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Embracing New Opportunities in and beyond First-Year Honors Composition

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Abstract: Authors describe course-embedded research experiences at a diverse, rural, regional university. Emphasizing the capacity for conventional teaching and learning in first-year honors composition, these experiences provide relationship-rich education through faculty and peer mentorships. Positing that first-year honors composition is undervalued as a means for establishing programmatic foundations that resonate with students throughout their honors experience, the authors reinforce its importance as a place for disciplinary research and thus for opportunities in mentoring. By addressing an urgent need for mentoring underrepresented students, the authors consider how a research-based first-year honors composition course might help such students make meaningful disciplinary connections. A curricular overview is provided, with references to impact studies on mentorship, persistence, and student success beyond first-year courses and general educational curricula, setting the stage for sustained, whole-college mentorship in the honors experience.

Keywords: mentoring; community of inquiry; undergraduate research; student engagement; University of North Carolina, Pembroke (NC)–Esther G. Maynor Honors College

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Honors colleges and programs in the United States are rightly distinguished for their embrace of high-impact practices in higher education as described by George D. Kuh (2008). Beginning with first-year seminars and experiences, honors convenes students in common intellectual experiences and learning communities; it enriches their curricula with writing-intensive courses, service-learning and community-based learning; it provides collaborative projects and undergraduate research, promoting diversity and global

learning; and it culminates in internships, eportfolios, and capstone courses and projects. As advisers to students and mentors in undergraduate research and capstone projects, honors faculty play leading roles in assuring the impact and efficacy of such practices beyond their commitment to engaged teaching, roles that increase in time and complexity as students advance toward graduation. At the same time, honors students play equally important roles in supporting each other, beginning during their first experiences on campus. Acknowledging students' vital roles, some honors colleges and programs facilitate peer mentoring programs, in which students support one another as advisors.

As an honors college dean and a member of an honors faculty, we know firsthand the value of our work as research mentors of upper-level honors students, and as first-year composition honors faculty, we embrace our capacity to welcome first-year students to higher education, orient them to scholarly discourse, and foster their sense of belonging as members of our campus community. Based on our experience in the Esther G. Maynor Honors College of the University of North Carolina, Pembroke (UNCP), and motivated by our desire to improve and enhance what we do, we have found that first-year honors composition can establish programmatic foundations that resonate throughout students' tenure in honors. We contend that infusing undergraduate research experiences in first-year composition, energized by embracing a mentor's mindset that builds relationships in and beyond first-year composition, enriches our students' experiences in their second, third, and final years as undergraduate honors students.

REVALUING FIRST-YEAR HONORS COMPOSITION

In U.S. colleges and universities, first-year composition is a course or sequence of courses in which students, usually in their first year and aspiring to a variety of majors, converge for the purpose of practicing and refining skills of academic writing. The course often is taught as a non-disciplinary writing course, using general interest topics to engage students in writing essays to prepare them for any discipline. Instructors typically have backgrounds in English and teach conventions of their discipline: rhetorical concepts of ethos, logos, pathos, and kairos; use of quotations for evidence; the Modern Language Association's dictates for citation, documentation, and formatting; and pedagogies such as class discussion, peer review, and writing workshops. In the main, the instructor and the course are focused on preparation for an infinite and unknowable range of disciplinary, curricular, and classroom

settings in the conviction that such preparation enables students, for academic purposes, to transfer the ability to communicate effectively from course to course, from general education to major, and from college to profession. As a course that tends to fixate on what comes next, it necessarily functions either as a higher education gateway, welcoming students into higher education, or gatekeeper, resulting in high rates of withdrawal or failure, devastating beginning students' grades and motivation, and hindering their progress or barring them entry altogether (Koch & Pistilli n.d.).

UNCP's Maynor Honors College offers first-year composition courses as core components of its living/learning community and students' first-year experience. The university requires completion (or credit by Advanced Placement score or transfer) of two composition courses with a grade of C or better for graduation; honors students take these courses in honors-only sections taught by honors faculty from the university's English department assigned to the sections by the honors college dean. Both honors and non-honors sections of the second course in the composition sequence, which is the subject of this essay, adhere to the description and outcomes of the course as determined by the composition program. Building on the skills of writing and reading practiced in the first composition course, the sequel focuses on steering students through the process of writing an argumentative research essay. Such steerage involves working with students to "locate and evaluate sources; negotiate differing perspectives; synthesize and integrate sources ethically; arrive at a claim through logical reasoning; and argue the claim in rhetorically effective forms, producing several sophisticated texts" (Department of English, Theatre & World Languages). Within these broad guidelines, course instructors may center the course on a theme of their choosing, with recent examples being food insecurity, sustainability, and gender and sexuality; some instructors frame the course on binary arguments related to subjects such as the death penalty or drinking age.

