

# AYRA Program Description and Guidelines

## Academic Year Research Award for Faculty-Student Research and Creative Activities Grants

### Purpose of the Grants:

The purpose of these grants is to expand the opportunities for undergraduate students and faculty to work collaboratively on scholarly projects in the academic year. Research and creative activities are defined in different ways by different disciplines, but in the context of this program these endeavors might be defined as *“any intellectual, inquiry-based project undertaken by the undergraduate student that advances the knowledge of the student in an academic discipline, immerses the students in the culture of the discipline, and leads to new scholarly insights or the creation of new works that add to the wealth of the discipline.”* As part of this program the work must be done under the direction of a CofC faculty member, and it is expected that the results of the effort will be disseminated in appropriate academic or professional forums. These funds cannot be used to support graduate student research.

Faculty-student collaboration in academic research and creative works is one of the most enriching and rewarding experiences on an undergraduate campus. In fact, this activity is so important that it is becoming one of the standards of excellence by which nationally pre-eminent undergraduate institutions are measured. It is hoped that the faculty-student teams who work on these projects will serve as ambassadors of excellence both on and beyond the College of Charleston campus.

Students who participate in these projects are expected to gain a better appreciation for the nature of scholarly work. Faculty members who participate in these projects are expected to imprint understanding and love of scholarship on the students and to help the students develop skills appropriate to the discipline of the inquiry and also to develop improved communication skills.

It is expected that the faculty member will play a key role in the design and management of the project. It is required that the student will be more than an apprentice in the process, and that the student will be encouraged to provide creative input into all aspects of the process. It is up to the applicants to explain the nature of the student and mentor involvement in the project, as it cannot be assumed that the reviewers will know.

### Who May Apply?

Each application requires at least two participants: an undergraduate student and a CofC faculty member. Preference will be given to roster faculty members, although non-roster faculty members are encouraged to apply as well. The student applicant must be a full time, degree seeking College of Charleston undergraduate student with a minimum GPA of least 2.5 in the major during the project period. Applicants who have cumulative GPAs of at least 3.0 are significantly more competitive than those with GPAs below 3.0. AYRA awards are not intended to support research efforts of recent graduates of the College of Charleston, nor do they support graduate students. Therefore, undergraduates who will graduate before the project end date should not apply for funding. A faculty member of the College of Charleston must serve as the Principal Investigator on the project.

More than one student may work on a single project mentored by the same faculty member. However, each student must submit a separate AYRA proposal to be considered for funding and each student/faculty mentor must make clear each student applicant's distinct role in the project. A student may only receive funding on one URCA-supported project per semester (RPG grants are not included in this limit). A faculty member may not submit proposals for more than two grants (AYRA/MAYS; RPG grants are exceptions) in any given semester (Fall, Spring), although faculty members may submit more than two grants in a given academic year (e.g., two in the fall semester and two in the spring semester – these grant proposals may be for the same project or different projects). In the review process, strongest consideration is given to the highest quality grant proposals; however, the panel will also be interested in supporting the work of as many different students and faculty as possible. Therefore, faculty members should understand that multiple grant awards to the same faculty member will be given a lower priority.

### **Amount and Duration of the Grants:**

The funds for AYRA awards are limited and will be awarded by the Director on a competitive basis, based upon the recommendation of a faculty review panel and available funding. Funds are not held in reserve so that awards may be issued to worthy proposals later in the academic year. For this reason, applicants are encouraged to apply as soon as possible in the academic year for funding from the program. **The maximum award is \$300 per application. Project funds may only be used to support specific material costs of the project.** The dates of the project are flexible, but requested support for AYRA projects must be within the fiscal year of application, which begins on July 1 and ends on June 30th. Applications for AYRA funds may include projects that occur during the Fall Semester, Spring Semester, December break, or Maymester. Projects occurring primarily during the summer should not be submitted as AYRA proposals, but instead should be submitted as SURF proposals.

