

# **AWARDS IN SUPPORT OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH**

## **Application Guidelines (Fall 2008)**

**\*\*\*Priority consideration will be given to applications received on or before the target date of Wednesday, September 10, 2008 and to first time applicants\*\*\***

The Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship (CURS) announces the availability of funds to assist undergraduate students who wish to conduct research and creative activities during the academic year under supervision of a faculty mentor. Projects should be initiated and developed largely by the student applicant(s) in consultation with the faculty mentor. Students may apply for individual projects or for group projects. Awards of up to \$500 are available with typical awards in the range of \$250 to \$350. In special cases, with appropriate justification, a group project may request more than \$500, but in no case will more than \$750 be provided from CURS. It is anticipated that 15 to 20 awards will be available for each fall and spring semester. The awards are funded by the Office of the Provost and disbursed through the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship.

### ***Eligibility***

Undergraduate students in all disciplines who have a GPA of at least 2.0 and who will be enrolled as a full-time (12 hours) undergraduate the semester in which you request to receive the award are eligible. The projects must be initiated and developed largely by the student applicant(s) under the supervision of a faculty mentor. Matching funds from departments or colleges are not required but such support will be viewed as a strong positive endorsement of the proposal.

### ***Application***

The application consists of an endorsement sheet, a proposal describing the research/creative activity, and a letter of support from the faculty member who will serve as the student's mentor. Details of each are outlined below. Applications for projects that involve human subjects, live vertebrate animals, recombinant DNA, or radioactive materials must also include appropriate regulatory committee forms.

For full consideration, completed applications must be received in the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship in 209E Harshman by the target date stated in the Programs and Applications Deadline section on the CURS website. Proposals received after the target date will be considered on a first come basis until funding for that semester is exhausted or held for consideration in the following semester.

#### **I. Endorsement Sheet**

The endorsement sheet serves to collect routine information about the student applicant(s), faculty mentor, and the proposed project. It also serves to alert the student applicant(s) and their faculty mentor to potential regulatory considerations that must be met. Finally, it outlines the commitment of the student(s), faculty mentor, and their department to the proposed project. For group projects, one student should be designated as the contact person and others listed as co-researchers.

## II. Proposal

Your proposal must be typed using a 12 point Times New Roman font, single-spaced with 1-inch margins. The original and 4 hardcopy proposals must be delivered to Center Undergraduate Research and Scholarship in 209E Harshman.

Remember, you are asking for money, so you must make it easy for the reader to understand what you propose to do, why it is important, and how you will successfully complete the project within the requested timeframe and budget. Keep in mind the proposal will be evaluated by a panel of faculty members representing a broad range of disciplines as such you should avoid the use of too much technical jargon specific to your discipline.

Your proposal must consist of the following sections and sub-sections:

Cover Page (1 page maximum) must include:

- Project Title
- Name of Student Investigator(s)
- Name of Faculty Mentor

Project Narrative (normally 2-3 pages and definitely not more than 5 pages) must include:

- Introduction statement about the topic
- Proposed plan of action to complete the research/scholarly activity
- Anticipated results/accomplishments
  - ◆ In this section you should discuss how you will analyze and interpret your results or how you will present and evaluate your creative activity. Explain how these results will impact your discipline and what follow-up studies you envision.

References Cited (normally 1 page):

- ◆ Provide full citations (including title) of all references cited in the proposal.

Figures and Tables (as many pages as needed):

- ◆ Figures and tables may be presented here or imbedded in the text. All figures must have a caption and all tables must have a heading to explain the information.

Budget and Justification (1 page maximum):

- ◆ Provide an itemized statement of your best estimate of the costs for doing your project. You may request up to \$500 from CURS, but it is anticipated that most awards will range between \$250 and \$350. In special cases, with appropriate justification, group projects may request more than \$500, but in no case shall more than \$750 be provided from CURS.
- ◆ Your budget should accurately reflect the cost of the proposed research. If the budget exceeds the maximum award available from CURS, you must clearly indicate from where the additional funds will come (e.g., from department, faculty mentor's grant, etc).

- ◆ You must provide a justification for all of the requested items. Funds may be requested for any reasonable research related expenses. However, funds requested for travel must be especially well justified.

