

CAL POLY-LSAMP RESEARCH SCHOLARS
GUIDE TO ENGAGING FACULTY IN CONVERSATION
ABOUT RESEARCH

How do I find out about faculty research interests?

Department Websites	Department websites typically list each faculty member and their research interests. If research interests aren't listed, contact them! Example: http://www.chemistry.calpoly.edu/content/about-us/faculty/index or http://www.chemistry.calpoly.edu/content/research/home
Department Events	Some departments host research-oriented discussions or events. For example, the Biological Sciences Department hosts a Seminar Series every Friday from 11-12 in 33-285. We also suggest reading the bios/publications! More Info: http://bio.calpoly.edu/news/current-events-and-news
Office Hours	Many professors mention past or present research projects in their classes. Utilize office hours as a chance to have a more in-depth discussion related to their research, and ask for suggestions to get involved.
Email	Sending a professional email to a professor is a great way to introduce yourself, to request more information on their research, and/or to get their suggestions for other ways to get involved! See the next page for a sample email
LSAMP Events	Every quarter, LSAMP hosts events to connect undergraduate researchers with faculty researchers. Be sure to join us at the next Coffee & Connections: Networking with Faculty Researchers event! More info: http://lsamp.calpoly.edu/ or sign up for our weekly newsletter!

How do I express interest in joining a research project at Cal Poly?

You have to take the initiative and ASK! Many on-campus research opportunities are not publicly advertised.

The best tools for expressing interest in joining a Cal Poly faculty member's research project at Cal Poly are email and office hours/appointments.

If you're feeling nervous, just remember that faculty are people, too! If the faculty member is not taking on new researchers, they will very likely give you suggestions for other people to contact or new places to look for opportunities.

Dear Professor [insert name],

I hope this message finds you well. Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is [insert name] and I am a [insert year in school] majoring in [insert major] here at Cal Poly. Last year, I was a student in your [insert class name]. I enjoyed the course and the materials very much and have taken the opportunity to read some of the supplemental articles and books you suggested, as I have a growing interest in [insert area of interest].**

I am seeking to identify opportunities to learn more about [area] and/or related fields. Encouraged by the LSAMP Program, I am currently seeking an undergraduate research experience during the [academic year/summer] so that I can learn more about my areas of interest and gain important professional skills.

To adapt your email to the LSAMP Undergraduate Research Scholars Program, add:

As part of LSAMP, I intend to apply to the new LSAMP Research Scholars Program, which provides a \$3,000 stipend to participate in on-campus research during Summer 2017. Participants in the Research Scholars Program commit to working full time on either a collaborative project with a faculty member or an independent project developed in consultation with the faculty mentor.

I have researched faculty online who are conducting research in my fields of interest and am now interested in having face-to-face conversations with potential research mentors. I would like to learn more about your research and my possible involvement. Even if you are not currently taking on new students, I am eager to hear your suggestions for other experiences.

Please let me know if I should plan to attend your office hours or if you would prefer that I make an appointment with you.

Thank you for your time, Professor [insert name]. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
[insert name]

****Note:** *Expressing interest in a class you had with the professor can create a connection, but is not essential. That sentence or section can be replaced with an indication of what brought you to this professor.*

When sending an email to faculty or Cal Poly professionals, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Send the Email from your [Cal Poly email address](#) (eg. jdoe@calpoly.edu), rather than from gmail, yahoo, etc.
- Use a proper salutation – *Dear Dr. or Professor*
- Use the subject line. Without a clear, concise subject, the email could easily be overlooked.
- **Be Professional.** Once sent, this email is permanent, so use appropriate language and make sure to check for typos or errors prior to hitting send.