



Library Research Award for Undergraduates

Testimonial

John Mitchell

Library Undergraduate Research Award

During my junior year of college, I spent two quarters completing my honors history thesis. My thesis consumed more time, energy, and dedication than any other project I had attempted in school. Yet, because I had the creative freedom to choose my own topic and focus, I thoroughly enjoyed the time I poured into planning, researching, and writing my thesis.

Yet, to be honest, it was a bit disappointing to realize that few others would eventually read a thesis I had been so dedicated to. Of course, my two supervising professors read my thesis numerous times and became intimately familiar with my work. And, a few friends and family members were interested to read the paper that had taken me away from them for so many hours. Despite their support, I became worried that my thesis was no different from so many other essays I had consigned to the “college work” box I stashed deep in my closet.

When I learned about the UW Libraries Undergraduate Research Award, I jumped at the opportunity to gain a wider audience for my research. At first, I was happy just to have a committee of people read my work. My professors were wonderfully supportive and gladly wrote letters of support. And, I suppose I was a little curious to know how my research would hold up against the work of others.

Winning one of the six Undergraduate Research Awards was a wonderful experience for me. At the awards reception, a review of my work was read to a very supportive crowd of students, faculty, and library staff. I had the opportunity to discuss my thesis with committee members who were interested in my work. And, I had ample opportunities to learn about the research of other applicants who wrote in fields ranging from Greek history to National Park ecology. Later, I was invited to post my thesis online and present my story to an assembly of financial donors.

I am so happy I applied for an Undergraduate Research Award and recommend that all undergraduates completing research in the future take the time to apply.