Instead, a first-year composition course might allow students to pursue intellectual and scholarly interests, decenter the instructor's disciplinary specialization, and provide students a welcoming entry into academic, professional, and civic communities. First-year composition can and should embrace the high-impact practices identified by Kuh (2008) that already distinguish honors programs; first-year honors composition can and should embed high-impact practices in their design and practice in order to prime honors students to develop themselves throughout their years in the honors college. First-year honors composition can embrace undergraduate research,

which the Council on Undergraduate Research defines as "[a] mentored investigation or creative inquiry conducted by undergraduates that seeks to make a scholarly or artistic contribution to knowledge" (2021). Centering undergraduate research in first-year composition can stimulate and front-load mentorship, part of an engaging first-year experience that is not reserved as an exclusive disciplinary activity in students' final year of undergraduate studies; this kind of experience has the potential to cultivate, amplify, and sustain deepened connection, perspective, and direction. Such reimagination depends, fundamentally, on the cultivation of relationship-rich education as imagined by Lambert and Felten (2020), actualized through instructor/student and student/student mentoring in support of course-embedded research.

Prior to transforming our second-semester honors classes, we taught our honors sections of the course in loose collaboration, occasionally using common readings or activities but differing in terms of class assignments and pacing. Two opportunities, however, tightened our collaboration and inspired a shared vision to embed undergraduate research experiences and mentoring into our courses. First, in 2016, Decker attended a presentation by Annmarie Guzy, associate professor of English at the University of South Alabama and a scholar of first-year writing in honors programs, at the National Collegiate Honors Council conference. In her presentation, Guzy shared her framework for teaching first-year honors composition centered on research in the disciplines with a strong focus on evaluating sources and delving into disciplinary discourses. She outlined her entire course, sharing assignments, activities, and rationales for her design and implementation grounded in evidence of student success (see Guzy 2014). We followed Guzy's approach closely, adapting it over the years to our teaching styles and to our students' interests and needs. Second, in 2017, UNCP's Undergraduate Research & Creativity Center convened faculty interested in embedding course-based undergraduate research experiences (CUREs) in their classes to share ideas and then present their work at a UNC system summit dedicated to exchanging approaches and networking. On campus, fellow faculty shared how they were redesigning their courses to incorporate research activities and poster sessions; during the summit, Hicks presented his and Decker's adaptation of Guzy's framework in first-year honors composition. Empowered by Guzy's pedagogy and generosity and nourished by campus collaboration and support, we since have worked together to build a first-year honors composition curriculum in support of the honors college's goals of deepening connections

among faculty and students and starting students on a path toward successful completion of senior honors project activities. This collaboration has developed over the years, resulting in a unique composition experience in which all honors sections of the course participate. While Guzy lamented in her presentation that she could not reach all honors college students in her program with her section(s) of the course, we have been fortunate in that we reach nearly all of the students in our college and can thus have a college-wide impact.

REINFORCING FIRST-YEAR HONORS COMPOSITION THROUGH UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH, STRIVING TOWARD MENTORSHIP

In applying Guzy's model to our pedagogy and course design, we adopted the University of Utah Office of Undergraduate Research's (2021) undergraduate research learning outcomes and blended them with the outcomes articulated by UNCP's composition program. When our students engage in prewriting and drafting, they simultaneously "identify and utilize relevant previous work that supports their research"; when they "present the research effectively," they consider the "knowledge and needs of different audiences"; when they "articulate a timely and important research question," they "conduct inquiry-driven research"; when they "locate and evaluate . . . research materials," they "identify and utilize appropriate methodologies to address the research question or creative objective"; when they "participate in an academic conversation with both peers and scholars by engaging with, responding to, incorporating and attributing the ideas of others," they "work collaboratively with other researchers, demonstrating effective communication and problem-solving skills." One of the outcomes of undergraduate research—that students "reflect constructively on their research experience, identifying what was learned, personal strengths and opportunities for growth, and how the experience informs their future educational and career goals"—fosters the integration and extension of mentoring in the course.

