

COLLEGE of
CHARLESTON

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH
AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

SURF Program Description
Summer Undergraduate Research with Faculty

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 during the summer. Research and creative activities can be defined in different ways, but in the context of this program these endeavors might be defined as *“any creative effort undertaken by the undergraduate student that advances the knowledge of the student in an academic 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. Projects may be initiated by students or may be faculty projects in which students are invited to participate. Where possible, 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 beyond the College of Charleston campus.

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

It is normally 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 state 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 both in the major and cumulatively during the project period. Applicants who have cumulative and major GPAs of at least 3.0 are significantly more competitive than those with GPAs below 3.0. SURF 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 SURF 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 SURF project per summer. A faculty member may not submit proposals for more than two SURF grants in a single summer. Faculty members who have received URCA funding during the previous academic year may submit a SURF grant for the same project or a different project. 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 in a given fiscal year. **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 SURF awards are limited and will be awarded by the Director on a competitive basis, based upon the recommendation of faculty reviewers and available funding. The maximum award is \$6,500. **Project funds may be used to support specific material costs of the project, student salary, faculty salary, travel directly associated with the project (this does NOT include travel for dissemination of results), and other direct costs of the project.** Grants will be awarded for activity conducted between the first Monday after spring graduation and the last day of classes in Summer II. The dates of the project are flexible within that time period, but it is expected that the student work on the project will be for 40 hours a week for a 10 week period. Only half of the awarded funds will be available through the end of June, and the other half of the awarded funds will be available on the first day of July. This is to accommodate the fact that the grant spans two fiscal years. In specific and well-justified circumstances, grants may be awarded in full either before June 30 or after June 30, although applicants should not expect nor should base project plans on such latitude. Projects occurring only during Maymester should be submitted as a MAYS grant.

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 is prepared to work on the project full-time (40 hours per week) for 10 weeks in the summer, 4) performing the work of the project will not have an adverse effect on other obligations of the student, 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 within 4 weeks of the project end date. The report should summarize the results of the project to date. **The student-mentor team should use the SURF final report form that may be accessed on the URCA website.** Failure to submit a report will 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.

Students and their faculty mentors are required to present the results of their projects at the annual Summer Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Poster Session held on Convocation Day. Information about the details of the presentation is sent to the grantees at least one month in advance of the event.

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 any contractual obligations during the summer. 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, including proper procedures for travel arrangements and student salary disbursement. Faculty must submit a final expense report, along with the project report, **no later than 4 weeks after the project end date**. The final expense 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 project end date.

In collaboration with student participants, faculty mentors are expected to submit a formal final project report within 4 weeks of the project end date. The report should summarize the results of the project. The final report form can be accessed from the URCA website. Failure to submit a report will 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.

Students and their faculty mentors are required to present the results of their projects at the annual Summer Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Poster Session held on Convocation Day. Information about the details of the presentation is sent to the grantees at least one month in advance of the event.

Mandatory Meeting:

Any students intending to apply for SURF grants, and if possible their mentors, are required to attend a mandatory meeting regarding the application process. There will be two opportunities to meet this requirement each year. The dates for SURF 2010 are:

Friday, January 15, 2010	2:00 – 3:00	Hawkins Living-Learning Center
Tuesday, January 19, 2010	4:00 – 5:00	Hawkins Living-Learning Center

What to Submit:

1. A completed original application with **ALL signatures** and **8 copies** must be submitted by the application deadline to the Director of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (**Trisha Folds-Bennett, 6 Green Way, 2nd floor**).
2. A completed electronic copy (MS word or PDF) of the entire application (signed or unsigned) must be submitted by the application deadline to the Director of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (urca@cofc.edu).
3. The Letter of Support by Faculty should be completed, printed, and signed by the faculty, then submitted with the hard copy application in a sealed envelope that is signed on the flap.

4. Complete unofficial copy of Transcript
5. If applicable copies of IRB/IACUC approvals.

When to Apply:

For the 2009-2010 academic year, SURF materials (both electronic and hard copies) must be submitted before 5 pm on February 5, 2010.

Applications received after the 5:00 pm deadline will not be reviewed. Incomplete/partially submitted applications will be eliminated from the review process.

Proposal Review Process:

Each grant application will go through a two step evaluation process:

1. School Evaluation: Two faculty members from within each School will be appointed by the Dean to evaluate all applications from that school. The School within which applications are reviewed is determined by the department of the faculty mentor. It should be assumed that the reviewers are *not* knowledgeable about the content area of the proposed work. Each application will be reviewed independently by each faculty reviewer. The two reviewers within each School will meet to discuss their evaluations and to prepare a final summary evaluation which will be submitted to the Director of the URCA program. The summary evaluation will recommend which applications should move to the final evaluation step.

2. SURF Campus Review Panel: This panel is comprised of one faculty member from each School. These reviewers are appointed by the School Deans. Panel members review the applications that have been recommended by school-level reviewers. The review panel makes recommendations to the Director of the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities program, who makes the final decision as to which applications should be funded and at what level of funding. Award decisions will be sent by email to the student, mentor and the chair of the department for each application.

Any faculty member who submits a SURF grant may NOT serve as a school-level reviewer or on the Campus Review Panel member.

