At the UH Cullen College of Engineering, undergrads are strongly encouraged to engage in hands-on, real-world research while pursuing their degrees, and there is no shortage of cutting-edge research projects for undergraduate students to get involved in at the college.

Now UH engineering students will have more opportunities than ever to pursue research in one of the world-class laboratories on campus thanks to the Professor Stuart Long Undergraduate Research Fund, which will provide support to students across the UH campus conducting innovative, high-level research.

The UH Cullen College of Engineering and the UH Honors College created the fund in honor of Stuart Long, associate dean of undergraduate research at UH and professor of electrical and computer engineering at the Cullen College. The Professor Stuart Long Undergraduate Research Fund will support undergraduate research programs at UH such as the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) and Houston's Early Research Experience (HERE) for many more years to come.

Long is a long-time proponent of undergraduate research and is credited with increasing research opportunities across the UH campus for undergraduate students.

"I was blessed with many amazing mentors during my undergraduate education who encouraged me to get involved in research," Long said. "That mentorship had such a profoundly positive impact on my education and my trajectory after graduation. So much so, in fact, that when Long became a faculty member at the Cullen College in 1974, he made it his personal mission to increase and enhance the research opportunities available to undergraduate students."
Long invited outstanding undergraduate students in the Cullen College to join his laboratory group, assist with research, co-author papers and travel to conferences to give poster presentations and seminar talks.

“Engaging undergraduate students with research projects or professional opportunities not only helps them connect-the-dots between classroom lessons and their real-world applications; it also helps them earn better grades and increases the chances that they will successfully complete their engineering degree,” Long said.

This model of undergraduate engagement soon became the cornerstone of a formal program, called the Electromagnetic Undergraduates Program (EMUGs), which identified outstanding undergraduate students and gave them access to a space where they could interact with graduate students and assist Long and other electrical and computer engineering professors with research projects and papers.

Thanks to Long’s efforts, undergraduate research opportunities both inside the Cullen College of Engineering and across the UH campus have been steadily increasing. Long and Fritz Claydon, director of the division of undergraduate programs and student success at the Cullen College, were instrumental in securing funding to establish the UH Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU), which brought talented undergrads from all over the country into Cullen College laboratories to conduct research alongside its world-renowned professors.

Long also works closely with Karen Weber, director of the UH office of undergraduate research, to enhance undergraduate research programs at the university including SURF, PURS (the Provost’s Undergraduate Research Scholarship), the Senior Honors Thesis and Undergraduate Research Day, an event wherein undergrads across the UH campus showcase their research projects to faculty, fellow students and industry representatives.

Within the Cullen College alone, opportunities for undergraduate research have been steadily increasing. Joseph W. Tedesco, Elizabeth D. Rockwell Dean of Engineering, has devoted additional funding to support undergraduate research projects that are not funded through one of the existing undergrad research programs, such as SURF and PURS.

“If undergraduate students are motivated to conduct advanced-level research, there shouldn’t be a scenario in which they are not able to do that at the Cullen College,” Tedesco said. “It is my absolute pleasure and one of my highest priorities to provide additional funding to support the stunning array of professional-quality undergraduate research conducted by UH engineering students.”

For more information and to make a gift to the Professor Stuart Long Undergraduate Research Fund, please contact Ryan Kenney at rpkenney [at] uh [dot] edu.

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