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Research is simply the expansion of current knowledge, and it occurs in every discipline and cross-discipline imaginable. Undergraduate research has been an integral part of the educational process for many past, current, and future undergraduates at UK and across the nation. SPUR aims to bring together the undergraduates at UK who are participating in scholarly, creative, and research projects, in a mentoring, networking, and social environment.

SPUR was founded in the summer of 2004 by four members of Dr. Tannenbaum’s Research Methods and Orientation course. We set out to create an organization that would increase the number of undergraduates participating in undergraduate research and independent creative activities across campus. This simple mission, driven by our own experiences and passion for research, has led to an increased awareness on campus that is expected only to grow even larger in the future. Our efforts have been met with a great response of encouragement and support from the offices of eUreKa! and UKURP, and SPUR could not have been so successful without them. The fall semester of 2006 marks the beginning of SPUR’s third year. This new year brings new challenges and new opportunities for the organization. Networking among SPUR members will continue through a variety of activities including, guest speakers, tours of research facilities, presentations of undergraduate research, and the annual Showcase of Undergraduate Scholars held in the spring, 2007.

The first annual Showcase of Undergraduate Scholars was held in the Grand Ballroom of the Student Center on April 25, 2006. For pictures of the event, see page 89. The Showcase was organized almost entirely by undergraduates, from arrangements, to photography, to catering, which is a unique aspect shared by no other such event at any other university across the country. In this first year, there were over 120 undergraduates participating in poster and oral presentations of their work in departments as varied as fine arts and chemical engineering. With the success of the first Showcase, we hope that in the years to come it will only continue to become bigger and better with more participants representing every department on campus. The second annual Showcase of Undergraduate Scholars is set to be held on April 25, 2007. We hope to see you there!

The 2006-2007 school year will also be one of particular change for the organization, because it is in this year that the last of the founders of SPUR and all of the current officers will be graduating, and handing over the reins to the next generation of leaders and undergraduate researchers. We, and the other graduating members of SPUR, will continue in our career paths in a great number of directions. For us, in whichever road we choose to follow, our skills and success will not be governed primarily by what we learned in the classroom, but by the life lessons we learned in applying the knowledge gained from the classroom at the bench top.

If you have questions or to get more information, please feel free to contact us at spur.uk@gmail.com.