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

- Intellectual and academic merit of the project
- Quality of writing in the proposal (e.g., sophistication of sentence structure, grammatical precision, absence of careless errors)
- Availability of the faculty member to effectively mentor the student
- Availability of the student to work 40 hours per week for 10 weeks during the summer
- Ability of the student to balance the project commitment with other 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:** All items on the cover page should be completed. 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 should be included. The student should also address how the project will coordinate with other commitments (e.g., coursework, 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 SURF support will be viewed positively by the review panel and should be addressed in the statement of intent. Intent to participate in the dissemination of results should be addressed.

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). This section should be jointly written by faculty mentor and student collaborator. *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.
- (b) **Project Objectives:** Primary objectives of the project should be stated. 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:** Significance of the project should be described. After reading this, 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.

- Describe any special facilities, equipment, or tools that are 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 SURF 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:** Outside of the Summer Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Poster Session to be held on Convocation Day, 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 \$6,500. It should be clear that at least half of the funding is going to direct support of the student effort.

Grants will be awarded for activity conducted between the first Monday after spring graduation and the last day of classes in Summer II. The dates of the project are flexible within that time period, but it is expected that the student work on the project will be for 40 hours a week for a 10 week period.

When preparing the budget, it is important to clearly indicate how expenses will be applied in each fiscal period. Only half of the awarded funds will be available through the end of June, and the other half of the awarded funds will be available on the first day of July. This is to accommodate the fact that the grant spans two fiscal years. In specific and well-justified circumstances, grants may be awarded in full either before June 30 or after June 30, although applicants should not expect nor should base project plans on such latitude.

- (6) **Budget Justification:** In this section of the proposal, each item request from URCA must be specifically justified as essential to the success of the project. Identify sources of additional support for each item as appropriate. **If this section is not adequately addressed, the grant proposal will not be funded.**

Allowable costs are as follows:

- (a) **Student Salary:** The standard student stipend is \$3,500. This is with the expectation that the student will work full time (40 hours per week) for 10 weeks. Exceptions from this work load must be justified. If the student will not be able to work full time (40 hours per week) on the project during the project period, the level of student support must be pro-rated to accurately reflect the actual commitment of the student during the hours that the faculty member will be able to provide direct mentoring. The deviation must be clearly justified. A compelling argument must be made that a student who will not be working full time on the project or who will have other obligations (academic, employment, or volunteer) will be able to succeed in reaching the objectives of the project and the necessary student development. Financial need of the student is NOT an acceptable justification.
- (b) **Faculty Salary:** A maximum stipend of \$2,000 for faculty is allowed. Faculty who are mentoring more than one student on a single project are not eligible for more than \$2000 in salary. Faculty who are mentoring more than one student and on different projects **may** be eligible for salary support above the \$2,000 maximum. The SURF program supports all types of URCA projects (those primarily designed by the mentor and those primarily designed by the student applicant). Regardless, it should not be assumed that the mentor stipend is uniformly deserved in all cases. Sufficient justification for the requested mentor stipend based on the frequency and nature of the interaction of mentor and student during the SURF funding period should be provided. Faculty stipends (or other support) may not exceed that of the student.
- (c) **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 by more thorough use of the literature or internet resources. Travel for the presentation of results is not allowed. (RPG grant proposals should be submitted for

presentation travel expenses.) *ORGA* per diem and mileage rates should be used as needed. *Caution: If the reviewers deem that the travel is not justified the project will be denied funding.*

- (d) **Faculty Travel:** Any faculty travel must be justified in relationship to the students' work and effort and the project goals or objectives. The program will not fund faculty travel without concurrent student travel unless convincing justification of need (based on the student) is presented. Faculty travel is expected to have additional departmental or school support.
- (e) **Supplies and Materials:** The total cost of supplies and materials, including the sales tax and estimated shipping costs, should be listed. Items over \$50 should be indicated separately. Items under \$50, such as photocopying, may be listed collectively. The relevance to the project of each request must be described. Additional support for the project must also 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. Supplies should be described in general terms in the Budget Justification. However, individual items costing more than \$500 must be listed and their use in the project must be described in the Budget Justification. Departmental or School matches for individual items of \$500 or greater are encouraged. Items costing over \$1,000 require justification based upon student need in this project and would be further justified by proposed use in future student projects. A BRIEF (**no more than one additional page**) description of proposed future projects may be added to the application.
- (f) **Other:** Any items must be justified in relationship to the students' work and effort and the project goals or objectives. This should include 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.

Cost-Share and External Support (Column III and IV): Any in-kind or cash cost share to the project provided by the Department or School should be indicated. In-kind or cash support for the project from external sources as appropriate for each budget category should be indicated. It is appropriate to submit applications for projects that are also supported by external funding, as long as it is made clear that the 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. 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.

(7) **Faculty BioSketch:** A biographical sketch for each faculty mentor involved in the project using the BioSketch form provided should be included. 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:** An evaluation of the student using the form and scale provided must be submitted separately by the faculty member to ensure confidentiality. The Letter should be completed, printed, and signed by the faculty, then submitted with the hard copy application in a sealed envelope that is signed on the flap. The evaluation should describe the student applicant's aptitude for the work, 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:** A copy (unofficial is fine) of the student's College of Charleston transcript must be submitted.