Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship

Spring and Fall Semester Grant Application Guidelines

*** *Please note:* Priority consideration will be given to applications received on or before the target submission date noted on the website. Late applications will only be considered, if sufficient funds remain to support the project. ***

The Program:

- The CURS Fall and Spring Grant program is focused on developing individual student/faculty mentor relationships and fostering learning through the processes of research, scholarly, and creative work.

- Students will engage in research/scholarship projects for 10 weeks during the fall or spring semester.

- Each student participant must work with a faculty mentor who is willing to supervise the project. Projects must be initiated and developed by the student applicant(s) under the supervision guidance of their faculty mentor.

The Student Receives:
- A stipend of $200 upon completion of the project (after final report has been submitted).

The Faculty Mentor Receives:
- Up to $500 to offset the costs associated with project supplies.

I. Overview

The Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship (CURS) announces the availability of funds to assist undergraduate students in conducting research, scholarly and creative work during the fall or spring semester under supervision of a faculty mentor. Students may apply individually or as a group. Awards of up to $500 to offset the costs associated with the project are available. 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 for a single project. The student will receive a $200 stipend upon completion of the project (after the final report has been submitted to CURS). It is anticipated that 15 awards will be available each fall and spring semester. Students may receive only one Fall or Spring Grant award during any given academic year, but are welcome to apply for other CURS programs (Travel Grant and Summer Grant) separately. The awards are funded by the Office of the Provost and disbursed through the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship.

II. Eligibility

This award is available to undergraduate students from all disciplines that have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5 and are enrolled full-time during the semester in which funds are requested. Matching funds from departments or colleges are strongly encouraged, but not required. Such support will, however, be viewed as a strong endorsement of the proposal during the selection process.

The faculty mentor must be a full-time faculty member affiliated with a BGSU department. To seek an exception to this policy, students must include a rationale for consideration at the time of their request.

The faculty mentor's department must agree to administer supply funds. Whenever possible, the department should coordinate purchases and order materials to maximize university discount programs and to avoid sales tax as appropriate. All funds must be expended by the end of the semester during which funds are awarded. **Any funds remaining by the end of the project have to be returned to the CURS budget account within 4 weeks of completion of the project.**

III. Application

The application consists of an Application/Endorsement form, a Proposal (Project Narrative) describing the research/scholarly/creative project, 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 before funds will be released.

For full consideration, completed applications must be received in the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship by email or as hard copy (104 University Hall) by the target submission date. Proposals received after the target submission date will only be considered for that semester, if funding is still available and project can feasibly be completed by the end of that semester.

A. Application/Endorsement Form
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 faculty mentor to potential regulatory considerations that must be met. Finally, it certifies the commitment of the student(s), faculty mentor, and the mentor's academic department to the proposed project. For group projects, one student should be designated as the contact person and others listed as co-researchers. (Please provide contact information for each student).

The original document containing all relevant signatures must be sent to the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship in 104 University Hall (to the attention of the CURS director, Dr. Cordula Mora) on or before the submission deadline. Alternatively the form can be sent by email as a pdf-file (no other file formats, please) to cmora@bgsu.edu.

B. Proposal (Project Narrative)
Students must submit a written proposal (typically 4-7 pages) that is typed using 12- point, Times New Roman font, and single-spaced with 1-inch margins. While in most cases the faculty mentor will need to assist the student with the preparation of the project proposal, it is encouraged that the student will write at least the first draft using the guidelines below after discussing the project with their mentor.

A hard copy of the proposal must be sent to the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship in 104 University Hall (to the attention of the CURS director, Dr. Cordula Mora) on or before the submission deadline. Alternatively it can be sent by email as a Word document or pdf-file (no other file formats, please) to cmora@bgsu.edu.

TIP FOR STUDENT APPLICANTS: Remember, you are asking for money, so make it as easy as possible 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 range of disciplines. As such, you should avoid the use of too much technical jargon specific to your discipline that others will not understand.

Each proposal must consist of the following sections:

1. Cover Page (1 page maximum). Must include:
- Project Title.
- Name of Student Applicant(s).
- Name of Faculty Mentor.
- Name of Department.

