

SURF Program Description

Faculty-Student Summer 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 problems. 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, 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 continue their collaborative efforts into the ensuing academic year and beyond. It is also expected that the teams participating in these funded 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 enquiry 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 as many aspects of the process as possible.

Who May Apply?

Each application requires at least two participants. Applicant teams (multiple students/multiple mentors) are allowed. The student applicants must be full time, degree seeking College of Charleston undergraduates with declared academic majors and a minimum cumulative GPA of least 2.5. A faculty member of the College of Charleston must serve as the Principal Investigator on all proposals submitted. It is normally expected that a faculty member will be named as the mentor on no more than two SURF awards in a single summer. A student may only receive one award from the SURF or MAYS programs in the same academic year.

Amount and Duration of the Grants:

The maximum award for a single proposal is \$6,500. Grants will normally be awarded for the activity conducted in the summer 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 ten weeks within that time period. It is also expected that only half of the awarded funds will be available through the end of June, and the other half of the awarded funds will not be available until after July 1st. Any deviations from these expectations, including applications to conduct the work at sometime other than the summer months, must be clearly stated, justified and explained as part of the proposal.

Team Member Obligation to the Project:

It is normally expected that the faculty mentor(s) and the student(s) working on a project will have no obligations that detract from their efforts during the funded project period. Any obligations that will detract from a full time effort on the project must be stated in the proposal and a realistic assessment of how the participants will conduct the work and meet the other obligation(s) must be provided. Team members of funded projects may be required to present the results of their work at a College-wide poster session held in conjunction with the fall convocation and they will be expected to participate at a Departmental or School-wide public forum in the spring. The team members of funded projects will also be required to submit a written project summary for public dissemination. In addition, team members will be strongly encouraged to present the results of their work in appropriate state, regional, national or international forums. 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.

Proposal Review Process:

The signed original and seven additional printed copies of the proposals must be submitted to the Dean of the School to which the faculty mentor belongs. In addition, one electronic copy must be submitted to the Director of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities. The deadline for submitting all copies is before 5 pm on Friday, February 6th, 2009. Each proposal will be evaluated by faculty within the School of the faculty mentor. The evaluation form for SURF proposals (which are to be used by the Schools) can be viewed as a separate PDF file document. The evaluation criteria are separated into three major areas and can be described as follows:

Participant Qualifications:

- Ability of the faculty member to effectively mentor the student
- Academic preparation of the student to conduct the project
- Motivation of the student

Intrinsic Merit:

- Intellectual and academic merit of the project
- Impact on student development
- Likelihood of communication of project results to the academic community outside CofC

Budgetary and Programmatic Appropriateness:

- Clarity and appropriateness of the description of the roles of the team members
- Appropriateness of the budget
- Identifiable as Research or Creative Activity within an academic discipline

Each School will be asked to submit two individual evaluations and one summary evaluation for each application. The Dean of the School will select two anonymous faculty evaluators to complete the individual evaluations. It is strongly recommended that the same individual(s) prepare all of the School's summary evaluations. The Schools will then forward to the Director by Friday, February 27th, 2009 the proposals, completed anonymous faculty evaluations and the summary School evaluation forms. Proposals not recommended for funding by the Schools may be returned to the applicants along with the School evaluation forms at this time.

Although all reviewers are asked to use the same criteria, Schools and individuals within a School might use differing degrees of selectivity. For that reason, a College-wide SURF Committee, with one representative appointed by the Dean from each School, will then review the individual and summary School evaluations and rank-

order the submissions. A faculty member submitting a SURF application may not also be on the College-wide SURF Committee, and should not be an individual reviewer for a School. The SURF Committee will not re-evaluate the proposals, but it may wish to review the applications in order to more accurately interpret the evaluations and then properly rank order the proposals. The SURF Committee will complete its work by Friday, March 20st, 2009.

