Finding a Faculty Mentor

1. Finding a Research Project
   - Finding a research project and faculty mentor is much like finding a job, it is incumbent upon you to find one for yourself. Our office does not place students into open research positions but we do provide resources for students to utilize in finding a research project.
   - Make a list of subjects you find most interesting. Review classes you have previously taken, assigned readings, and talk to your TA's and professors about subjects you are interested in studying.
   - Visit your major’s departmental website, or the website of the department you want to perform research in. *For your research to count towards your major as a 199 course, you may need to work with faculty only in your home department. Consult with your departmental counselor for more information.

2. Identify possible research mentors
   - Once you have an idea of the area you want to pursue, it is now time to find a mentor. One of the best resources currently available is the Undergraduate Research Portal, which is located on MyUCLA under the “Academics” tab. This portal is a platform where faculty can post open positions in their lab as well as view student profiles to actively recruit candidates. However, not all faculty post openings here, so you should still contact potential mentors directly.
   - Visit the department website and browse through their faculty webpage. Each department has a page listing all of their current faculty as well as the research they are performing, recently published papers, etc. Make a list of at least 5-10 faculty mentors and write down their contact information.
   - Ask your TA’s and professors from your classes about the availability of research positions in their department.
   - Contact a mentor in the Graduate Programs in Bioscience (GPB). GPB mentors are current mentors for graduate students and represent a variety of research interests across campus making them excellent mentors for undergraduates. Their website can be found here: www.bioscience.ucla.edu.

3. Contacting potential mentors
   - Send an email to all potential faculty mentors introducing yourself and clearly indicating the purpose for contacting them. This “cover letter” should include the following points:
     i. Name, major, and reason for contacting them (interested in research as an SRP student)
     ii. Major research interests and enthusiasm for gaining research experience
     iii. How your research interests related to the research in their lab specifically?
     iv. Request an interview
     v. Include your contact information (professional email address and phone number)
   - Attach a 1-page Curriculum Vitae (CV) to your email
     i. CV’s are similar to resumes but are specific to your academic career, they include:
        1. Relevant coursework – list course titles, not just numbers
        2. Leadership experience and work experience
        3. Honors, awards, distinctions

4. Preparing for the interview
   - Be on time and have questions prepared to ask regarding the research you would be performing
   - Inquire about who will be supervising/training you, how is the project structured, what exactly will you be doing? What time commitment would be expected of you? Are hours flexible during exam season?
   - You may find that a mentor is unable to accept you. Do not take it personally. Graciously thank them for their time and be persistent with your next option.