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I. Making the Case for Undergraduate Research

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I. Making the Case for Undergraduate Research

In this section Josephine Carubia and Renata Engel introduce the topic of undergraduate research by focusing on the current definitions of scholarship. They place those definitions in the context of specific disciplines and research opportunities. Next, two distinguished educators engage scholarship and also reflect upon the reasoning and purposes that support the practice of undergraduate research. Alan Jenkins probes data on the impacts of undergraduate research in an attempt to answer the most preliminary and crucial questions of whether educators should support this experience, and if so, why and how. He starts out a skeptic and slowly persuades himself, along with his readers, of the value of undergraduate research. Rodney Erickson, by contrast, begins on a positive note and builds evidence thoughtfully on the beneficial outcomes of undergraduate research on students, faculty, and the university. Erickson draws upon many years of experience to offer evidence of how undergraduate research motivates students, guides them in finding relevance, and helps them develop strategies and relationships that lead to deeper and deeper understandings. Together, these three papers establish a frame and a context for the more specific studies, case histories, and narratives that follow.