Before any awards are finalized, the teaching commitments of the mentors for approved awards will be checked. Any mentors with concurrent teaching duties will be asked to submit a mentoring plan (if they have not already done so, see Budget Description of Faculty Salary) that addresses the concurrent workload issue. The mentoring plan for any faculty member with a concurrent teaching load must be approved by the mentor, mentor's Chair, and URCA program Director. Similarly, before any awards are finalized, the course commitments of the student applicants will be checked, and any students with May or Summer course work, will be asked to submit a research plan timeline (if they have not already done so) to clearly demonstrate that the course work will not coincide with the 10 week full time research effort of the SURF project. (If the concurrent coursework is for earned credit for the research or creative activity, then the student may only need to state that in the plan.) The student's research plan must be approved by the mentor, mentor's Chair, and URCA program Director. After review the Director will seek approval of qualified awards from the Provost in the rank order as determined by the College-wide SURF Committee, until all funds for the year have been committed. The Director will start to announce the award decisions by Friday, March 27th, 2009.

SURF Proposal Preparation

The signed original and seven additional printed copies of the entire proposal application must be submitted to the Dean of the School to which the faculty member belongs before 5 pm on Friday, February 6th, 2009. In addition, one electronic copy of the entire proposal (including URCA cover sheet, either signed or unsigned) must be submitted to the Director of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities. In preparing a proposal, it is important to remember that the proposal will be evaluated first by faculty within a School, and then by faculty outside of the School. Applicants are encouraged to look over the SURF Evaluation form that the faculty reviewers will be asked to use before preparing an application. Technical or disciplinary expertise of the reviewers should not be assumed. The two forms needed for proposal preparation are available as separate documents. The completed application will include the signed **UNIFORM APPLICATION COVER PAGE FOR INTERNAL SUPPORT FROM URCA** and the **2007 MAYS/SURF Unified Proposal Forms**. The proposal should include the following sections:

(1) A completed URCA proposal cover sheet. The signatures required on the form do not reflect approval or recommendation for funding; they merely attest to the accuracy of the administrative details. (The electronic copy of the cover sheet does not need to be signed.)

The completed SURF Application using the 2007 MAYS/SURF Unifies Proposal Forms, to include:

(2) A one-page statement (12 pt font, 1 inch margins, single spaced) prepared by the student that explains why she/he wants to work on this project and what she/he anticipates learning or accomplishing from the experience. The student is encouraged to work with the faculty mentor while preparing the statement. Intent to continue the work in the academic year, which is strongly encouraged, should be accompanied by a planned curriculum and self-assessment of how academic year work on the project will fit into the student's schedule.

(3) A project description, no longer than six pages (12 pt font, 1 inch margins, single spaced). ***Appendices or other attached materials are not allowed.*** The project description should contain the following elements. Significant deviation from this format may be sufficient grounds to deny funding or to reduce the relative rank ordering of the application.

- (a) Non-Technical Project Abstract: Suitable for posting and public dissemination if the proposal is funded. No more than 150 words in length.
- (b) Project Objectives. State the objectives of the project. Include 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 10-week effort ends.
- (c) Project Significance. Describe the significance of the project. After reading this, the evaluators (who will most likely not be experts in the field of your 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. Describe the role of both the faculty mentor and the student and the nature and extent of their interaction. Describe any special facilities, equipment, or travel that is necessary for the

successful completion of the project. Describe existing joint efforts of the faculty-student team members, any preliminary efforts that the team members have made, 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 live vertebrate animal subjects, describe the status of the [IACUC](#) request for the project. A timetable or timeline, similar to that shown below is strongly recommended.

Spring 2009	Summer 2009	Academic Year 2009-10
Preparatory efforts	Short term objectives	Long range objectives Dissemination Plan

- (e) **Current and Pending Support.** List the Title, Dollar Amount, and Period of Award for any current or pending support by any of the applicants on this proposal. Describe the impact that other support will or would have on the work described in this application. For example, if additional funding will enable the team to pursue additional goals, clearly delineate and state that impact.
- (f) **Student Development.** Describe the way in which funding this proposal will enhance the development of the student applicant. For mentors with current support, this statement and the description of "*Impact of Current and Pending Support on Work Described in this Application.*" in the previous section are to be taken together in the evaluation regarding impact on student development.
- (g) **Project Dissemination.** Describe when and how the results of this work will be internally communicated to the College of Charleston. Describe when and how the project results will be externally communicated.
- (h) **Student Involvement in Application Process.** Clearly indicate the involvement of the student applicant in the preparation of this project description. Note to applicants and reviewers: the URCA program, including the SURF program, supports all types of undergraduate research and creative activity projects. One extreme model would be an application written entirely by the mentor (with the exception of the Student Statement of Intent). The other

extreme would be a SURF application written entirely by the student applicant (excluding the Faculty BioSketch and Faculty Mentor Recommendation forms). In the mind of some, the ideal application might involve a more cooperative, collaborative effort between mentor and student, but that ideal may not be attainable nor is it necessary for a successful SURF application. Do not assume that the reviewers are familiar with the nature of your discipline to the extent that the role of undergraduates in the research process is known. Make the case that the student involvement, which begins with the proposal application, is sufficient and appropriate to achieve both the aims of the project and the necessary student development.

