Conference Experience for Undergraduates in the Division of Nuclear Physics - 10 Years Running

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The Conference Experience for Undergraduates (CEU), held annually in the APS Division of Nuclear Physics since 1998, has become a valuable addition to the fall DNP meetings. Since its inception 10 years ago, approximately 730 undergraduate students from over 60 colleges and universities from around the country (and a few from abroad) have participated. The goal of the program is to provide students who have conducted undergraduate research in nuclear science a “capstone” conference experience, with the goal toward strengthening retention of talented students in the field. In addition to the main conference, the CEU includes extra activities for the students, including the main research poster session, two undergraduate nuclear physics seminars, and a graduate school information session. CEU application materials are considered by an independent review committee, and travel and lodging grants are awarded based on project merit. Financial support is provided by the NSF, DOE, and DNP. At the recent 10th anniversary CEU, a mini-symposium was organized as part of the DNP conference, at which former CEU students (now graduate students, post-docs, and professors) had opportunity to talk about their research and the influence that undergraduate research and conference participation had on their career paths. Survey and anecdotal data indicating benefits of CEU participation, as well as initial results from career path tracking will be presented.