relationship. By participating in supervised laboratory procedures associated with these courses, students will become familiar with experimental design and data collection techniques. Moreover, they will be able to follow up their course-based laboratory experiences with long-term independent research projects using any of the above Research Link 2000 model systems. Ultimately, BIOL 397 will become a forum for sharing the results of independent research with other members of the department.

**CONCLUSION**

Small class size is integral to the personalized undergraduate education offered at D&E. The authors recognize that the interactive learning environment associated with small groups may have contributed to the favorable assessment results.

We will continue to collect annual assessment data to validate the current study. While acknowledging the small sample size utilized for program assessment, we are encouraged by the preliminary results. When the integrated research component of the plan is in place, we are confident that D&E biology graduates will have all five tools necessary to produce key breakthroughs in the laboratory, timely discoveries in the field, and spectacular discussions in the classroom.

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**REFERENCES**


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