

MEMORANDUM

Office of the Provost

Joseph B. Hellige
Vice Provost for
Academic Programs

Dean of the
Graduate School

To: Academic Deans and Department Chairs

From: Joseph Hellige, Vice Provost for Academic Programs
Cornelius W. Sullivan, Vice Provost for Research

Date: January 14, 2005

Subject: Request for Undergraduate Research Proposals



Seven years ago we inaugurated the USC Undergraduate Research Program to provide support for collaborative research between undergraduate students and members of the faculty. **This year we will offer two grant periods: summer 2005 and academic year 2005-2006.** Attached is this year's request for proposals, with a due date of **Tuesday, March 8, 2005 for both grant periods.** We ask your assistance in making faculty aware of the program and encouraging members of your faculty to respond to the request for proposals. Due to the overwhelming success of this program in previous years, the Provost has provided funding this year at \$350,000. This enables us to substantially increase the number of proposals that are funded.

As indicated in the attached request for proposals, the USC Undergraduate Research Program solicits proposals from USC faculty in all disciplines to support undergraduate students as members of faculty research teams or to otherwise collaborate with undergraduate students on scholarly activity. Special consideration will be given to proposals for projects that align with one or more of the critical pathways identified in the university's updated strategic plan (life sciences, communication, the urban paradigm, and/or the arts initiative).

Please note that proposals may be submitted by individual faculty, by multiple faculty within a department, or by multiple faculty from different academic units. Proposals may include projects where students work individually with specific faculty members or projects where teams of students work either with individual faculty members or with a team of faculty members. Each proposal must involve funding for **two or more** undergraduates. The average stipend for an academic year is **\$2,500**; the maximum is **\$3,000**. Awards will be limited to a maximum of \$10,000 per project. Additional details are contained in the attached request for proposals. For more information, please visit the new website for undergraduate research at <http://www.usc.edu/ugresearch>. Questions should be directed to David Glasgow, Director of Undergraduate Programs (dglasgow@usc.edu) at 213-740-6146.

**University of Southern California
Undergraduate Research Program
Proposal Cover Page**

I. Proposing Faculty

Name _____

Address _____

Department/School _____

Telephone _____ E-Mail _____

Name _____

Address _____

Department/School _____

Telephone _____ E-Mail _____

Name _____

Address _____

Department/School _____

Telephone _____ E-Mail _____

II. Proposal Title _____

Brief Abstract

III. Project Start Date _____ **Project End Date** _____ **Total Duration** _____

IV. Number of Undergraduates to be recruited for the project _____

V. Funding/Student _____ **Total Amount of Funding requested** _____

Please attach your complete proposal of no more than 5 double-spaced typewritten pages including each of the items identified in the Application section of the RFP. Proposals should be submitted to the Office of Undergraduate Programs, Grace Ford Salvatori 227, MC 1695 (ATTN: David Glasgow), no later than **Tuesday, March 8, 2005**.

**University of Southern California
Undergraduate Research Program
Request for Proposal
Grant Periods: Summer 2005 and Academic Year 2005 – 2006**

I. Overview of the Program

USC is one of only eighty-eight Research I universities among the 3,500 institutions of higher education in the United States. We believe that undergraduate education within a research university offers special opportunities to students that are not available in other academic institutions. The ability to integrate research activities with professional and liberal education provides USC with a distinctive model of undergraduate education that sets us apart from other institutions.

The basic idea of learning as inquiry is the same as the idea of research; even though advanced research occurs at advanced levels, undergraduates beginning in the freshman year can learn through research. In the sciences and social sciences, undergraduates can become junior members of the research teams that now engage professors and graduate students. In the humanities, undergraduates should have the opportunity to work in primary materials, perhaps linked to their professors' research projects. As undergraduates advance through a program, their learning experiences should become closer and closer to the activity of the graduate student. By the senior year, the able undergraduate should be ready for research of the same character and approximately the same complexity as the first-year graduate student; the research university needs to make that zone of transition from senior to graduate student easy to enter and easy to cross. For those who do not enter graduate school, the abilities to identify, analyze, and resolve problems will prove invaluable in professional life and in citizenship. (Boyer Commission Report, 1998)

Providing support for collaborative research between an undergraduate student or a team of undergraduate students and a faculty member is best accomplished through mechanisms that blur the distinction between research and teaching. Such an approach should serve to maximize faculty participation and enhance the learning experiences of the students. The Undergraduate Research Program is funded by the Office of the Provost under the joint auspices of the Vice-Provost for Research and the Vice-Provost for Academic Programs. The goal of this program is to make available financial resources that will encourage faculty to integrate undergraduates into their ongoing scholarly and professional activities and that will enable interested undergraduate students to participate.

