

Research Opportunities at MUW: An Institutional Study

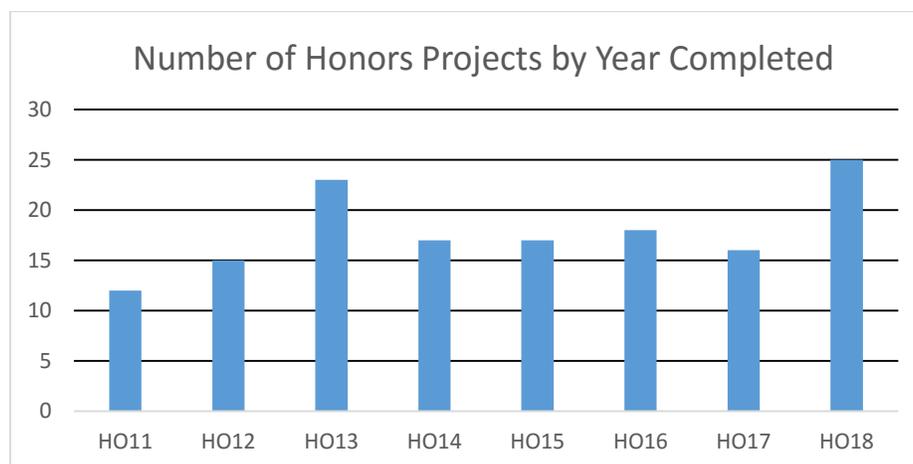
Executive Summary

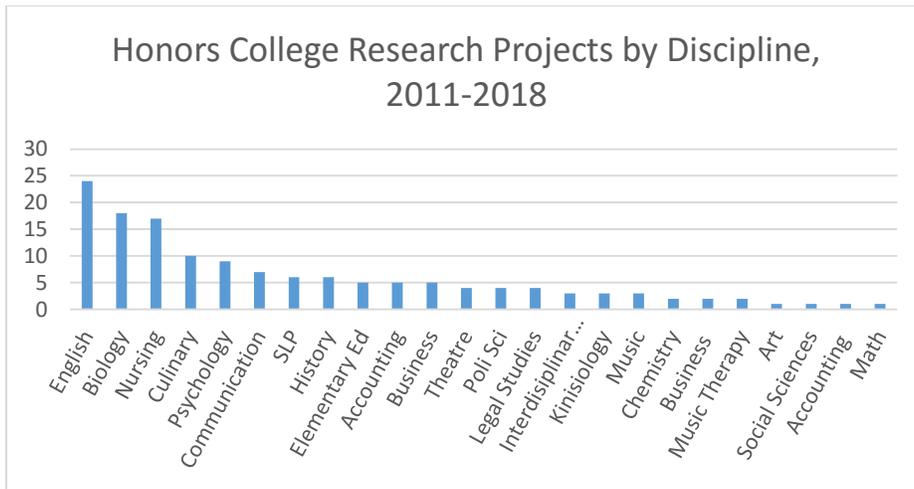
Based on the information from departments about the current research opportunities for undergraduate students at the W, undergraduate research *is* occurring in isolated pockets across campus, both within the Honors College and without. The following represents months of discussions, meetings, and responses from faculty members and data gathered from the Honors College, IRB submissions from students, and departmental websites.

Based on the data gathered to date, we will continue to advertise the ongoing opportunities in areas that produce research (which leans toward STEM fields, as is typical in most colleges and universities), and create opportunities for areas where research may not be as present: in humanities, some social sciences, and among underclassmen.

