that because of them they were more culturally aware and had more knowledge to combat social issues and injustices. Through Tim's role as the co-graduate school coordinator, he is going to be able to impact and influence more students as they continue their education.