2. Proposal (normally 2-3 pages and definitely no more than 5 pages). Must include:
- Introductory statement about the project (give a brief background to the project and its relevance for your chosen discipline, describe your project's connection to the outcomes of any relevant current or previous related project(s) conducted by your mentor's group, and at the end make sure to provide a clear statement of your project's goal(s)).
- Proposed plan of action to complete the research/scholarly/creative project including methods to be employed to achieve project goal(s).
- Anticipated results/accomplishments or outcome(s). In this section you should discuss how you will analyze and interpret your results or how you will present and evaluate your scholarly/creative work. Explain how these results will impact your discipline and describe any anticipated follow-up studies.

3. References (normally 1 page):
- Provide full citations (including title) of all references cited in the proposal.

4. Figures and Tables (as many pages as needed):
- Figures and tables may be presented here separately, or imbedded in the narrative text of the proposal. All figures must have a caption and all tables must have a heading to explain the information. Be sure to cite the source of each figure and table not prepared by you or your mentor in your reference list.

5. Budget and Justification (1 page maximum):
- Provide an itemized and annotated statement of your best estimate of supply costs associated with your project. Supporting documentation is encouraged. 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/scholarly/creative work. 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/scholarly/creative related expenses as long they are associated directly with achieving your project's goals. However, funds requested for travel must be especially well justified (if funds are requested to attend a meeting in your discipline, please submit a separate CURS travel grant application).

C. 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 following:
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/or previous experiences);
3. Impact of the project on the faculty mentor's larger research activities/scholarly/creative work;
4. Appropriateness and accuracy of the budget.

The faculty mentor should confirm his/her willingness to supervise this project, and provide assurance that expectations for participation are understood, especially in regard to ensuring compliance with university regulations and expectations for completing the final report (i.e., that the student's reflection paper and PowerPoint presentation are accurate and will be 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.

A hard copy of the support letter must be sent to the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship in 104 University Hall (to the attention of the CURS director, Dr. Cordula Mora) on or before the submission deadline. Alternatively it can be sent by email as a Word document or pdf-file (no other file formats, please) to cmora@bgsu.edu.

IV. Evaluation Criteria for Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated by faculty members representing a range of academic disciplines who have actively involved undergraduates in their own research and scholarly work. The proposals will be judged on the basis of the following four general criteria.
A. Quality of the Proposal
¤   Is the proposal well-written? Is the research problem or scholarly project clearly articulated and being facilitated primarily by the student(s)? Is it an original intellectual contribution to the discipline?
B. Potential Impact of the Study
¤   What are the anticipated benefits that are expected for the participating student(s), the discipline, and the faculty mentor's research/scholarly activities?
C. Potential for Success
¤   Do student applicants have adequate training and experience to successfully complete the project in the stated time frame?
D. 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?

V. Award Notification

It is anticipated that a funding decision will be made within two weeks of the application deadline, and the student(s) and faculty mentor will be notified **by email**. Students will be sent a Grant Recipient Contract that must be completed and returned, indicating acceptance of the terms and responsibilities of the grant, before any funds will be transferred.

VI. Disbursement of Funds

Successful applicants will receive instructions on how the funds are to be disbursed. In general, the funds directly supporting the project (up to $500, and for group projects up to $750) will be released to the department of the faculty mentor, who will act as an account administrator. Whenever possible, the department should coordinate purchases and order materials to maximize university discount programs and to avoid sales tax as appropriate. Receipts or invoices will be required for reimbursement, and students should speak with the faculty mentor or designee for exact procedures and requirements in their department PRIOR to making any purchases.

All funds must be expended by the end of the semester in which funding is awarded. **Any funds remaining by the end of the project have to be returned to the CURS budget account within 4 weeks of completion of the project.** Please note that in accordance with university purchasing guidelines, any tangible items purchased with CURS funds are considered university property and, if they are for general usage (such as computers, cameras, digital recorders, etc.), are expected to be returned to CURS upon completion of the project in order to benefit future undergraduate researchers. Exceptions must be approved by CURS in consultation with the department prior to purchase.

The $200 stipend awarded to the student will be sent as a check upon completion of the project to an address designated by the student. This will not occur until after the final reports (reflection paper and PowerPoint presentation) and the financial disclosure statement (see below) have been received by the CURS office.

