Congratulations on your selection to the Freshman Research Scholars program (FRS) and welcome to your first chance to engage in research at Oklahoma State University! I hope this early introduction to university research will both challenge and inspire. Throughout the year you will have the unique opportunity to meet like-minded scholars and learn from the most innovative researchers on campus. Your experience and some requirements may vary by college, but the common requirements are outlined here.

During the fall semester you will be asked to find a faculty member to serve as your mentor, who will guide you through the development and implementation of a research project in the spring. Near the end of the fall semester you are required to submit a Progress Report (DEADLINE: Nov. 20, 2015) in which you will be asked to provide an overview of your fall experience and summarize your plans for the spring. Your mentor will need to confirm the arrangement by submitting a Mentor Agreement (DEADLINE: Dec. 4, 2015).

Near the end of the spring semester you will be required to present the results of your research at the Scholar Development Undergraduate Research Symposium on Friday, April 15, 2016. All FRS must also submit a final Program Evaluation (DEADLINE: Apr. 29, 2016).

Throughout the year, you will attend a few mandatory meetings to introduce you to various aspects of the research process. If you cannot attend a mandatory event/meeting due to a verifiable scheduling conflict, you must arrange a meeting with me. Events will be added to the calendar as details are set.

I will deliver regular communication to your official OSU email account, so please check your box frequently or have your mail forwarded to an account that you do.

At some point in the research process, your faculty mentor may ask you to complete a short online tutorial in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) or submit your research plan to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for research compliance. If you have any questions about either RCR or IRB, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

As a FRS you will have the distinct advantage of an early introduction to university research. OSU has many opportunities available for undergraduates to engage in research beyond FRS, such as the Wentz ($4,500 grants) and Niblack ($8,000 scholarships) programs, so I hope you consider this your first step in a long journey of discovery.

Please take some time to familiarize yourself with the resources on okstate.edu/scholars, learn from former FRS students and be inspired by selections from Ralph W. Emerson’s “The American Scholar.”

Again, congratulations and welcome. I hope your experience in FRS will inspire you to continue your development as an innovative scholar. If you have any questions please contact me or your college coordinator.

Stay curious!

Tim O’Neil, Undergraduate Research Coordinator
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From Ralph Waldo Emerson's

"THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR"

PHI BETA KAPPA ORATION, CAMBRIDGE, MA 1837

The theory of books is noble. The scholar of the first age received into him the world around; brooded thereon; gave it the new arrangement of his own mind, and uttered it again. It came into him, life; it went out from him, truth. It came to him, short-lived actions; it went from him, immortal thoughts. It came to him, business; it went from him, poetry. It was dead fact; now, it is quick thought. It can stand, and it can go. It now endures, it now flies, it now inspires. Precisely in proportion to the depth of mind from which it issued, so high does it soar, so long does it sing.

Or, I might say, it depends on how far the process had gone, of transmuting life into truth. In proportion to the completeness of the distillation, so will the purity and imperishableness of the product be. But none is quite perfect. As no air-pump can by any means make a perfect vacuum, so neither can any artist entirely exclude the conventional, the local, the perishable from his book, or write a book of pure thought, that shall be as efficient, in all respects, to a remote posterity, as to contemporaries, or rather to the second age. Each age, it is found, must write its own books; or rather, each generation for the next succeeding. The books of an older period will not fit this.

Yet hence arises a grave mischief. The sacredness which attaches to the act of creation—the act of thought—is transferred to the record. The poet chanting, was felt to be a divine man: henceforth the chant is divine also. The writer was a just and wise spirit: henceforward it is settled, the book is perfect; as love of the hero corrupts into worship of his statue. Instantly, the book becomes noxious: the guide is a tyrant. The sluggish and perverted mind of the multitude, slow to open to the incursions of Reason, having once so opened, having once received this book, stands upon it, and makes an outcry, if it is disparaged. Colleges are built on it. Books are written on it by thinkers, not by Man Thinking; by men of talent, that is, who start wrong, who set out from accepted dogmas, not from their own sight of principles. Meek young men grow up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the views, which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon, have given, forgetful that Cicero, Locke, and Bacon were only young men in libraries, when they wrote these books.

Hence, instead of Man Thinking, we have the bookworm. Hence, the book-learned class, who value books, as such; not as related to nature and the human constitution, but as making a sort of Third Estate with the world and the soul. Hence, the restorers of readings, the emendators, the bibliomaniacs of all degrees.

Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst. What is the right use? What is the one end, which all means go to effect? They are for nothing but to inspire. I had better never see a book, than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit, and made a satellite instead of a system. The one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul. This every man is entitled to; this every man contains within him, although, in almost all men, obstructed, and as yet unborn. The soul active sees absolute truth; and utters truth, or creates. In this action, it is genius; not the privilege of here and there a favorite, but the sound estate of every man. In its essence, it is progressive. The book, the college, the school of art, the institution of any kind, stop with some past utterance of genius. This is good, say they—let us hold by this. They pin me down. They look backward and not forward. But genius looks forward: the eyes of man are set in his forehead, not in his hindhead: man hopes: genius creates. Whatever talents may be, if the man create not, the pure efflux of the Deity is not his;—cinders and smoke there may be, but not yet flame. There are creative manners, there are creative actions, and creative words; manners, actions, words, that is, indicative of no custom or authority, but springing spontaneous from the mind's own sense of good and fair. [. . .]
Of course, there is a portion of reading quite indispensable to a wise man. History and exact science he must learn by laborious reading. **Colleges, in like manner, have their indispensable office—to teach elements. But they can only highly serve us, when they aim not to drill, but to create:** when they gather from far every ray of various genius to their hospitable halls, and, by the concentrated fires, set the hearts of their youth on flame. Thought and knowledge are natures in which apparatus and pretension avail nothing. Gowns, and pecuniary foundations, though towns of gold, can never countervail the least sentence or syllable of wit. Forget this, and our American colleges will recede in their public importance, whilst they grow richer every year. [. . .]

In self-trust, all the virtues are comprehended. **Free should the scholar be—free and brave.** Free even to the definition of freedom, “without any hindrance that does not arise out of his own constitution.” Brave; for fear is a thing, which a scholar by his very function puts behind him. Fear always springs from ignorance. It is a shame to him if his tranquility, amid dangerous times, arise from the presumption, that, like children and women, his is a protected class; or if he seek a temporary peace by the diversion of his thoughts from politics or vexed questions, hiding his head like an ostrich in the flowering bushes, peeping into microscopes, and turning rhymes, as a boy whistles to keep his courage up. So is the danger a danger still; so is the fear worse. Manlike let him turn and face it. Let him look into its eye and search its nature, inspect its origin,—see the whelping of this lion,—which lies no great way back; he will then find in himself a perfect comprehension of its nature and extent; he will have made his hands meet on the other side, and can henceforth defy it, and pass on superior. The world is his, who can see through its pretension. What deafness, what stone-blind custom, what overgrown error you behold, is there only by sufferance,—by your sufferance. See it to be a lie, and you have already dealt it its mortal blow. [. . .]

Help must come from the bosom alone. **The scholar is that man who must take up into himself all the ability of the time, all the contributions of the past, all the hopes of the future. He must be an university of knowledges.** If there be one lesson more than another, which should pierce his ear, it is, The world is nothing, the man is all; in yourself is the law of all nature, and you know not yet how a globule of sap ascends; in yourself slumbers the whole of Reason; it is for you to know all, it is for you to dare all. [. . .]

(Go online or to the library for the full text.)