

# Undergraduate Biology Research Program

By: Tierra Edison



Jennifer Cubeta

An alumna and current director of The Undergraduate Biology Research Program (UBRP), Jennifer Cubeta graduated from The University of Arizona in 2000 with bachelors' degrees in Science Education and Biology and also earned a master's degree from Northern Arizona University.

Jenn started working with youth as a 7th grade middle school teacher for three years. Later, she transitioned from working with youth to college students as an academic advisor in the Microbiology Department with The University of Arizona for a total of ten years. Jenn's involvement with UBRP started in 1999 as a college student where she began to find her passion for teaching and explaining the "why?" in science after taking part in genetics research. She started as an assistant director and soon became the director of UBRP in 2018. She stresses how much she enjoys expanding upon science education and because of that, she also thought it would be exciting to inspire curiosity in other people.

UBRP, which is considered to be one of the longest standing programs at The University of Arizona, works towards helping students engage in mentored and self-directed work by sharpening their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students' projects include research, investigation, discovery, design, and presenting their experimental results. While working as part of UBRP, students develop communication skills, are able to give an "elevator speech" about their research in less than 2 minutes, participate in field trips, engage in community events, build upon community engagement and lastly, contribute toward collections for The University of Arizona's campus pantry.

She hopes for UBRP to grow in the near future and be able to increase the number of students each year in order to share the great experience that UBRP has to offer. She advises that every college student should explore and find out what they do and do not like to do. These steps will assist them in finding their professional match. She also communicates that experience, people, and mentorship are essential for guidance and success. "It's always great to have someone ahead of you and looking out for you. Don't give up on mentorship, they are out there!"

Roxanne Vann (San Carlos Apache) has been involved with UBRP for two years under the Partnership for Native American Cancer Prevention. To her, UBRP has been a life-changing experience.

*"Being part of UBRP has opened many doors for me during my undergraduate studies. It has made me grow mentally, spiritually, and physically by being exposed to today's science and medical era. Being Native American, it made me have a broader view of how much the creator has blessed us with to have the sustainability to pursue our dreams of becoming future scientists or medical doctors. We all have talents and gifts to share amongst us and to one day return back to our people to give back what we have learned in our journey."*

- Roxanne Vann



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For more information visit:  
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