Getting Started in Research!

Questions to ask yourself before you get started in undergraduate research:

1. How do I determine my research goals and what I really want to accomplish?
   - You should first consider what topics interest you and what you have a passion for in regards to research. Another thing to first consider is what you are trying to gain from an undergraduate research experience. You must first determine your needs and goals to help you decide how undergraduate research can benefit you, and what areas of undergraduate research interest you.

2. Should the research project be specific to my discipline?
   - It is not important that the research you decide to do be specific to your discipline. There are advantages to doing research outside of your discipline. Not only does it give you an opportunity to embrace a new passion, but it may shape your career plans or help you to decide to further continue your education after undergrad. The research project you choose should be one that you are interested in and passionate about, whether it is in your discipline or not.
   - If you are interested in doing cross-disciplinary research, you should consider the following first:
     - Attending a lecture or presentation in the field you are choosing to research.
     - Enroll in a course in the field in which you are interested in doing research in.
     - Engage in discussions with students (graduate and undergraduate) who have shown an interest or done past research in the area you are interested in.
     - Review faculty research interests that are similar to the area you are interested in researching.

3. At what point in your undergraduate career is it a good time to become involved in research?
   - Will your schedule allow you some time to take away from coursework and devote to undergraduate research?
   - What are some possible areas of interest for research?
   - Will participating in undergraduate research help you achieve your long-term goals?
   - Do you plan to continue onto graduate school or professional school?
   - Will an undergraduate research experience provide an opportunity for you to enter a more competitive job market after your undergraduate career is complete?
How to get involved in undergraduate research:

1. Decide what interests you
2. Look for research opportunities in your area of interest
3. Visit a Peer Mentor in the OURI or Join C.S.I. to learn more!
4. Do some research on faculty members currently doing research in your areas of interest
5. Make contact with a professor and see if they would be willing to mentor you and/or allow you to participate in their research. Remember to always be professional!
6. Take courses in the area in which you wish to research or join an Honors Program
7. Attend lectures/presentations to help generate ideas for your own research
8. Get involved in laboratory experiences or Directed Independent Studies
9. Use faculty and students as resources in the research journey
   - Be to research faculty members with similar research interests
   - Make contact with these faculty members in order to begin a mentorship process
   - Seek out graduate students with similar interests who will also be willing to mentor you in the research process
   - Review previous projects done by other undergraduate students
   - Make contact with current undergraduate students who are completing or have completed research, in order to help gain perspective on the research process as a whole
10. Visit the Undergraduate Research Symposium
    - The Undergraduate Research Symposium is held annually at FAU. It is an opportunity for students to showcase their research. It is also an opportunity for aspiring researchers to ask questions and learn more about the research process, what had been done, what’s being done, and what areas could use more research.