In our interactions with students in class and through our written feedback, we instructors serve as mentors to students in academic discourse, orienting them to the practices or customs that scholars undertake in their scholarly work. Together, we discuss questions or conflicts in the discipline that will make for an engaging, thoughtful, and illuminating argumentative research essay, exploring key websites, books, and journals in the field. Such

discussion serves the purposes of fostering a closer academic and intellectual relationship among students and between student and instructor that offers possibilities for formative guidance to students and their capacity to set future-focused goals. Course activities thus make immediate and tactile the imbrication of first-year composition, undergraduate research outcomes, and immersion in a highly mentored experience:

1. Students cultivate and practice an ethos of scholarly discourse they will encounter in upper-level undergraduate research and graduate study by identifying key research, presenting it to scholarly audiences, and exploring its contributions and limitations as related to larger scholarly and disciplinary conversations. Students lead and participate in discussions of articles from their field of study. We as faculty help students use the university library's databases to identify and access scholarly, relevant, and authoritative sources; share strategies for critical reading; and share our own experiences engaging sources for research purposes.

2. Students compose analytical and evaluative essays discussing key websites, books, and journals in the discipline of their research project, supported by peer and instructor review and enriched by instructional sessions led by library faculty on searching for sources and evaluating them for relevance, reliability, and recency as outlined in Alewine and Canada (2017). We as faculty continue to share our own experiences assessing research sources for their accuracy, fairness, relevance, and significance.

3. With a sense of the literature in their fields and in preparation to organize and compose their research essay, students create an annotated bibliography and present their research in a conference-style setting. We as faculty support students as colleagues presenting their work, and we share our experiences of presenting our work at various conferences.

4. Drawing on the sources they have collected throughout the semester and refining the ideas they have presented to their peers and us, students compose essays that identify and weigh arguments concerning the disciplinary issues or questions they have chosen to research. We as faculty, in this culminating assignment, act as colleagues to our students, engaging not only the mechanics but the ideas and arguments of their work and partnering with them in imagining the future of not

> only the content of the work and further study but also their future partnership with faculty mentors.

Throughout the course, students and instructors take part in reflection and assessment. Through peer review, students assess others' work and provide constructive advice. In class discussion, students describe, discuss, and reflect on their own research skills, practices, and approaches, and we instructors emphasize outcomes of undergraduate research as we facilitate discussions and interactions. Through reflective assessment, students identify the skills, perspectives, and competencies they have developed or enhanced and will use in academic and professional settings in the future. Such iterative and reiterative opportunities for reflection and assessment center the class on the outcomes that undergraduate research affords and amplify the impact of mentoring as a means of incorporating first-year students into the scholarly community as collaborators in consuming and producing knowledge.

Our experience teaching first-year composition as a course-embedded research experience confirms the conclusions of other scholar-teachers in the areas of student learning, engagement, and academic growth in honors. Like Guzy (2011), we find that "[students] learn to express [themselves] in increasingly sophisticated ways . . . in the company of a more culturally diverse group of peers . . . of equal or greater intellectual caliber who will prompt [their] growth through feedback on [their] writing and who will challenge [their] conceptions about argumentation and about the world in general" (p. 69). Similarly, Kao et al. (2020) describe an honors composition class at Lawrence Technological University in fall 2017 that was "structured around the principles of open-ended, problem-based, and collaborative learning methods and student-led original research of interest to the greater academic community"; on completion of the class, students indicated benefits of "enjoyment, research collaboration with faculty, potential for publication, perspective on research, and application of compositional skills" (p. 11). Kao et al. (2020) continue:

> Furthermore, making the topic of a research-based course of unmistakable relevance to the major disciplines, careers, and peers of the students engages those who might be unwilling to produce their best work for general education courses. Students responded enthusiastically to the opportunity to engage with existing scholarship—to be, in other words, real academics. (p. 12)

