



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

Beacon Conference of Undergraduate Research Summary of Survey Results 2016

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Introduction

The second Beacon Conference of Undergraduate Research (BeaCUR) was held on 18 August 2016. This report summarises results of the survey that was conducted to obtain feedback from the BeaCUR attendees, and where relevant, it responds to feedback by providing recommendations for continuous improvement of future Beacon conferences. The questionnaire used in this survey is provided as an attachment to this Summary.

Summary of Findings

This survey was sent to 303 people, 295 of which had registered to attend BeaCUR. Of the 303 recipients there were 41 respondents (13%) who answered the questions below.

Q1 Overall, how would you rate BeaCUR?

The overall outcome of this question was very positive, with the majority of the 41 respondents rating BeaCUR as either excellent (37%) or very good (46%).

Answer Choices	Response Count	Response Percentage
Excellent	15	37%
Very Good	19	46%
Good	5	12%
Fair	1	2%
Poor	1	2%

2016 BeaCUR – Evaluation

Q2 What did you like about BeaCUR?

The main response to this question showed how impressed and interested people were with the student presentations. Many commented on the diversity and quality of the presentations and that it is good to hear about and share the research that is going on across different faculties. Some of these comments can be seen below:

Responses
Loved the quality of presentations- some really interesting ones
People have similar interests get a chance to meet and talk together.
Great to hear the depth of undergraduate research.
Student speakers were fantastic - generally very polished and speaking at a level which was impressive for UG researchers.
Use of hub
Getting to find out about a diverse variety of research going on was great. Being able to encourage the presenters and honour their work was wonderful too. Furthermore, the whole conference was organised and presented professionally (as I expect a "normal" academic conference would be - somewhat to my pleasant surprise), in details such as registration, venues, and catering, which emphasised the University's commitment to undergraduate research and honouring and encouraging those involved.
Finding out new things from across faculties. Seeing the potential in undergraduate research.
It's very inspiring to see the wonderful work being done by our students.
Standard of presentations and enthusiasm of presenters

The diversity of research areas that were presented.
Offers an important platform for UG researchers to present their work.
The professional environment and the encouraging feedback
Student talks were outstanding
Learning about study in other fields
The opportunity for undergraduate students to showcase their research.
Opportunity to hear from a wide variety of student researchers.
It was an excellent opportunity to develop skills pertaining to sharing research findings, and to learn about current research from different disciplines.
Great opportunity for undergraduate students to present their research and have exposure to the conference experience.
Variety of research presented, high quality of presentations and excellent presentation skills of all presenters
Meeting new people and discussing our research

Q3 What did you dislike about BeaCUR?

Responses to this question varied from a lack of publicity, to low audience numbers and the awkwardness of having it spread around different locations within the University. In response to some of the comments below, the following should be noted:

Location: *it was difficult to secure rooms during teaching time; due to this factor we were limited as to which rooms were available to book.*

Directions: *due to various locations around the campus being used, a map was provided on each BeaCUR lanyard and A frames as well as directional and door signage were placed accordingly around the grounds. One comment mentioned the confusion as to where to find the registration desk, a recommendation in regard to this has been made below.*

Advertising: *BeaCUR was advertised via several means, including the University Events calendar, Unified, Staff News (on several occasions) and all staff / all student emails. Posters were also displayed around the North Terrace, Waite and Roseworthy campuses a month beforehand and a save the date went out to all staff back in February 2016.*

Audience numbers: *One recommendation to help improve this next year would be to finish the presentations earlier in the day and close with a Keynote speech, where people can come back together.*

Please see some of the responses to this question below:

It was awkward trying to move between rooms quickly for each session- would have been good to have them closer together. I also very much disliked the morning tea being set up in the IRA room during a presentation. I found it very distracting and noisy and it seemed disrespectful to the speaker (was a really excellent presentation too)
I think it could be advertised to a wider audience to spectate I also think it shouldn't just be limited to research projects done as part of a course. Adelaide Uni students should be as able to present a research project that they have done independently.
There were some presenters without an audience due to the low numbers present, which was disappointing for them. Perhaps academic staff need more incentive to attend?
Needed a schedule of talk times and better directions to different venues
Perhaps a perceived over-representation of health sciences
Some talks incredibly specific especially in sciences and medicine. They were difficult to understand and relied on heavily technical terms. I didn't think they were understandable to anyone outside the field, which is not the audience of BeaCUR. The audience is from across faculties.
The sanctioning off into separate rooms -there were some presentations that were scheduled for the same time and I wanted to see both!

