

184e Graduate Student Recruiting and Mentoring through an Reu Program

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The Division of Engineering and Applied Sciences at Harvard University is home to an NSF REU Site that provides core funding to bring over 40 students each summer to campus. The REU Site combines opportunities with local MRSEC, NSEC, NIRT, NNIN, and other Harvard centers. These joint programs provide professional development activities and mentoring that extend beyond the 10-week summer program.

During the summer, each student works closely with a mentor on a research project, submit a final research paper and give an oral presentation. Students and mentors also participate in weekly seminars covering ethics, research motivation, “science in the news,” professional development, graduate school applications, and tours of laboratories and research facilities with the goal of giving students a broad perspective of the culture of science and engineering research. Students are also mentored post-program, and encouraged to present at and attend conferences.

Another aspect of the program is to help graduate students and postdoctoral researchers develop one-on-one teaching and mentoring skills with the guidance of faculty and other researchers. We are developing an REU mentor training program prior to the beginning of the summer program so that graduate students and postdoctoral researchers can reflect on their mentoring style, and develop project and time management skills.

We will discuss results of pre- and post-program evaluation and tracking of students, as well as the effect of the mentoring experience on graduate students and postdoctoral researchers.