Such enthusiastic response, as described by Guzy (2011) and Kao et al. (2020), stems from the cultivation of authenticity and support for autonomy in learning (Indorf et al. 2019; Bhattacharyya et al. 2020). According to Indorf et al. (2019), "As students are given increased freedom to ask their own research questions and devise their own investigations, the experience becomes increasingly *authentic*, with students engaging in the discovery process as scientists. The more freedom students have to make decisions about their projects, the more authentic the experience is" (p. 2). Likewise, Bhattacharyya et al. (2020) find that a "research-infused [course]" "lets students critically evaluate alternate ideas for themselves, allows them to look at the bigger picture, . . . empowers them to empirically test claims[,] . . . allows students to apply course content to real-world problems, and prepares them for the workforce or postbaccalaureate studies" (p. 15). Such outcomes are vital in light of the racial and ethnic diversity of UNCP's students, the university's core value of educational access, and its priorities of increasing persistence and graduation of marginalized students. Russell et al. (2007) emphasize the capacity of undergraduate research efforts to engage diverse students (including transfer students), promote or sustain interest in postgraduate studies, and foster enthusiasm: "[T]he inculcation of enthusiasm is the key element—and the earlier the better. . . . [G]reater attention should be given to . . . providing [undergraduate research opportunities] for college freshmen and sophomores" (p. 549).

Despite the positive impacts of undergraduate research opportunities in first-year courses, we are aware of two possible limitations: 1) the exemption of students from first-year composition courses based on AP credit and/or dual enrollment and 2) the possibility that first-year gains in writing and research skills will not transfer to upper-level courses and research experiences. Guzy (2011) asserts that students should not be exempted from first-year composition, stating that "[s]tudents who take both AP [Advanced Placement] and first-year composition courses perform better in future college-level classes than students who take AP alone" (p. 64). Guzy (2011) quotes Hansen et al. (2006): "[E]xempting students from college writing based on work done in high school may be unwise because more instruction in writing at college appears to solidify student learning. First-year writing courses that build on strong college preparatory work may best prepare students for writing expected in other college classes" (p. 65). At our institution, the number of students exempted from first-year composition has risen steadily over the years, with slightly more than one half of honors students admitted in 2021

exempt from Composition I. If these trends continue, we might lose valuable opportunities to prepare students for advanced research, writing, and mentoring. Instead, we seek to assure that students who begin in UNCP's honors college graduate with honors. As Guzy (2014) finds, in an informal, avowedly unscientific assessment from fall 1999 to fall 2010, students who enrolled in her course-embedded, research-focused, honors first-year composition courses were more likely to complete the honors program (p. 10).

To be sure, the assignments and course activities that we describe in our redesigned courses conform to those of a traditional first-year composition syllabus, but the transformation of our courses has prompted us to see ourselves and our classes as not only preparing students to write and research in a general sense but also playing a larger role in students' development. Student research projects are focused not on topics but rather explorations of a field of study that transcends the conclusion of a semester, and thus we are guides to students as they approach an unfamiliar field in which they are developing sustained interest. As instructors, we consciously take on the role of mentor rather than what is more often the role of a coach or guide in a traditional first-year composition course. In this way, we aspire to mentoring as

> a reciprocal and collaborative learning relationship between two (or more) individuals who share mutual responsibility and accountability for helping a mentee work toward achievement of clear and mutually defined learning goals. Learning is the fundamental process, purpose, and product of mentoring. Building, maintaining, and growing a relationship of mutual responsibility and accountability is vital to keeping the learning focused and on track. (Zachary 2005, p. 3)

Reinforcing first-year honors composition through undergraduate research results in understanding and conducting ourselves as mentors more than teachers and thus confirms the value of taking our next steps to infuse a mentor's mindset and thus create a mentoring culture among all members of the Maynor Honors College. Such transformation has had measurable effects. The honors college completion rate for students who started the program in 2015 (the year before we transformed our course) was 30% and had hovered there for several prior years. In 2016 the completion rate jumped to 39%. This number held steady the next year at 38%. This positive trend indicates that students are successfully completing not only the program but also their senior project.