### **Team Member Obligation to the Project:**

**Student Role:** It must be **made clear** in the proposal that 1) the student is academically prepared to have a significant role in the project, 2) that the student's role is more than apprentice or research assistant – the student must have a substantive and central role in the project, 3) the student will have sufficient time to conduct the proposed work, 4) performing the work of the project will not have an adverse effect on the student's continued academic coursework, 5) the student understands the significance of participation in scholarly work with a faculty member, and 6) the student intends to participate in the dissemination of the results of the project, even if dissemination occurs after graduation. Any obligations that the student has in addition to the proposed work on this project (including courses, employment on or off campus, tutoring, serving as a supplemental instructor, leadership position in a club or organization, etc.) must be described in the **Student Statement of Intent** section of the application. The **Student Statement of Intent** is where the student explains how he/she will balance commitments to meet all of his/her obligations.

Student participants in funded projects should work with their faculty mentors to prepare a brief formal report before the start of the examination period in the academic semester in which the project is executed. The report should summarize the results of the project to date (December break project reports should be submitted by the end of January). **The student-mentor team should use the AYRA final report form that may be accessed on the URCA website.** Failure to submit a

report may jeopardize the ability of the faculty mentor to serve as a mentor on any future requests, and it will jeopardize the ability of the student to obtain future funding from URCA.

Student participants are expected to communicate the results of the project at a College-wide public forum. The participants further agree to acknowledge the support of the URCA program and the College of Charleston in any presentations or communication of the results of the project.

**Faculty Role:** Faculty mentors must convince the reviewers that they have the time and resources to effectively mentor the student(s) working on the funded project while meeting the contractual obligations of instruction during the academic year. They must ensure that the grant proposal clearly articulates the role of the student in the funded project. They must agree to supervise all grant activities and obligations of the student, including the required final report.

Faculty mentors are entirely responsible for proper administration of the grant funds and must submit a budget report **no later than 4 weeks after the project end date**. The final budget report form may be accessed on the URCA website. Faculty mentors of funded projects are responsible for reporting any funded projects into the Faculty Activity System (FAS) **within two weeks of receiving the funding**. The FAS will also be updated by the mentor within four weeks after the conclusion of any funded project

### **What to Submit for Application Review:**

1. A typed, completed hardcopy application with ALL signatures must be submitted **no later than 5pm** on the stated deadline to the Director of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (**Trisha Folds-Bennett, 6 Green Way, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**).
2. A completed electronic copy (MS Word or PDF) of the entire application (signed or unsigned) must be submitted **no later than 5pm** on the stated deadline to the Director of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities at [urca@cofc.edu](mailto:urca@cofc.edu).
3. A complete unofficial transcript from each higher education institution attended by the student applicant and a schedule of intended coursework during the project period must be submitted with the hardcopy application. All transcripts and schedules will be scanned and uploaded by URCA program staff into the student's electronic file.
4. If applicable, copies of IRB/IACUC approvals should be submitted with the hardcopy application. Grant funds will not be transferred until all approvals are received.

### **When to Apply:**

For the 2009-2010 academic year, AYRA materials must be submitted **before 5 pm** on one of the dates indicated below:

- September 4, 2009
- November 6, 2009
- January 22, 2010
- March 12, 2010\*

\*Funds awarded during this round of review must be expended before June 30, 2010. For projects that will begin sometime between August 15, 2010 and October 1, 2010 (i.e., in the 2010-2011

fiscal year), provisional review will be completed in the March 12, 2010 round of review. However, grant funding decisions will not be finalized until 2010-2011 budgets are released.

Under no circumstances will late applications be accepted. For an application to be considered on time and complete, both the FINAL electronic and hardcopy must be submitted by 5pm on the deadline. Faculty members should note that signatures by the department chair and school dean are required; therefore, an appropriate amount of time should be set aside for their review before the deadline. The URCA program staff will not be responsible for ensuring that chairs and deans complete their review by the deadline; this is the responsibility of the submitting faculty member.

### Proposal Review Process:

A committee made up of faculty representatives from all Schools of the College will evaluate the proposals; it should be assumed that the reviewers are *not* knowledgeable about the specific content area of the proposed work. It generally takes about three weeks after submission of an application for notification of the final status of an application.