The Honors College

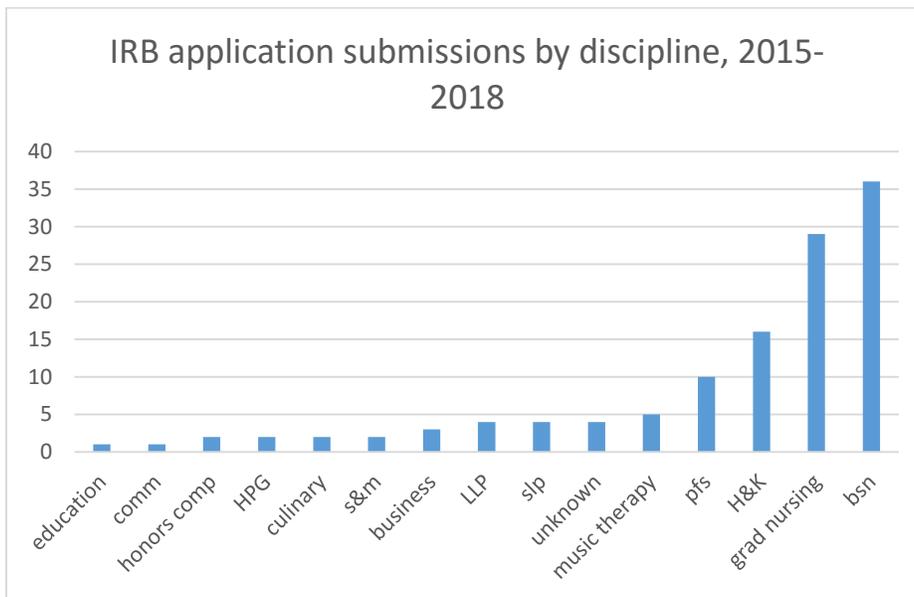
A large concentration of undergraduate research at the W occurs in the Ida E. Gordy Honors College. Senior Honors students are required to spend two semesters pursuing a guided research question that they are expected to present to campus. They work with faculty mentors, and they are enrolled in HON 401 and 402 their senior year. Over the course of this year, they write research proposals, conduct original research, and present their research to the MUW community in the form of posters and presentations. English, Biology, and Nursing are the areas most represented in Honors projects to date, but projects have been conducted in most disciplines on campus.





IRB applications

Under the guidance of faculty advisors, students submitted a total of 119 research proposals between 2015 and 2018 to the IRB for studying human subjects. Of those, 28 were honors student proposals and 29 were graduate nursing students, so approximately 62 proposals were submitted by faculty members advising non-honors undergraduate students. These submissions heavily favor research in nursing, health science, and psychology and family studies, but this is not surprising given that these are the fields that use human subjects primarily. Surprisingly, a wide variety of other disciplines are represented here, albeit fewer in number.



College of Nursing and Health Sciences Research Presentations

Each year, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences holds a program with graduate and undergraduate presentations, all of which are presented in groups of students directed by one faculty advisor. The following data shows the number of posters and presentations done by undergraduates, which constitute the majority of presentations in the program.

Year	UG presentations	Total presentations	UG posters	Total posters
2018	8	13	7	13
2017	10	16	1	6
2016	10	10	data not available	

Social Science Undergraduate Research Colloquium (SSURC)

In 2015 and 2017, the PFS department hosted a regional colloquium of undergraduates in the social sciences, where W students presented posters alongside students from other schools in the state and surrounding states. These posters contained either completed projects (data were gathered, analyzed, and discussed) and proposals for projects. Twenty of 26 of the posters came from W students, and 7 W students received awards for their 2017 projects.

HPG Capstone Projects and Presentations

Students majoring in History, Political Science, and Geography are required to propose and complete a capstone project that involves working with primary sources and presenting their findings in either an online or in-person format. The HPG department's website (<http://www.muw.edu/case/hpg/opportunities/research>) lists digital projects (exhibits, maps, etc.) that students have completed as a part of the course requirements, presentations that students have given at local and national conferences, and course-related assignments that involve extensive research.

Discipline	Number of projects
Interdisciplinary Capstone Projects	11 (2011-2018)
Political Science	19 (2009-2016)
History	17 (2012-2015)

Biology Labs funded by local and national grants

Faculty in Biology (Dr. Ganshyam Heda, Dr. Lauren Brandon, and Dr. Ross Whitwam) currently use funds from MS-INBRE, NASA, and NIH grants to further their own research agendas and/or employ undergraduate students to assist with this. This often leads to presentations at local and national conferences, and on occasion, publications in peer-reviewed journals.