Odd timing, and location in a very busy hub meant it suffered from distractions.
Diffuse physical feeling- very spread out.
1) Learning Innovations Studio was a stupid place for presentations as people couldn't hear properly because of background noise in the other half of the room. The other two locations were at least closed and isolated rooms. 2) I thought some presentations were more interesting and better prepared than those that won prizes.
The prize criteria meant medical students were unable to be awarded for their efforts. For example, you had the best first year student etc. We were in fourth year Med, so were ineligible for these. Given how difficult it is to get leave as a medical student and how we were specifically invited via email, this lack of relevant prizes was disrespectful to us. If we'd been correctly informed that we were ineligible for prizes fewer of us would have presented.
Possibly consider having a more dedicated area for the lunch time/ morning tea times along with the posters...perhaps the mezzanine area of the Hub.
The rooms were not particularly well labelled, and were generally spread out, so those unfamiliar with each space may have found them difficult to locate. I understand that there are restrictions with existing room bookings, but I feel for this event to be more successful, greater engagement from the broader University should be encouraged and facilitated. Increased and improved advertising along with clear signage of rooms and presentation timetables outside each presentation space, will help to encourage this, particularly impromptu walk-ins by passersby (students, staff, etc.), increasing the reach of the event.
This is not really something that can be controlled, but it would have been great to retain more attendees throughout the afternoon and breakout sessions (rather than just attending the keynotes).
Not enough people. Some information was missing, like where was the registration desk and not easy access

Q4 How organised was BeaCUR?

Of the 41 recipients, over half of them agreed that BeaCUR was well organised, and over a quarter said it was extremely well organised.

Answer Choices	Response Count	Response Percentage
Extremely well organised	13	32%
Very organised	23	56%
Moderately organised	3	7%
Slightly organised	2	5%
Not well organised	0	0%

Q5 How did you hear or learn about BeaCUR?

The responses to this table indicate that contacting the staff and students by email is a crucial way to advertise this event. It is suspected that the posters scored the lowest response for two reasons, one being that they were only put up only 1 month beforehand (due to not receiving them earlier from the printers) and secondly, as there are many other posters around the University it is hard to make them stand out from the others in the designated poster areas.

Answer Choices	Response Count	Response Percentage
University Email	29	74%
Poster	1	3%
Staff News	3	8%
Unified	2	5%
Through a lecturer/tutor	3	8%
Word of mouth	11	28%

Q6 Please briefly specify the main reason you attended BeaCUR

The two main areas from the responses to this question relate to staff and students supporting their division and peers, and to the students gaining experience as presenters. This is closely followed by interest in listening to the research there is going on across different faculties.

Some of the comments from this question can be seen below:

Responses
To support student research and the work of our Division
To demonstrate to the undergraduates that staff are interested in their research.
Interested to explore the caliber of student undergraduate research being conducted, with some secondary interest in specific topics.
I was a presenter, and I attended to gain experience in talking in front of an audience. I also really wanted to share my research experience, as it was the highlight of my degree.
To see my students present.
Family member presenting
To practice and further develop my presentations skills.
To see what kind of research undergraduate students are undertaking
To disseminate my idea to a wider audience and to gain presentation skills
To practice our presentation skills
A chance to showcase recent research to a broad audience.
I am an academic and came to my students' presentations.
Presentation experience.
I attended last year in order to gain experience in presenting and to develop skills in communicating my research to the public. It really helped on both accounts and so this year I was more than happy to act as a judge to assist students in a similar situation.
The opportunity to share my research findings.
To listen to student presentations and to see projects via posters (particularly from our Faculty).
Network with other staff and find out about activities taking place through the rest of the University. Identify opportunities to add value to other areas.
I was interested to see the research being conducted in different faculties within the University.
Had been involved previously, and realised its benefit to young researchers - not only for their research and presentation skills, but for their confidence!

