RESEARCH IN ECOLOGY PROGRAM
The Duties of the Undergraduate Facilitator

The Role of the Undergraduate Facilitator

As an undergraduate facilitator (UF) in the Research in Ecology Program, you will probably have more "hands on" contact with the student participants than any of the other staff. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, you will accompany your research team into the field or lab and act as the Graduate Mentor's "right hand"--making sure that students stay on task and are listening and behaving. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, you will be the classroom "wrangler" for your team, and your duties will vary as the day progresses.

Daily Duties

Monday/Wednesday/Friday
These are the "field days," and the Faculty and Graduate Research Mentors will determine the day's activities and where they will take place. First thing in the morning, two UFs will be assigned to "shepherd" the students from the Cox front steps (and from the Metrorail pick up area) to SA 110, and keep them busy until the Graduate Mentor is ready for the group. (The Grad Mentor will be busy filling the ice chest, getting the box lunches organized, getting the van ready, and loading equipment for the day, and this can take 30-40 minutes.) The schedule for the field days are flexible, and the activities listed on the Weekly Schedules may vary. Mornings will almost always be spent doing field work or data analysis, and you'll be expected to help your group in any way the Graduate Mentor requests (which will usually be in terms of "crowd control" and perhaps help with the data.). Lunch break is about noon, with a return to work at about 1:00pm. If the work is done, and the Graduate Mentor allows it, then you may take your team to the University Center Pool beginning at about 2:00pm. Be sure to have them back in SA 110 no later than 3:50pm for daily dismissal.

Tuesday/Thursday
The classroom day starts at 8:00am, but we will need to assign UFs to meet the students at the Cox front steps on a rotating basis. Usually, only two UFs will be needed before 8am (about 7:45am)
1. one to meet the students on the steps of Cox
2. one to be in the classroom to keep things in order (and take roll) while the students arrive.

Classroom days generally run as follows:
8:00am - Ecology lecture and activity
10:30am - Scientific Writing
11:30am - Swimming at UC pool (UFs take them, and also are allowed to swim)
12:30pm - Lunch at the dorm cafeteria (UFs take them, and also get free lunch!)
1:30pm - Computers and Statistics (meet back in SA 110)
3:00pm - Guest speaker in SA 110 (or other location, TBA)
4:00pm - Students are dismissed

For Ecology Lecture, you'll be expected to help your team with the activity at the end of lecture, and each one will be explained to you in advance by the ecology lecturer.
For Writing, only one or two UFs will need to be present to help the instructor (as the writing instructor requests), and these can be rotated so that the burden can be shared. The others can take a break.

For Computers and Statistics, UFs will rotate in, as above, and mainly serve to keep order.

Your most responsibility-intensive period will be Swimming and Lunch, during which you are their Sole Source of Authority. Don't be afraid to discipline them, when necessary.

Various Duties

Keeping Track of Attendance: Students and Teachers

Besides keeping order with the middle school students, perhaps the most important administrative job of the Undergraduate Facilitators is to keep track of the attendance of their team members. Miami-Dade County Public Schools require that a student attend all summer school days, and three absences is cause for dismissal from the program. Please be sure all your team members are aware of this. They know this from their printed materials, but it doesn't hurt to remind them.

Teachers receive a daily stipend for their participation. Although we do not ask you to make subjective judgements about a particular teachers attitude or effort, we DO ask that you keep track of each teacher's attendance at the following:

1. Ecology lecture
2. Writing
3. Statistics
4. Daily activities on field research days.

If a teacher is absent, or "AWOL", or leaves early--even for a doctor's appointment or other reasonable excuse--PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF IT ON THE ROLL SHEET. The teachers' stipends are adjusted according to their attendance at all required parts of the program.

Final Grading of Participants

At the end of the program, we will ask you for your input on the students' grades. They receive high school credit for this program, so their grades will have a lasting effect on their academic records. Please pay special attention to their Effort and Conduct, as your input on these two items will be more heavily weighted than the opinions of the other facilitators and instructors. After all, you know the participants better than anyone!