### III. Letter of Support from Faculty Mentor

The faculty mentor must write a brief letter of support for the proposed project. In this letter, the faculty mentor should provide a critical assessment of the:

1. scholarly impact of the proposed project;
2. credentials of the student(s) with regard to successful completion of the proposed project (please cite specific examples of preparation and experiences);
3. impact of the project on the faculty mentor's larger research activities;
4. appropriateness and accuracy of the budget.

The faculty mentor should confirm his/her willingness to supervise this project and to make certain that any progress reports as well as the final report are accurate and submitted on time. Finally, should the project budget exceed the maximum amount available through this program, the mentor should confirm that the additional necessary funds exist to cover any additional costs.

### ***Project Duration***

It is anticipated that the project will be completed by the end of the semester in which funding is requested/received and a final report (as outlined below) will be submitted to the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship by the last day of classes for the semester in which funding is awarded. Should it prove to be impossible to complete the project by the end of the semester in which funding is awarded, an extension may be requested as outlined below. If an extension is granted, the final report is due by the last day of classes for the following academic semester.

### ***Evaluation and Selection Criteria***

Proposals will be evaluated by faculty members representing a broad range of academic disciplines who have actively involved undergraduates in their research. The proposals will be judged on the basis of the following four general criteria.

#### I. Quality of the Proposal

- ☒ Is the research problem or creative activity clearly articulated and is the problem worth solving?

#### II. Potential Impact of the Study

- ☒ Impact to the students, their discipline, and to the faculty mentor's research activities.

#### III. Potential for Success

- ☒ Do student applicants have adequate training and experience to successfully complete the project in the stated time frame?

#### IV. Budget

- ☒ Is the budget appropriate/sufficient to complete the proposed work and if the budget is more than CURS can support, have other sources been identified to cover the remaining expenses?

### ***Notification***

A funding decision will be made within two weeks of the application deadline and the students and faculty mentors be notified by email.

### ***Disbursement of Funds***

Successful applicants will receive instructions on how monies are to be disbursed. In general, funds will be released to the home department of the faculty mentor who will act as account administrator. Receipts or invoices will be required for reimbursement, and students should speak with the faculty mentor for exact procedures and requirements. All funds must be expended by the end of the semester in which funding is awarded. Unused funds must be transferred back to CURS immediately by the academic department.

### ***Reporting Requirements***

Students who receive an award are required to complete a brief (two or three pages maximum) report describing the major objective(s) and the result(s) of their project. The report should be typed and must include the signature of the faculty mentor certifying the information provided. The report is due at the Center for Undergraduate Research by the last day of class in the semester in which funding is provided. Failure to submit completed reports in a timely fashion will jeopardize future awards involving the faculty mentor and his/her department. In addition, the student(s) may be required to reimburse the University for a partial or the full award amount. If your project cannot be reasonably completed by the end of the semester in which funding is awarded, the work may be extended through the following semester provided you request in writing an extension through the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship prior to the deadline. You must provide a brief description of progress to date and indicate the reason(s) the project will not be completed on time. The request for an extension must include the signature of your faculty mentor indicating that the request is reasonable and that he/she agrees to continue overseeing the project through its completion. If an extension is granted, the final report is due the last day of class for the following academic semester.

In addition to the final report, students who receive funding through this program are required to present their findings at the Symposium on Undergraduate Research. Also, students must submit a short presentation (5 to 10 slides in PowerPoint) outlining their project and results that will be archived and displayed on the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship website (details will be supplied when funds are awarded).

### ***Responsibilities of Faculty Mentors***

The faculty mentor must certify that the proposed project represents a valid scholarly research or creative activity and that the project will contribute to the growth of the scholarly and/or creative capabilities of the undergraduate applicant(s).

Further, the faculty mentor must insure that the:

1. student applicant submits a well-written proposal that can be understood by an educated person who is not a specialist in the field;
2. application conforms to the format specified in these guidelines;

3. required information and appropriate protocol forms concerning special circumstances are supplied.

The faculty member should decline sponsorship of any proposal that falls outside the criteria of the Awards in Support of Undergraduate Research Program.

The faculty mentor must also certify the accuracy and appropriateness of the budget and must further certify that the student investigator(s) received appropriate training and/or submitted the appropriate completed form(s) for work involving human subjects, live vertebrate animals, radioactive materials, and/or recombinant DNA.

Finally, the faculty mentor must sign any progress report as well as the final report submitted by the student applicant(s) and make certain that these reports are typed and submitted in a timely manner.