

MAYS Program Description and Guidelines

Major Academic Year Support 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. MAYS 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 MAYS 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 MAYS 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 \$5,000 per application. Project funds may be used to support specific material costs of the project, student salary, travel directly associated with the project (this does NOT include travel for dissemination of results), and other direct costs of the project.** The dates of the project are flexible, but requested support for MAYS projects must be within the fiscal year of application, which begins on July 1 and ends on June 30th. Applications for MAYS 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 MAYS 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.

In collaboration with faculty mentors, student participants in funded projects are expected to submit a formal final 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 MAYS 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. The student and faculty mentor are expected to communicate the results of the project in an appropriate forum (see below).

Faculty Role: Faculty mentors must convince the reviewers that they have the time and resources to effectively mentor the student(s) working on this 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 must also be updated by the mentor within four weeks after the conclusion of any funded project

In collaboration with student participants, faculty mentors are expected to submit a formal final project 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 final report form can be accessed from 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. The student and faculty mentor are expected to communicate the results of the project in an appropriate forum (see below).

Presentation of Project Results

Team members of funded projects are expected to present the results of their scholarly work in a public forum. They are strongly encouraged to present the results of their work at an appropriate Departmental, School, College-wide, regional, or national public forum. One such forum that is appropriate for most academic disciplines is the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (www.ncur.org); however regional or national meetings of disciplinary conferences may be preferred venues in many areas. The participants 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.

What to Submit:

1. A typed, completed hardcopy application with ALL signatures must be submitted to the Director of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (**Trisha Folds-Bennett, 6 Green Way, 2nd Floor**) **no later than 5pm** on the stated deadline.
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 (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, MAYS 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) A one-page **Student Statement of Intent** (12 pt font, 1 inch margins, single spaced, Times New Roman, no more than 500 words) written by the student applicant, in which the student discusses his or her academic and career goals and explains the importance of the project to his or her academic and career development. The student should also address how the project will coordinate with coursework and other commitments (e.g., jobs, student organizations, service organizations). The student must disclose in the statement whether he or she will receive academic credit for work on the project and a description of that credit (i.e., course number, number of credit hours, semester that credit will be awarded) must be incorporated into this statement of intent. Intent to continue similar research or creative activity beyond the period of MAYS support will be viewed positively by the review panel and should be addressed in the statement of intent.

A professional tone and strong writing ability are expected in the statement. Therefore, the student is strongly encouraged to work with the faculty mentor while preparing the statement.

(3) A **Project Description**, no longer than five pages (12 pt font, 1 inch margins, Times New Roman, single spaced). *Appendices or other attached materials are not allowed.* The project description should contain the following elements. Deviation from this format will be grounds to deny funding or to reduce the relative rank ordering of the application. Although faculty mentors may be primary authors of this section of the proposal, student applicants should be included in the writing of the project description as such experience serves an important role in the student's development as a scholar.

(a) **Non- Technical Project Abstract:** For posting and public dissemination if the proposal is funded. No more than 250 words in length. Should include 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) **Project Objectives:** State the primary objectives of the project. Short-term objectives that are planned for completion during the funded period and also long-term objectives, as appropriate, that will be pursued after the funded effort ends should be included.

(c) **Project Significance:** Describe the significance of the project. After reading this, the members of the review panel (who will most likely not be experts in the field of the

proposed work) should be convinced that the work to be done in this project is of sufficient quality that if successful, the results and findings would be of interest to an academic community of scholars in the field of the inquiry.

(d) **Methods of Work:**

- Describe how the work on the project will be conducted, including the specific techniques and tools of the discipline that will be used to complete the project. Budget request for specific materials, equipment, and/or other tools of the project should align with this description.
- Describe any special facilities, equipment, or travel that is necessary for the successful completion of the project. Budget request for specific materials, equipment, and/or other tools of the project should align with this description.
- Describe the nature, destination, length, and necessity of any student and/or faculty travel that will occur.
- Describe existing joint efforts of the project team members, any preliminary results that the team members have produced, and existing or planned interactions with other individuals or groups that are potentially beneficial to the project.
- If the project involves human subjects, describe the status of the [IRB](#) request for the project. If the project involves vertebrate animal subjects, describe the status of the [IACUC](#) request for the project.
- A timetable or timeline (presented in a table as shown on the application form) to delineate expectations of meeting projects goals and objectives is strongly recommended. There should be compelling temporal need to conduct the project during the specified time period. The temporal need should be related to issues other than availability of the student or mentor.

