Undergraduate Research Mini-Grant Request for Proposals (RFP)

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

For 2024/2025 Awards

Goal

The goal of the UL Undergraduate Research Mini-Grant program is two-fold: to insure that the undergraduate students at the university benefit from the university's growing R&D program, and to improve student outcomes by facilitating undergraduate research. It is believed that students who participate in directed undergraduate research will perform well in their majors and be more prepared for their future careers. Accordingly, the University has set aside $30K to be awarded as 15 undergraduate research mini-grants of $2000 each. The University's undergraduate research council, the Louisiana Council for Excellence in Undergraduate Research (LaCOUER), with representatives from each college, along with the Student Center for Research, Creativity, and Scholarship (SCRCS) manages and administers this mini-grant program.

Scope of Grant

Undergraduate research can be very broad, encompassing original creative and scholarly activities in every discipline. The mini-grant program requires that a qualified faculty or staff member be directly engaged in mentoring one or more undergraduate students. Mentoring allows students to explore their interests and to challenge themselves beyond the classroom environment. There are many opportunities for mentored research, from creative performance projects to innovative lab research on biomedical engineering. The Undergraduate Research Council encourages grant projects in all disciplines supported by the university. Interdisciplinary projects are allowed and encouraged.

Eligibility

All UL Lafayette faculty members (including instructors) and research active staff (such as Research Scientists and Library staff) are eligible to apply and serve as the Principal Investigator (PI) for an Undergraduate Research Mini-Grant project. <u>Only one application per PI is permitted.</u> *Students are not eligible to apply.* Interested students should contact their research mentors to inquire about applying.

Application Process

Proposals must be submitted for approval to the chair and dean of the PI. Then proposals can be submitted online by email to advance@louisiana.edu. File names should include the PI name and minigrant; i.e. sherrykrayesky-minigrant. The due dates are posted on our website. The PI will receive a confirmation email confirming the receipt of their proposal. All proposals will be reviewed, but awards will not be made without administrative approval.

Selection Process

The applications will be managed by SCRCS however they are reviewed and awarded by LaCOUER. The rubric shown in Appendix A below will be used for scoring the proposals based on merit. In making the final awards, the first priority in the review process will be given to the merit score from the rubric. A secondary priority will be to ensure that each college that has applied receives at least one funded project. Reviews will be completed and PI's notified of acceptance via email.

By way of guidance, past experience shows that the impact on students is often the deciding factor between proposals that are funded and those that are not. Successful proposals show that students will be engaged in higher-level cognitive activities, such as applying, analyzing, evaluating, or creating, as opposed to lower-level activities such as remembering and understanding. For example, it would be preferable if the students were involved in the design of the experiment, rather than simply being tasked with data collection.

Accounting

All PI's will be assigned a Banner account number to use for the project, and the accounts will be managed by SPFAC, just like an external grant. Project funds may be used for any reasonable and ordinary project-related expenses, including equipment, supplies, travel, registration, student stipends, and so on. The only restrictions are that project funds may *not* be used for faculty compensation, and all standard university travel, purchasing, and approval processes policies apply. LaCOUER and SCRCS are not involved in the approval process for expenditures. The Department Head, in consultation with the PI, may approve minor re-budgeting within the original scope, budget, and intent of the project. PI's are encouraged to keep a close eye on their expenditures. Overspending of the account will render the PI ineligible for future RFP's, and the PI's department may be required to reimburse the university for the overage. A final report that details project expenditures is required, as described below.

Deliverables

At the end of the project period, all PI's who are awarded an Undergraduate Research Mini-Grant are required to submit a brief report describing the results of the project, as shown in Appendix B below. PI's will also be responsible for requiring their students to disseminate their work, describing the project, which must also be submitted at the end of the project period. In addition, they are highly encouraged to facilitate an actual student presentation, demonstration, performance, or show of the scholarly work at some appropriate venue, such as the Undergraduate Research Conference hosted each year by the Student Center for Research, Creativity, and Scholarship. PI's who do not submit the required final report will not be eligible for consideration in future RFP's.

Instruction Sheet:

1. Complete the cover page.
2. Complete the basic information page
3. Give a description of your proposal in 12 pt. font, single spaced, addressing the following points:
    a. Purpose and impact of the proposed work/plan/program
        i. The narrative of the proposal must include the purpose and justification for each of the items listed in the budget.
    b. Projected impact of the work during and after the duration of the grant period
    c. Person(s) responsible for
        i. Implementation
        ii. Installation
        iii. Maintenance
        iv. Operation
        v. Training (with qualifications)
        vi. Other as needed
4. Complete a Budget Proposal.
5. Include any additional information relevant to your application.