MENTORSHIP BEYOND FIRST-YEAR HONORS COMPOSITION

The emergence of a mentor's mindset from our focus of first-year honors composition on undergraduate research seems obvious, now, with the benefit of reflection and hindsight. The transformation has occurred sensibly and intentionally given that the honors college community is where we were most mentored since we joined UNCP's faculty in 2006 (Hicks) and 2007 (Decker). Jesse Peters, then dean of the honors college and an associate professor of English, served as a member of the search committee that hired Hicks to a position specializing in African American literature. He also volunteered to serve as mentor to Decker in a university-sponsored mentoring program for new faculty. For both of us, he was a well-connected colleague, active in shared governance and leadership, who introduced us to the university's culture, recruited us to apply for appointment as honors faculty, and connected us to national honors college networks. As honors faculty, we took part in an NCHC-sponsored Place as Text experience in Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico, an experience that we translated into activities for subsequent honors first-year composition and seminar courses. Because of Peters's advocacy, Hicks participated in "Democracy and the Stewardship of Public Lands: Politics and the Yellowstone Ecosystem," a summer 2007 program sponsored by the American Democracy Project and American Association of State Colleges & University, and in the Aspen Institute's Wye Faculty Seminar in Queenstown, Maryland, in summer 2008. Peters was succeeded as dean in 2012, by Mark Milewicz, who encouraged us in our efforts to create a college-wide honors composition curriculum rooted in undergraduate research and mentorship. Beginning in 2014, Decker became assistant dean of the honors college, advancing to dean in 2020. Hicks remains a member of the honors faculty and is director of UNCP's Teaching & Learning Center. From serving on the University Honors Council to regularly teaching first-year honors composition—and in Decker's case serving as assistant dean, directing the senior project series—we experienced collegial support, took part in policy and programming decision-making, and connected our scholarly work with each other and other honors faculty, thus inspiring, motivating, and sustaining our commitment to improving what we did in first-year honors composition.

As a future-focused course that sets the stage for subsequent research projects and collaborations, first-year honors composition provides us unique opportunities for fostering a culture of mentorship in the honors college. Because we know our students will be working with faculty mentors

and completing senior projects, we can contextualize our pedagogy, demonstrating to students through example how mentoring relationships work. Yet we are committed to doing more so that students continue to experience high-quality peer and faculty mentoring after completing first-year honors composition. Given the capacity of first-year honors composition to impact students until they graduate, we take seriously the obligation to extend mentorship from individual relationships to communal networks, building toward what Zachary (2005) calls a "a mentoring culture [that] enables an organization to enrich the learning that takes place throughout the institution [and] leverage its energy" (p. 5). To this end, the Maynor Honors College has hired and trained peer mentors, who in turn are working to create "affinity groups" among honors college students so that those with similar interests can find each other and fully leverage the power of peer networks.

The cultivation of a mentoring culture has particular significance for the persistence and success of diverse students, students like those enrolled at UNCP, North Carolina's historically American Indian university. Of its approximately 8,200 students, 2 percent identify as Asian/Pacific Islander, 8 percent as Hispanic/Latino, 13 percent as American Indian, 31 percent as Black/African American, and 39 percent as white/Caucasian; the university ranks as the South's most ethnically diverse university according to *U.S. News & World Report*. Additionally, 47 percent of students are classified as low-income, and 29 percent are first-generation students. The university is charged by the UNC system administration to increase the enrollment and rate of graduation of low-income and rural students (University of North Carolina, Pembroke, n.d., and University of North Carolina, 2021). In fall 2021, the Maynor Honors College enrolled 286 students, of whom less than 1 percent identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, less than 1 percent as Hispanic/Latino, 15 percent as American Indian, 17 percent as Black/African American, and 61 percent as white/Caucasian; of the honors college's student body, 43 percent are low-income. According to Hathaway et al. (2002),

> Underrepresented students of color who participated in undergraduate research were significantly more likely to use faculty for job recommendations and remain in contact with faculty after graduation compared to those who did not participate in undergraduate research. . . . Underrepresented students of color often feel distant from faculty (Fullilove & Treisman, 1990), and these findings suggest that undergraduate research participation can facilitate connections between students of color and their undergraduate faculty. (p. 626–27)

Given the challenges underrepresented students face in succeeding in college, the mentoring that supports them must be all the more intentional, consistent, steadfast, and comprehensive. Analyzing the publication of student research in peer-reviewed journals, the presentation of posters at national conferences, and graduate admissions to Research I-tier universities, Dillon (2020) demonstrates the benefits of providing students with additional faculty mentors throughout their experience in the university, benefits derived from mentors' availability and ability to encourage creativity, model inclusion, model professional skills, assure confidence, and share challenges and emotions (pp. 31–33). As faculty dedicated to the success of diverse students as a matter of personal and institutional commitment, we likewise affirm the value of high-impact, communal, authentic undergraduate research experiences early in students' educational experience, and we aspire to continue in ongoing, relationship-rich mentorship in the community.