The reviewers will be asked to assess each application using the following criteria:

- Intellectual and academic merit of the project
- Quality of writing in proposal (e.g., sophistication of sentence structure, grammatical precision, absence of careless errors)
- Availability of the faculty member to effectively mentor the student
- Ability of the student to balance project commitment with other academic commitments
- Academic preparation of the student to conduct the project
- Motivation of the student
- Clarity and appropriateness of the description of the roles of the team members
- Appropriateness of the budget
- Likelihood of communication of project results to the academic community

### Proposal Preparation:

(1) **Application Cover Page:** Complete all items on the cover page. The signatures required do not reflect approval or recommendation for funding; they merely attest to the accuracy of the administrative details.

(2) **Project Description:** The quality (both in terms of content and in terms of mechanics) of the project description will be a primary criterion in the evaluation of the application; therefore, students and faculty mentors are strongly advised to work collaboratively on the writing of the description. **Any descriptions over the prescribed word limits will not be eligible for funding.**

The Project Description should include:

(A) **Non-Technical Project Abstract:** This section must be written by the student, but should be reviewed by the faculty mentor for its accuracy and appropriateness. The abstract should be written in 12 pt Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins and single spacing, and should be no more than 250 words in length). The student must provide a brief description of the nature of the research project or creative work, similar to the type of description that would be used for a

conference presentation proposal, scholarly publication, or similar forum typical of the discipline. The abstract should be written in a tone appropriate for a general academic audience so that it is understandable to scholars from outside the discipline of the proposed project. A technical abstract may be attached as an appendix to the application; however, it will not suffice as the description and justification of the project.

**(B) Student Statement of Intent:** This section must be written by the student. The statement should be written in 12 pt Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins and single spacing, and should be no more than 250 words in length. In it, the student should describe the importance of involvement in the project to his or her academic and career development. The student should also address the ways in which the demands of work on the project will be balanced with other academic, job-related, and organizational commitments during the project period.

**(C) Roles Statement:** This statement should be written by the mentor. (12 pt font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, single spaced, and no more than 250 words in length). If the faculty mentor has more than one student applicant for a single project, the mentor should make clear in each application what the student's distinct role in the project will be. The description should 1) state the individual responsibilities of the mentor and the student who will participate in the project, and 2) explain how the faculty mentor will balance a commitment to the project with other responsibilities.

**(D) Proposed Budget:** This section should be written by the faculty mentor. Make sure that the budget form includes:

1. An itemized budget **for the entire project** should be presented and funds requested from the URCA program clearly highlighted. The total budget request from the URCA program may not exceed \$300.

2. Each budget item for which support from the URCA program is requested must be specifically justified as necessary to the success of the project. If the total project costs exceed the AYRA award limit then description of how the excess will be funded, whether from another award or departmental funding, must be included. The status (i.e., funded/pending, project dates) of this additional funding should be indicated.

Allowable costs supported by the URCA program are:

**Supplies and Materials:** The total cost of supplies and materials includes the sales tax and estimated shipping costs (Sales tax and shipping costs do not have to be listed separately, but they are real costs that must be paid and therefore considered when planning a budget.). Items over \$50 separately should be listed separately. Items under \$50, such as photocopying, may be listed collectively. **The necessity to the project of each requested item must be described.** All items purchased with URCA funds (in part or in whole) are considered to be the property of the College of Charleston and must remain in the custody and possession of the College of Charleston at the conclusion of the award period.

The following expenses are NOT allowed:

- Student Travel and/or Faculty Travel
- Student Salary and/or Faculty Salary
- Contractual fees
- Indirect Costs

(E) **Transcripts:** Attach a complete unofficial copy of the student's College of Charleston transcript and transcripts from any other colleges or universities from which student has received academic credit. Transcripts should only be included with the hardcopy application. URCA staff will scan and upload them to include with the electronic copy to be reviewed by URCA committee members.

(F) **Student Course Schedule during Project Period:** Attach either a proposed or actual student course schedule for the semester(s) in which the project will be carried out. This schedule should only be included with the hardcopy application. URCA staff will scan and upload them to include with the electronic copy to be reviewed by URCA committee members. If this schedule changes, the new schedule must be reported to the URCA office.