Proposal template:

Title

Name of Submitter
(Faculty or Staff Only)

Organization/College/Department

Basic Information page (required)
Date:
Title:
Project Lead (PI)
coPI(s)
Primary Contact
Email:
Phone:
Department
College / Center or Organization
Abstract (250 words)

ONE ELECTRONIC COPY (Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF) OF PROPOSAL SHOULD BE EMAILED TO
advance@louisiana.edu
BY THE DEADLINE
Hardcopy will not be accepted

Budget Proposal

1. **Equipment** $

2. **Software** $

3. **Supplies** $

4. **Personnel** $

5. **Training** $

6. **Other** $

TOTAL: $

Appendix A: ADVANCE Grants Evaluation Rubric

Merit of Project	Fair = 1	Good = 2	Exceptional = 3
Preliminary Material or Background: Characterize current trends	Author includes 2-3 cited works to support proposal. Analysis provided addresses individual works, but no connections or syntheses are made.	Author provides a discussion of cited works; shares connections between different sources Describes research trends and connections related to the proposed work.	Author provides evidence of synthesis of cited works showing depth of insight/analysis through use of multiple works to support different points within the proposal. Author shares connections among cited works and communicates research trends related to proposed work. PI demonstrates a competent understanding on relevant concepts within the proposal
Proposal Professional Impact: explain how the proposed work will impact the discipline the work focuses on.	Author suggests a relationship exists between the topic and existing information in related areas of knowledge but does not provide a definitive connection between the two. Proposal does not provide connections between the proposed work and the disciplinary foundations.	Author states a relationship exists between the topic and existing information in related areas of knowledge. Proposal provides descriptions of how the work proposed connects to disciplinary foundations.	Author develops and shares defined relationships between the topic and existing information in related areas of knowledge. Proposal provides evidence through descriptions and conclusions to document a direct connection to disciplinary foundations.
Broader Impact: description of the proposals impact on UL Lafayette students, the University as a whole and the overall community	Project does not encourage longevity or how it will attract non-participating student to undergraduate research	Project documents an attempt to encourage longevity for the project and how it will attract some (2-3) non-participating students to undergraduate research	Project provides a plan to maintain longevity and how it will attract participating and non-participating students to undergraduate research
Meets ADVANCE goals	Proposal documents student participation and how students will demonstrate active learning but does not show how student discovery will drive the process Planned student learning outcomes shared are limited to rudimentary cognitive tasks, such as remembering or understanding existing knowledge	Proposal documents how students will collectively drive discovery within the project. Planned student learning outcomes include medium-level cognitive tasks such as applying and/or analyzing.	Proposal documents how students participate in individually driven discovery. Planned student outcomes will include high-level cognitive tasks such as evaluating and/or creating.

Description of methods and techniques the project will use, with explanation	Explanation of methods are not shared or do not demonstrate a rationale for use or how they support the project.	Approach and reason for use of methods are described and align with the goals of the project	Methods are appropriate for topic and discipline and are explained to document how these support the goals of the project
Proposal Timeline: outline of achievable goals within the one-year period of performance	PI has considered and made plans for the initial steps of the project	PI has considered and made plans for initial and intermediate steps of the project and shares how these could be achievable	PI has considered and made plans for *all* steps of the project and explains with details how these will be achieved.
Budget: explanation of how the proposal will use the funds	Budget explains how the funds will be used, but does not include quotes for proposed expenses	Budget explains how the funds will be used and includes documentation for a portion of the expenses	Budget explains how the funds will be used and has documentation such as including quotes for all proposed expenses
Number of students involved & interdisciplinary connections described	Proposal shows a request for supplies and equipment but lacks explanation of how these will be used over time. Interdisciplinary connections are missing	Proposal mentions how students will be using supplies or long-term equipment over time. Interdisciplinary connections are suggested but not explained	Proposal documents how students will be using supplies or long-term equipment over time. Interdisciplinary connections are shared and explained
Writing: proposals should be written for a professional, but non-expert audience. They should follow conventions of academic writing	Proposal includes 4+ grammatical errors. Writing style and format makes the proposal difficult to read. Description shared is difficult to understand, verbose, or uses too much jargon specific to a given field	Proposal includes occasional (2-3) grammatical errors. Writing style is easy to follow. Description depicts the project well, but uses some jargon within a specific field leading to difficulties for the reviewer to understand	Proposal is free from grammatical errors. Description is clear, concise, and uses appropriate non-technical descriptions and terms or explains the terminology clearly

Appendix B: Report Guidelines for ADVANCE program grants and stipend

Name of Recipient:
Title of Research Grant or Stipend:
Department:

Proposal Title:
1. Abstract of Project (500 words or less), including the significance of findings or work accomplished.
      a. Impact on students
      b. Total number of students involved.
2. List any publications, presentations, performances, or joint inter-professional work that have or may result from this project. Attach copies of any publications or presentations.

3. Provide a detailed budget describing how the grant monies were spent.

4. List any plans for future sustainability or funding.