

## Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) program



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\* This statement can be incorporated in a research proposal, a part of which may be required to include a training/education component.

The VIP program intends to overcome the fragmented nature of higher education which is subdivided in one part into research, education, service, and economic development and, in another, into silos of majors and levels. The VIP program intends to reverse the fragmentation, and introduces a new type of long-term, research-to-education, depth-and-breadth learning environment.

In the VIP program framework, a professor initiates a project from his research and opens it to any student, regardless of majors and levels and all, who want to engage in innovation processes, learn and get training of needed skills, and enjoy mentorship provided by the professor and the graduate students. VIP team is operated by weekly meetings through which tasks are assigned, reviewed for progress, shared and mentored. In each semester, a VIP team presentation and elevator pitch contest is usually conducted.

A VIP project provides a significant benefit for the students and the faculty advisors in terms of continuity, technical depth, and disciplinary breadth involved in the project. This continued project environment produces more efficient training environments than the traditional summer-only REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) programs. Multiple universities can form an intercollegiate VIP team by which students in different campuses can participate in the same project administered in a campus, working locally on divided tasks and meeting others online.

In the VIP framework, any students who are hired to work or join voluntarily; however, all participating students are encouraged to earn credits for course(s) taught by the project advisor or other VIP substitutable courses. For example, "Intro to Engineering" course can be easily arranged to become an institutionally accepted VIP substitute course.