VII. Project Duration

It is anticipated that the project will span ten weeks (depending on timing of notifications) and be completed by the end of the semester in which funding is requested/received. During this period, the student and faculty mentor should maintain regular meetings/communication. A final report consisting of two written assignments and a financial disclosure statement (see outlined below) must be submitted by email to the director of CURS (Dr. Cordula Mora at cmora@bgsu.edu) within one week after the last day of classes for the semester in which funding is awarded.

VIII. Reporting Requirements (Assignments)

Students who receive an award are required to complete two written assignments (a report/reflection paper and a PowerPoint document) and a financial disclosure statement upon completion of their project. They must also present their findings at the annual Undergraduate Research and

Scholarly/Creative Activity Symposium to be held in late April each year, with the exception of those who graduated prior to the symposium event.

A. Written Assignments:

1) A brief report/reflection paper (3 pages maximum, Word document or pdf file) describing the major objective(s) and the results/outcomes of their completed project (2 pages), as well as a brief personal reflection about the overall experience (1 page). The report should be typed and written in the style appropriate to the students' discipline (APA, MLA, etc.).
2) A PowerPoint presentation document (12-15 slides, PowerPoint or pdf file) that provides an overview of the project, describing the research/scholarly/creative questions/goals for the study/nature of the project, the methods used, the research findings and/or results, and implications of the project/conclusions/created product for the student's discipline. Organization of the presentation may vary according to the student's discipline. PowerPoint documents will be archived and displayed on the Center of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship (CURS) website.
3) A financial disclosure statement (Word document or pdf file) confirming how the grant funds were utilized, whether any tangible purchases were made with grant funds, and whether any funds remain. Certain purchases become property of the University and must be returned at the end of the project (refer to *Disbursement of Funds* section above. Failure to properly document or return requested property could result in a referral for disciplinary action.

Written assignments are due (to be submitted electronically by email to the CURS director, Dr. Cordula Mora, at cmora@bgsu.edu) within one week after the last day of classes for the semester in which funding is awarded. 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 up to the full amount of the award.

If a project cannot be reasonably completed by the end of the semester in which funding is awarded, an extension may be given through the following semester provided a written request is submitted by the student to the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship prior to the completion deadline. Students requesting an extension 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 the 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 no later than the last day of classes for the following academic semester.

B. Participation in Annual Undergraduate Research & Scholarly/Creative Activity Symposium

In addition to the final report, students who receive funding through this program are required to communicate their results/outcomes to the campus community through participation in the annual Undergraduate Research and Scholarly/Creative Activity Symposium, which is usually held in late April. Students are expected to register for the event and participate by presenting a poster (or alternative format appropriate for the student's discipline). All students receiving CURS grants within the year preceding the conference are required to participate, with the exception of those who graduated prior to the symposium event.

IX. Responsibilities of Faculty Mentors

A. In conjunction with the application, the faculty mentor must certify that the student's proposed project sufficiently represents valid research/scholarly/creative work in their discipline, and that the project will contribute to the educational development of the undergraduate applicant(s).

Further, the faculty mentor must insure that:

1. The student applicant submits a well-written proposal that can be understood by an educated person, who is not a specialist in the field. *Please note, while it is important for mentors to provide feedback and support, the proposal itself (Project Narrative) must be written by the student.*

2. The application conforms to the format specified in these guidelines.

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

4. The faculty mentor must also certify the accuracy and appropriateness of the budget and must further certify that the student(s) received appropriate training and approval for any work involving human subjects, live vertebrate animals, radioactive materials, and/or recombinant DNA. The faculty mentor should decline sponsorship of any proposal that falls outside the criteria specified by above guidelines.

B. Once the project is underway the faculty mentor plays a critical role in the learning process by interacting regularly with the student and frequently discussing the student's progress.

C. Faculty members must work with student and department budget officer(s) to provide appropriate oversight for all project expenditures, ensuring that purchases fall within the expectations outlined in the project's proposal, as well as university policy guidelines.

D. The faculty mentor must complete the mid-semester progress report form provided by CURS and return it by the specified date. This form allows the Center staff to track a student's progress and intervene if necessary.

E. Finally, upon conclusion of the project, the faculty mentor should review the student's written assignments (report/reflection paper, PowerPoint presentation, and financial disclosure statement) and provide feedback to the student prior to these documents being submitted by the student(s). Faculty members should help ensure projects are completed in a timely manner.

For questions or assistance, please contact the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship:

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