

Abstract Submitted
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Seriously? Freshmen In A Physics Research Lab?¹ ROSA ELIA CÁRDENAS, ISAAC MANZANERA ESTEVE, JOHN T. MARKERT, The University of Texas at Austin, Department of Physics, SARAH SIMMONS, The University of Texas at Austin, Office of Honors, Research, and International Studies — We report on the University of Texas College of Natural Sciences Freshman Research Initiative (FRI) program as a whole and more specifically, its physics stream. The FRI program was developed in an effort to improve retention in the College of Natural Sciences (CNS). The general goal of the program is to bring students at the freshman level into a research laboratory. The reasoning is that as students become part of a research laboratory he or she will feel more involved with science, both academically and socially, and will be more likely to continue on a research science route. We will present the college wide statistical tracking data which shows that the FRI program has indeed improved retention in the CNS, has improved GPA and has improved graduate school matriculation. We will also discuss the tracking of three generations of physics stream participants. We describe the curriculum, training, precautions and techniques used as we bring freshmen into a physics research laboratory.

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