II. Guidelines

Proposals are solicited from USC faculty in all disciplines to support undergraduate students as members of faculty research teams or to otherwise collaborate with undergraduate students on scholarly activity. Proposals may be submitted by individual faculty, by multiple faculty in a particular department, or by multiple faculty in different academic units/departments. Limited funding will also be available as matching funds for departmental undergraduate research initiatives.

Proposals may include projects where students work individually with specific faculty, or they may be projects where teams of students work either with individual faculty or faculty teams. Within specific proposals, faculty may choose to work individually with student researchers and share responsibility for the group components of the project (see below). Special consideration will be given to proposals that align with one or more of the critical pathways identified in the university's updated strategic plan (life sciences, communication, the urban paradigm, and/or the arts initiative) or to supplement existing grants in order to support undergraduate researchers.

Funding is not provided for students registered in directed research courses, for graduate research assistants or for projects where undergraduate researchers will be supervised exclusively by graduate students.

- A. Proposals should describe plans for the involvement of **two or more** undergraduate students.
- B. Students are to be paid in the form of stipends. The average stipend for an academic year is **\$2,500**. The maximum is **\$3,000**. Awards will be limited to a maximum of **\$10,000** per project.
- C. In addition to students' individual involvement in research activities, projects should include some regular, integrative or group activity such as research seminars, colloquia, participation in regional or national conferences, etc. As part of their research experience, students are expected to receive training with respect to relevant ethical issues, appropriate forms of information retrieval and appropriate forms of scholarly communication.
- D. Each undergraduate research project should culminate with an appropriate report of the completed work (for example: a formal research paper, poster presentation, or similar demonstration of scholarly/creative accomplishments). All examples of student work should be submitted as deliverables at the conclusion of the funding cycle, for publication through the undergraduate research site on line.

Funding Criteria

A faculty panel will review proposals and funding decisions will be made on the basis of the following criteria:

1. The quality of the proposed research project.
2. The level of educational benefit to the undergraduate research assistants.
3. Proposing faculty's previous experience working with undergraduates, particularly in a research and/or collaborative environment.

4. The extent to which the project involves collaboration among faculty, particularly across academic units and/or disciplines.

Proposals that are project-based extensions of existing courses are **not** likely to be funded. The majority of the project budget should be devoted to student stipends. Proposals should include no more than 10% of the total project budget for materials and supplies.

III. Application

Applications should not exceed five double-spaced typewritten pages and should include the following:

1. Completed cover page.
2. Description of the research projects or collaborations in which the individual undergraduate students will participate.
3. Clear definition of the role of the undergraduate researcher(s) or collaborator(s), including the number of hours per week that students are expected to spend in the research.
4. The process and criteria for selecting student researchers, which will assure that students who participate in these projects have demonstrated academic excellence, are well suited to the project structure and content, and will benefit academically from the experience.
5. Details regarding oversight and supervision by the proposing faculty.
6. Discussion of the integrative and/or group activities in which the undergraduate researchers will engage.
7. Nature of the final research report that will be prepared by each participating student.
8. Budget. Funds are available to provide stipends for undergraduate research assistants, either during the academic year or during the summer. Funding for any one student will be limited to a maximum of \$3,000 for the period covered by the grant and may be divided among academic year stipend, summer stipend, and travel. Project budgets should include no more than 10% for research costs. Joint submission to this program and federal agencies or other funding sources for undergraduate research is encouraged. Awards will be limited to a maximum of **\$10,000** per project.

IV. Timeline

Proposals should be submitted to the Office of Undergraduate Programs **no later than Tuesday, March 8, 2005**. Applicants have the opportunity to apply for two grant periods: summer 2005 (3 months) and fall 2005-spring 2006-summer 2006 (12 months).