(e) **Faculty Mentor and Student Participant Roles:** Describe the role of both mentor and student and the nature and extent of their interaction. 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 explain how the faculty mentor will balance a commitment to the project with other responsibilities.

(f) **Current and Pending Support:** If applicable, describe other current or potential sources of support available for the project. Include both external and internal sources: Title, Dollar Amount, Period of Award. Then, address the impact of current and pending support on work described in this application. For pending support, clearly state how the requested funding from this application will be affected by the outcome of other funding decisions. If additional funding (pending, planned, or current) will enable the team to pursue additional goals, clearly delineate that impact (potential or actual) on the project. It is appropriate to submit applications for projects that are also supported by external funding, as long as the PI can clearly state how the MAYS funding is essential to the project and will enhance the development of student(s) working on the project.

(g) **Student Development:** Describe how funding of this proposal will enhance the development of both academic and career opportunities for the student(s).

- (h) **Project Dissemination:** Describe when and how the results of this work will be internally communicated to the College of Charleston and describe when and how the project results will likely be externally communicated.
 - (i) **Student Involvement in Application Process:** Clearly indicate the involvement of the student applicant in the preparation of this project description. The reviewers may evaluate this section to get an indication of the nature of the student – mentor interaction expected on the project.
- (4) **References:** List supporting literature references in the accepted format of your discipline.
- (5) **Proposed Budget:** A completed project budget using the budget form must be submitted. The total cost of the project (URCA funding and other funding) must be clearly indicated on the budget form. The total budget request from the program may not exceed \$5,000. It should be clear that at least half of the funding is going to direct support of the student effort. Allowable costs are as follows:
- (a) **Student Salary:** It is expected that a full time student (12 semester hours) will spend no more than 10 hrs per week working on a project. Financial need of the student is NOT an acceptable justification for salary in and of itself, so the justification must include more specific reasons that student salary is necessary. **If the student will receive academic credit for work on the project during the semester in which salary will be awarded, a very clear statement of how the paid hours will be separated or will be above and beyond the academic credit hours must be included in the justification.**
 - (b) **Student Travel:** Only travel needed to conduct the work may be supported. If travel support is requested it must be justified that comparable project results could NOT be obtained thorough use of professional literature or internet resources. Travel for the presentation of results is not allowed (students should apply for an RPG for presentation travel expenses). Use *ORGA per diem* and mileage rates as needed.
 - (c) **Faculty Travel:** Proposed faculty travel will be scrutinized very carefully. Any faculty travel must be justified in relationship to the student’s work and effort and the project goals or objectives. The program will not fund faculty travel without concurrent student travel. Faculty travel is expected to have substantial departmental or school support to be considered.
 - (d) **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). List items over \$50 separately. Items under \$50, such as photocopying, may be listed collectively. The relevance to the project of each request listed must be described. All items purchased with these 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. Departmental or School matches for individual items in excess of \$500 are encouraged. If a match will not be made available, the reason must be addressed in the justification section. Items that cost over \$1,000 will require justification based upon student need in this project and by proposed use in future student projects.
 - (e) **Other:** Must be justified in relationship to the students’ work and effort and the project goals or objectives. Includes contractual services and other miscellaneous

costs that are directly related to the research/creative work project. Identify and explain these costs in the Budget Justification.

- (f) **Cost-Share and External Support:** Indicate in the appropriate categories any in-kind or cash cost share to the project provided by the Department or School. Show any in-kind or cash support for the project from external sources as appropriate for each budget category. It is appropriate to submit applications for projects that are also supported by external funding, as long as it is made clear that the URCA funding will enhance the project and development of student(s).

Costs for personnel other than the undergraduate student and the faculty mentor are not allowed. Salary support is only allowed for student participants. Faculty or students costs related to presentations or publications should not be included, as funds for this purpose are available on a competitive basis by separate application (RPG) or through the Department or School. No consultant costs or subcontracts are allowed.

(6) **Budget Justification:** Each item requested from URCA must be specifically and clearly justified as essential to the success of the project. Often, submitters omit this section – **please be advised that if this section is not addressed sufficiently the application will not be funded.**

(7) **Faculty BioSketch:** Include a biographical sketch for each faculty mentor involved in the project using the BioSketch form provided. Additional information that the faculty member feels is relevant to the project may also be provided so long as the TWO page limit is not exceeded.

(8) **Letter of Support by Mentor:** Complete the evaluation of the student using the form and scale provided. The evaluation should describe the student applicant's aptitude for the work described, nature of the mentor's previous interaction with the student, and the mentor's opinion on the likely effect of the experience on the student's development.

(9) **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.

(10) **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.