

# Single Long-term Research Project Integrates In-depth, Knowledge and Skill Development Leading to Scholarship Excellence

Authors: Ila Bagheri, R. Mitchell Faloon, Emma L. Hammer, Harleen K. Kahlon Alexandra Kalo, Jhada Sims, Kaitlyn B. Taylor, Renata Volonterio

Mentors: Dr. Peggy R. Borum, Samantha Waterman, Dr. S. Parrish Winesett

Food Science & Human Nutrition Department



## Abstract:

Healthcare undergraduates pursuing career and education goals face a highly competitive admission process to graduate and professional schools. Applicants are urged to develop and demonstrate a multitude of health professional competencies obtained from a variety of experiences and communicate them in an integrated manner. The Difference Makers in the University of Florida, Food Science and Human Nutrition Borum Lab surveyed lab members to identify key health professional competencies needed to be a top applicant for their future professions and graduate programs. The Difference Makers then supplemented the data with an internet search for current requirements/competencies for healthcare professions and graduate programs. A focus group made up of the Difference Makers deliberated over the survey results and narrowed the competencies to the eight illustrated on the diagram. Completing a multitude of research activities as an undergraduate student to cover all the skills is time demanding, not conducive to in-depth learning, and makes it difficult to integrate the demonstration of competencies during an interview. The Difference Makers identified examples of activities developing the eight health professional competencies while working in the Borum Lab. This research highlights the feasibility of obtaining health profession and clinical translational research competencies by overlapping the experiences with skill development when excelling in an extended single extracurricular research program.

## Background Information:

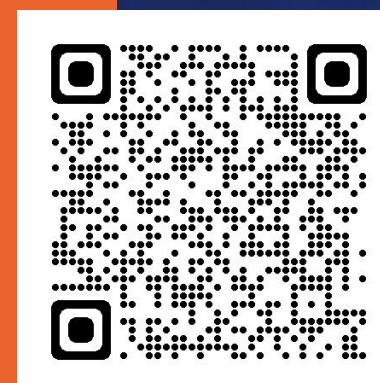
Undergraduate students must decide on a research experience that will give them the ability to develop key competencies which professional programs are looking for in their applicants.

## Hypothesis:

The Difference Makers of the Borum Lab hypothesized that undergraduate researchers will gain a higher quality holistic research experience through a singular integrated research project with a consistent research question and participants that allows them to develop the key competencies to become a top applicant in their future professional endeavors.

## Methods:

Members of the Clinical Team of the Borum Lab were surveyed about the key competencies of their professional school or career of interest. The results of this survey were then fortified with information gathered through internet research on the qualities that specific graduate programs indicated were desired in an applicant. A focus group comprised of members of the clinical team then deliberated over this data, categorized them into eight key categories of competencies and discussed ways in which these categories can be integrated into a single research experience.



## Conclusion and Future Implications:

The Difference Makers of the Borum Lab concluded that learning these competencies in a singular research experience with the same central question and participants is an efficient method to gain and master the top eight competencies. They discovered this through the collection and analysis of the key competencies undergraduate students must gain from research to be the ideal applicants for their future education and career paths. Student researchers should consider pursuing a solitary experience that integrates as many of these skills as possible in order to procure the knowledge and application desired by many educational and career paths.