

SEEDS-CCB Mentorship Program Description

Spring 2024

Overall Goal: This program is a collaboration between the [UC Riverside SEEDS](#) club and the Center for Conservation Biology ([CCB](#)) graduate student club. Many incoming UCR undergraduate students are not exposed to the diversity of disciplines in biology and are unsure about how to find research opportunities. Therefore, the objective of this program is to introduce undergraduate students to research areas, lab/field methods, and the graduate student experience in *ecology, evolutionary biology, and conservation biology* fields through mentoring by graduate students. While the goal of this program is not to have mentees develop independent research projects with their mentors, this program will serve as an introduction to the diverse research experiences possible at UCR in these fields.

Signing up as a mentor or mentee

Please note: If you are recurring mentor or mentee please fill out the respective signup form again for Spring 2024

- [Mentor signup form](#)
- [Mentee signup form](#)

Program Structure and Expectations

The Program Committee will assist in matching mentees with mentors and provide resources for all participants.

- Mentors will be current UC Riverside graduate students in ecology, evolution, and conservation biology fields
- Mentees will work with a mentor for one quarter and can rotate mentors each quarter
- Time commitment of ~1-3 hours per week
- Effective communication and professional conduct from both parties

Learning goals

Mentees will learn about...

- The host lab's research program and methods (lab/field techniques)
- Important literature in the field
- Life as a graduate student
- Potential careers and research areas of interest
- How to begin undergraduate research and navigate the world of science

*Important note: This program may be especially helpful for those undergraduates who have not yet joined a research lab but want to learn more about research. Any UCR undergraduate student is welcome to join. **This program does NOT provide direct research experience.***

Spring 2024 Program Guideline

Note: This schedule is *flexible and adaptable*. Topics are suggested and can be changed and/or moved around, and new topics can be added, based on mentee goals/interests or mentor availability.

| Week | Topic | Description of possible activities |
|-------------|--|--|
| Week 1 | Monday, April 1 – Mentor and mentee sign up forms open | |
| Week 2 | Friday, April 12 – Deadline to sign up as a mentee or mentor | |
| Week 3 | Friday, April 15 – Mentor selection form opens, due Thursday, April 18 Friday, April 19 – Pairings sent out | |
| Week 4 | Initial connection and Relevant literature | Initial meeting should be geared towards establishing a connection: <i>Mentee should come with questions prepared to facilitate discussion.</i> Discuss how to read scientific papers and/or brief literature review; read and discuss a seminal paper. |
| Week 5 | Introduction to graduate student’s research | Tour of lab or field site (or for virtual work, an overview of the software used); review of techniques and methodology. |
| Week 6 | Project Proposals | Discuss how to propose and plan a project, experimental design, and how to identify research questions. |
| Week 7 | Data Analysis & Visualization | Review the workflow/process of data analysis such as where to start, best practices for making figures, etc. |
| Week 8 | Career Paths | Discuss careers in ecology/evolution/conservation that do and do not require graduate school, the process of applying for graduate school, and/or finding your area(s) of professional interest (depending on mentee goals). |
| Week 9 | Shadowing | Mentee will shadow graduate student mentor during a “typical day in the life of a graduate student” (no longer than a couple hours). |
| Week 10 | Making the most of your undergraduate experience | Mentor will help the mentee identify activities to do in their undergraduate time such as research opportunities, classes to take, internships, professional development programs, awards/scholarships to apply for, etc. |
| Finals Week | No meeting | No meeting. |

Testimonials

Our mentors and mentees wanted to share these testimonials with prospective mentors and mentees!

- Mentors have said...
 - “It is really a good chance to share your experiences of grad school with prospective undergrads.”
 - “Working with my SEEDS mentee has helped me approach my research and graduate school with a more positive perspective. Graduate school is exhausting and weekly meetings with an excited undergraduate can really brighten your day. This program has provided great mentoring experience and given me the opportunity to develop resources I can use for students in the future (example: intro to data visualization in R).”
 - “This has been a great opportunity for me to get a sense of mentoring. It has been a rewarding experience interacting with undergrads and helping them navigate their way towards grad school.”
 - “Don't be worried about not knowing enough! Literally any advice you have to give your mentee is helpful. Plus, SEEDS is a great opportunity for both mentor and mentee to grow together—mentorship isn't a one-way street. And don't limit your mentoring to just career/school stuff! Talking about life skills and social-emotional learning is something for all ages. Ultimately, people are just looking for someone to connect with, and SEEDS is an amazing place to do that.”
- Mentees have said...
 - “Use this opportunity to learn about graduate school, whether you are certain or not that you want to attend. It definitely helps you debunk the myths or facts about graduate school and the life of a grad student. Even if you decide you don't want to pursue it after the mentorship, you definitely gain skills and knowledge in a 1-to-1 environment that not many undergraduates get to have.”
 - “Being a mentee in this program has been super fun so far, and it has opened my eyes to an entirely new world of possibilities regarding biology and ecology!”
 - “This program opened my eyes to many of the unique opportunities in ecology here at UCR, and it's such a great feeling to connect with a mentor, learn from them, and have someone cheering you on as you explore ecology more!”

Contact Information

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→ *Please contact any of us with any questions, issues or concerns about the program or your mentor/mentee.*

Program Committee

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