MICHELLE RICHARDS-BABB, C. EUGENE BENNETT Department of Chemistry, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506. The undergraduate research pipeline at West Virginia University.

Studies have demonstrated that involving undergraduates in research increases the probability that they will be retained within their STEM majors and graduate on time. Providing opportunities for students to engage in research aligns with institutional goals of enhanced student recruitment, increased student diversity, improved persistence, and high-quality graduates. At our institution, individual efforts to promote research through NSF and state-funded summer undergraduate research experiences were initiated but suffered from a lack of cohesion across STEM disciplines and the institution. Establishment of a centralized Office of Undergraduate Research has (i) increased the number of students who take part in research; (ii) expanded the disciplines served; and (iii) diversified the students who engage in research (e.g., underrepresented persons, first-generation, and low income). In addition, we how have a four-year pipeline of opportunities that begin the summer before the freshmen year via the NSF-funded First2 Network's summer research immersion, continue into the academic-year through the Research Apprenticeship Program (RAP), into the summer via the state-funded Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE), and culminate in disciplinary research coursework or research impactful to the community through the Honors Experiential and Community-Engaged Learning (EXCEL) program. Summary participation and tracking data will be presented on the efficacy of these research opportunities. In addition, best practices for engaging diverse undergraduates and faculty members in research will be discussed.