



Silvia Ronco
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“Effective Undergraduate Research Programs: The Tale of a Traveling Chemist”

As a former academic at a public institution and a current program officer at a private foundation for the advancement of science, I’ve had the opportunity to work closely with the scientific community and have helped a large number of early career faculty and students to establish and grow productive programs of research. This presentation will cover a number of professional activities and initiatives with a common goal - the support of interdisciplinary undergraduate research as a way of teaching and learning. Effective programs to help shape the future of science, educate the future workforce, and influence institutional change will also be presented and discussed.

Silvia Ronco is currently a program officer at Research Corporation for Science Advancement where she directs both the Cottrell College Science Awards and the Partners in Science programs and actively participates in all Science Advancement programs. Silvia joined Research Corporation in September 2003 after a faculty career at the University of South Dakota (USD) where she moved through the ranks as assistant professor (1992-1997), associate professor (1997-2002) and full professor (2002-2003). Her research interests involve the synthesis and study of the photochemistry and photophysics of transition metal complexes with applications in solar energy conversion, luminescence probes and photocatalysts. At the University of South Dakota, she maintained an active research program and taught inorganic and freshman chemistry courses for undergraduate and graduate students and worked diligently to institutionalize undergraduate research on campus. She also served as the chair of the USD undergraduate research program (1999-2003), and as the program director of an interdisciplinary NSF-REU site, “Retracing the Lewis

and Clark Expedition: Contemporary Aspects of Culture and Environment along the Missouri River.”

Before joining the University of South Dakota faculty in 1992, Silvia received a PhD in inorganic chemistry from the National University of La Plata (Argentina) where she worked under the supervision of Dr. Pedro Aymonino, and conducted postdoctoral work with Guillermo Ferraudi at the Notre Dame Radiation Laboratory (1986-1989) and with John D. Petersen at Clemson University (1991-1992). In addition, she was a visiting professor at the University of California-San Diego (sabbatical leave, 2000-2001) where she worked in collaboration with Cliff Kubiak, and a Program Officer for the Photochemical and Radiation Sciences Program at the U.S. Department of Energy (1995-1996).

Silvia is currently the Chair-elect for the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) Chemistry Division and is serving a fourth term as a Chemistry Councilor. At CUR she has been part of many leadership roles including her participation as the co-chair 2008 CUR National Conference. As a CUR Councilor and a Program Officer her main interest has been to help early career faculty at PUIs and R1s to establish and sustain long-term research programs. Silvia also served two terms as a member of the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) Board of Governors (2002-2008).