

## UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLAR AWARD APPLICATION 2008-2009

To encourage and award excellence in independent student scholarship, the University has established the Undergraduate Research Scholar Award (URSA). This award is to support student work above and beyond ordinary coursework performed under the supervision of faculty members across the entire array of disciplines at our various colleges.

The award will consist of \$5,000 allocated towards a student's tuition bill, half awarded in each semester, with the spring award contingent on progress made in the fall. Successful completion of the project will be noted on the student's transcript.

Scholars will be expected to make at least two presentations about their work, one brief five-minute introduction at the **30 April 2008** Student Research Day outlining the relevance and context of the work to be done, and one longer presentation during Research Day the following year, following successful completion of the project. The project is expected to be completed in full by 10 May 2009, with a report filed with the Award Committee Chair.

The committee is charged with distributing at least five of these awards across academic departments and programs, with no more than two projects awarded within a given school or college. The committee judges the applications on the following criteria:

- Quality, clarity, and completeness of project description.
- Significance and originality of project, with respect to both the discipline and the student.
- Appropriateness of approach and/or method.
- Feasibility of project completion and specificity of timeline.
- Clarity and specificity of expected outcomes.

**Format:** An application consists of the following sections presented in the order indicated. Please include letter of recommendation with other application materials.

1. **Proposal Cover Sheet:** Include the following information on one page: Project Title, Applicant's Name, Major, School (Business Administration, Education, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Westminster Choir College, or Continuing Studies), Department(s) and Name(s) of Faculty Mentor(s), Expected Month and Year of Graduation, Contact information, Date.
2. **Project Summary:** Abstract of project (about one-half page or 100 words in length)
3. **Project Description:** Description should address the criteria above, be written clearly and concisely with a minimum of technical jargon, accessible to a multidisciplinary review committee; contain a timeline for completion, including plans for submission of an interim report, and be no more than five pages in length, including timeline and references.
4. **Project Bibliography:** References to the primary literature on the topic should be presented in a format appropriate for the discipline (e.g., MLA or APA style).
5. **Letter of Recommendation from Advisor:** Recommendation letter should describe:
  - a. student qualifications, including ability to maintain good academic progress and complete project
  - b. project significance, both to the discipline and to the student's learning
  - c. mentor plan, including support activities such as regular meetings and assessment of progress
  - d. expected outcomes, including project presentation in discipline- specific format
  - e. previous experience as a mentor for undergraduate research

**Deadline:** Thursday March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008; 3:00 pm Rider University Lawrenceville Campus Mailroom, marked for Laura Hyatt, Ph.D., Undergraduate Research Scholar Award Committee Chair. Submit 9 double-sided copies.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What kinds of projects are eligible?**

Just about anything, as long as it is original, grounded in an academic discipline and teaches both you and the world something new. The URSA committee is in its fourth year and has supported student work ranging from a study of the mating habits of oyster toadfish and a series of paintings of the human body to a study of depictions of Hester Prynne in film and an investigation of the development of barbershop quartets.

### **When in my University career should I apply for this?**

All full-time or College of Continuing Studies (CCS) students in good academic standing interested in pursuing research or creative activities in an independent project supervised by a faculty mentor are eligible. Successful recipients must have completed at least one year of university study and remain enrolled at Rider until completion of the project. Students will generally only be supported for one year by this award; although it is thought that it will best serve rising seniors, rising juniors and sophomores with exceptional projects and at least 24 credits at Rider are also encouraged to apply.

### **I'm in CCS and am not exactly a full-time student; what is my standing and am I permitted to participate?**

The full-time status requirement may be waived if the applicant is enrolled in CCS at the time of the application. CCS students must be enrolled and matriculated in CCS at the time of application. You must have completed at least 12 Rider credits by the time the project is begun. Your faculty sponsor must verify your eligibility with the appropriate Dean's Office.

### **Who should I get to act as my advisor?**

Find a faculty member who is familiar with you and your work; if the project you have in mind is multidisciplinary, you may wish to ask multiple faculty to advise you simultaneously. As long as the faculty member is not already sponsoring another URSA application and is not on the URSA committee, they are free to advise you, if they wish.

### **Can I get academic credit for doing this?**

Generally, students receiving the awards enroll in XXX490 courses each semester within their departments. These classes carry 3 credits and appear as "Independent Study" on your transcript. You may enroll in them for both semesters.

### **Do I have to wait for September to get started?**

By no means; in fact, you are encouraged to start as soon as you can. Summer is a spectacular time to get a lot of independent work done; you are free from class obligations and can immerse yourself in your studies; opportunities might crop up in the summer for you to intensively explore your project. You may also be able to do laboratory, library, or travel for interviews during that time.

### **I'm interested in putting together a dance or vocal performance, rather than engaging in an academic research activity; can I apply?**

Absolutely. As long as your project is original and fits into a demonstrable academic and historical context, we're eager to see your ideas. It may be valuable to you to produce some kind of written documentation about the creative process you undergo in assembling your work, so include that in your proposal.

### **What else am I obliged to do if I receive the award?**

We expect that you will appear at Research Celebration Day the year before you undertake your work as well as after you have completed it. Your final report is due on 10 May 2009. You may be asked to make yourself available for programs such as Open House or Family Day.

### **Is your question not answered here?**

**Contact Laura Hyatt, Department of Biology by email: [lhyatt@rider.edu](mailto:lhyatt@rider.edu) with any other concerns you might have.**