We know that we cannot go it alone. Creating a mentoring culture means engaging students as well as transforming institutions, and peer mentoring is key to such engagement. According to Smith (2008), optimal frameworks of peer mentoring

> combined an in-class mentoring role for all students with an extracurricular role that provided more interaction for those who chose to take advantage of the opportunity. . . . [W]ell-integrated in-class peer mentoring support proves to be the most effective[,] and . . . in-class peer mentoring encourages more students to participate in out-of-class peer mentoring activities. (p. 62)

Institutions must cultivate, nurture, and support comprehensive and interwoven opportunities for providing and receiving mentoring, and studies show that effective mentoring requires institutional investment in faculty development in mentoring. "[Institutions] must ensure that faculty members (or others in assigned supervisory capacities) move beyond simply supervising research and consider whether they are actually mentoring" (Bradley et al. 2017). Linn et al. (2015) find individual mentoring an effective way to guide students and enhance their learning, and they propose as beneficial activities "discussion with mentors, participation in group meetings where current research is discussed, guided opportunities to explore relevant research literature, reflection on observations in weekly journals, and synthesis of their insights by creating research proposals, reports, or posters" (p. 627). As corroboration, students' feedback emphasizes the importance of increased or more effective faculty guidance, according to Russell et al. (2007); especially

valuable are "mentors who are able to combine enthusiasm with interpersonal, organizational, and research skills" (p. 549). Guzy (2016) asserts that honors programs must "foster the community nature of honors among students and faculty, advocating for the time and space to allow the personal, professional, and intellectual exchange that leads to Herbert's 'thinking and rethinking'" (p. 9), and Bradley et al. (2017) address the importance of faculty awareness of and participation in the full range of mentoring support that students seek and/or use so as to improve coordination and collaboration. As Hathaway et al. (2002) note, such a network of mentorship can include collaboration beyond academic affairs: "Undergraduate research programs can develop partnerships with student affairs to provide more comprehensive support services to their student researchers," just as "[s]tudent affairs professionals can use the undergraduate research programs as an avenue to facilitate more structured and sustained faculty-student interactions" (pp. 627–28). Through collaboration and partnership, we can forge a mentoring culture rooted in first-year honors composition that nurtures and supports diverse honors students.

LOOKING FORWARD

Part of the mission of UNCP's honors college is to prepare students for graduate school and careers. Immersing students in a culture of mentorship in first-year composition is a strong start. Subsequently, many students continue their first-year composition research project as their senior (capstone) project, formally mentored by a faculty member in the field of study relevant to the project. This continuation indicates to us that students gain a sense of confidence and ownership of a particular area of research and possess a sense of what they can contribute, whether it be humanities scholarship, laboratory research, or an artistic project. We also see the benefits of peer mentorship, with students working together in first-year composition as they research and craft their projects. They often cite these collaborations as the most beneficial aspects of the course. This type of collaboration is currently nascent in our senior project cohorts, but it is an area that the honors college's leadership would like to address: How might the honors college bring together students, who now are firmly in their various disciplines, to support, critique, and learn from one another? Since they are already enrolled in a senior project course sequence together, such peer mentorship can be developed. Similarly, the honors college administration hopes to bridge the gap between students' first year and senior year in terms of mentorship. A one-credit course is being

developed that would bring honors students together in their sophomore or junior year to discuss such topics as undergraduate research, publishing, conference presentations, scholarships, and graduate school plans. This curricular experience would sustain mentorship by peers as well as faculty across disciplines, support students as they transition from general education coursework to disciplinary coursework, and offer an opportunity for sustained and enhanced inclusion of underrepresented students.

These enriched experiences need not be confined to an honors college, of course. The mentorship culture that we foster on a small scale can serve as a testing ground for larger-scale efforts such as implementing capstone projects in undergraduate degree programs. What we emphasize—and what should not be lost as undergraduate programs implement high-impact practices such as undergraduate research—is the power of first-year composition to set the stage, especially in a university with a tradition of access, where students most benefit from this strong preparation and early inculcation into a tradition of research and mentorship.

The project of whole-college mentorship can be accomplished by recognizing and enhancing the work undertaken in first-year composition and creating structures by which such efforts can be continued throughout the students' academic careers. The senior project, which is typical in honors colleges, fits the traditional model of upper-division faculty/student mentorship in an academic discipline. First-year composition is not always seen as part of this equation, but we argue that it can be foundational in acclimating students to a culture of research mentorship and a sense of belonging in a research community. The more lines we can draw between the traditional activities of mentorship in research and other less traditional research mentoring experiences, the more opportunity students will have to grow into researchers and gain confidence as scholars and professionals.

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