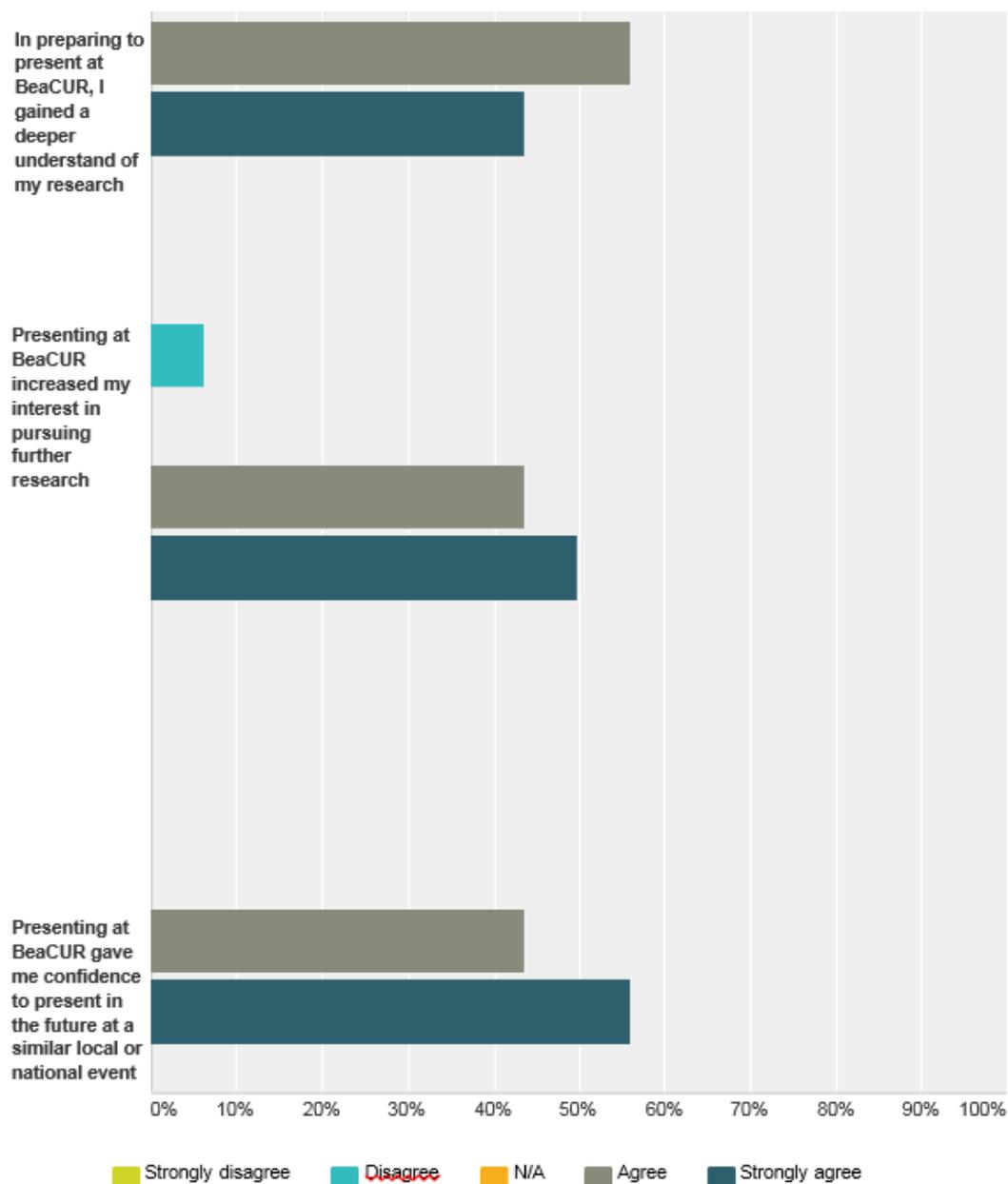
Q7 What was your primary role at BeaCUR?

Of the recipients who completed the survey, the table below indicates that 51% were a guest / audience member. This is then followed by those who presented.

Answer Choices	Response Count	Response Percentage
Presenter	16	39%
Judge	4	10%
Guest/Audience	21	51%

Q8 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Although only a small portion of people who attended BeaCUR filled in this survey, it is clear to see from the answers below that BeaCUR allows students to gain a deeper understanding of their research, increase their presentation skills and boost their confidence with regards to presenting.



Answer Choices	Strongly disagree	Disagree	N/A	Agree	Strongly agree
In preparing to present at BeaCUR, I gained a deeper understand of my research	0%	0%	0%	9 (56%)	7 (44%)
Presenting at BeaCUR increased my interest in pursuing further research opportunities	0%	1 (6%)	0%	7 (44%)	16 (50%)
Presenting at BeaCUR gave me confidence to present in the future at a similar local or national event	0%	0%	0%	7 (44%)	16 (56%)

Volunteers interested for 2017 BeaCUR

Q9 If you are interested in volunteering at BeaCUR 2017, please contact Helen Nagel at helen.nagel@adelaide.edu.au. Volunteers will join a strong community of students and staff committed to BeaCUR, and will be invited to fulfil roles on the 2017 abstract review panel and judging panel. No prior experience is necessary.

Q10 Would you recommend BeaCUR to your peers or colleagues

Out of the 41 respondents to this question 39 people (95%) strongly agreed that they would recommend BeaCUR to their peers or colleagues. This indicates a high level of support towards BeaCUR as a University wide event.

General Comments

Q11 Please provide any further comments or suggestions that might help improve BeaCUR in the future

The comments this year were quite varied; they included a range of positive remarks and future suggestions. One of the more prominent topics outlined how great it was to see students showcasing their work and what a good opportunity BeaCUR is to share research across faculties and build presentation skills.

With regards to suggestions for the future, these ranged from changing the locations (using rooms that are closer together), awarding commendations rather than prize money and the idea of publishing a journal at the end with everyone's work in it for those who could not attend the event.

Conclusion

From this feedback it can be seen that BeaCUR is a highly valued event and should continue to run in future years. Both students and staff enjoyed listening to research from other faculties and the students in particular appreciated the chance to present their work as well as network with peers.

Whilst there were a couple of negative comments regarding the room locations for this event, we have to consider that it is during teaching time and rooms are therefore subject to availability. We selected the best rooms available at the time and we will aim to do the same again next year.