- (i) **Mentoring Plan.** This section is to be written by the mentor. It should provide a brief description of the nature and timing of the planned interactions between the faculty mentor(s) and undergraduate(s) during the funded project period. It should not be assumed that the evaluators will be familiar with "normal" mentoring practices for your discipline. Likely topics of discussion, the number of discussions per day or week, the length of those interactions, and the forms of communication planned should be described.
- (4) **References.** List supporting literature references in the accepted format of your discipline.
- (5) **SURF Proposed Budget and Budget Justification Page.** When preparing the budget, it is important to know that funds requested and allocated for use prior to July 1st must be spent before the end of June or they will be lost. The expectation is that half the funds will be used prior to July 1st. There is no carry over of SURF funds from the fiscal end ending on June 30th into the fiscal year beginning on July 1st. A completed project budget using the SURF budget page (do not submit the MAYS budget page). The total budget request from the SURF program may not exceed \$6,500. Allowable costs are as follows:
 - (a) **Faculty Salary:** The standard faculty mentor compensation is \$2,000 in taxable salary support for mentoring the student on the project from the SURF program. However, an additional \$500 mentor compensation is allowed if the mentor can demonstrate in the mentoring plan a justified and significant mentoring workload for this project. If the faculty mentor expects to have other obligations, including teaching, travel, or other research, during the project period, a mentoring plan must be provided in the Budget Justification along with a weekly percent effort estimate for each obligation

- (teaching, travel, or other research) in the SURF funded period. The weekly combined percent effort for all tasks can be less than 100%, where 100% effort is defined as 40 hrs of work effort by the faculty mentor in the funded period. The maximum compensation a faculty mentor with multiple SURF awards can obtain from the SURF program in a single summer is \$5,000. Faculty mentors are encouraged to seek addition compensation support from external grants, other internal grants, and the mentor's Departmental or School.
- (b) Student Salary: The standard student stipend for the SURF is \$3500, with the expectation that students will work full time (40 hours per week) for 10 weeks. Exceptions from this workload should 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 explained in the Budget Justification. 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.
- (c) Travel: Travel costs must relate directly to student conduct of the research/creative activity (*e.g.*, travel for collection of samples from the field, travel to a museum or library special collection). Explain the basis for the calculation in the Budget Justification. *It may be appropriate for some projects to require less salary support and greater travel support.* In those cases, the proposal should make it clear that the student will conduct research or creative activity as the primary purpose of the travel. Travel expenses related to making research presentations should not be requested; they are to be supported by separate RPG awards. Faculty travel costs are allowed if justified in terms of the impact on the student development during the SURF project period, however no more than half of the total SURF award can go towards faculty support. On the budget form you should separate the costs of faculty travel and student travel, justifying each separately.

- (e) **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.) Supplies may 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 in excess of \$500 are encouraged.
 - (f) **Other:** 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.
 - (g) **Cost-Share and External Support:** Indicate in the appropriate categories in the second budget column any in-kind or cash cost share to the project provided by the Department, School or College (including other internal grants). In the third budget column, show any in-kind or cash support for the project from external sources (grants) in the appropriate budget categories.
 - ⊗ Costs for personnel other than undergraduate students and faculty mentors 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.
 - ⊗ Consultant costs or subcontracts are **not allowed**.
- (6) **Student Transcript.** Attach a copy of the student's transcript from the SIS system or Cougar Trail.
- (7) **Faculty BioSketch.** Attach a biographical sketch for the faculty member 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.** Attach a letter (using the form provided) prepared by the mentor describing the student applicant's aptitude for the work described, nature of the mentor's previous interaction with the student, and mentor's opinion on the likely effect of the SURF experience on the student's development.