

An undergraduate research experience: mathematical modeling with graph theory

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July, 2009

Abstract

Entering the research arena in graduate school can be an intimidating idea to undergraduate math majors who have little to no experience doing original research. With a grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, I was able to conduct an internship in mathematical modeling with three math majors at Washington and Jefferson College during the summer of 2009. This experience proved to be outstanding both for me as a mentor, and for the students involved. Not only were the students required to explore mathematical modeling in an interdisciplinary setting, but they were able to develop and prove their own result. I will describe our journey into original research, the students reactions to it, and the benefits that such a program has for students who are considering what it really is like to do independent math research.

1056-E5-97