

2012-13 Annual Report Undergraduate and Creative Activities Program

I. Narrative Description of the Status of the Discipline from a National Perspective (including emerging issues and trends)

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. According to George Kuh (2008, AAC&U), participation in a high impact practice such as faculty-student research at the undergraduate level, leads to deep learning that correlates with higher levels of student performance. Such engagement, argues Kuh, increases the frequency of meaningful interactions with faculty and peers. The net result is that students spend more time and effort in hands-on and collaborative forms of learning that contribute to the development of their analytical thinking skills. Interestingly, data suggest that a mentored research experience has benefits for all students, but particularly for students from underrepresented groups (e.g. Vieyra, Gilmore, Timmerman, 2011, CUR Quarterly) and in STEM disciplines.

More broadly, some institutions have begun to recognize that a well-conceived and managed undergraduate research program not only serves current students, but can also be an excellent tool for the recruitment of new students (e.g., Noji, 2011, CUR Quarterly). Showcasing faculty-student research is quickly becoming a primary public relations strategy that increases the visibility of academic programs and encourages students to become involved in research early in their academic careers.

At the College of Charleston, we believe that students who participate in faculty-mentored projects will gain a better appreciation for the nature of scholarly work. Faculty members who participate in these projects are expected to imprint understanding and love of scholarship on the students and to help the students develop skills appropriate to the discipline of the inquiry and also to develop improved communication skills. Furthermore, it is hoped that the faculty-student teams who work on collaborative projects will serve as ambassadors of excellence both on and beyond the College of Charleston campus.

II. Program

- a. Mission statement: To provide grant funding that expands the opportunities for undergraduate students and faculty to work collaboratively on scholarly projects in the academic year and during the summer. In the context of this program, research and creative activities are defined as *“any intellectual, inquiry-based project undertaken by the undergraduate student that advances the knowledge of the student in an academic discipline, immerses the student in the culture of the discipline, and leads to new scholarly insights or the creation of new works that add to the wealth of the discipline.”*
- b. Program goals and their relationship to the College’s strategic plan:
 - i. Program Goal 1: To provide financial support for undergraduates at the College of Charleston to work on a research or creative project under the mentorship of a CofC faculty member.
 - ii. Program Goal 2: To provide sufficient financial support of faculty during summers so that they are encouraged to work collaboratively with students.
 - iii. Program Goal 3: To ensure access to research support for faculty-student teams across all disciplines represented at the College of Charleston.
 - iv. Program Goal 4: To provide opportunity for students to pursue professional development within the context of their chosen discipline, particularly in terms of dissemination of the research results or creative products in appropriate academic or professional forums.
 - v. Program Goal 5: To provide training opportunities for students and faculty who are interested in learning more about faculty-student collaboration and strategies for successfully implementing collaborative projects.
- c. Strategies and tactics in the College’s strategic plan your department would place as highest priorities (*please consider this a preliminary and tentative list that would collectively provide a starting point for a workshop on strategic priorities this fall*)
 - i. Strategy 1: Enhance the Undergraduate Academic Core

1. Provide each student a personalized experience that integrates classroom learning with at least two the following: research and creative activities, civic engagement, study away, internships and peer education
- ii. Strategy 3: Develop and Retain a Highly Qualified and Diverse Faculty and Staff
 1. Enhance resources for pedagogical innovation, faculty research, and creative activity through the re-establishment of a faculty development center. Incentivize faculty and staff to write and administer grants in all of these areas.
- d. Student Learning Outcomes of the program
 - i. Learning Outcome #1: Student will be able to demonstrate knowledge and application of the “tools of the discipline” as a result of participation in a project funded by the URCA program.
 - ii. Learning Outcome #2: Student will demonstrate the professional skills of the discipline in the form of a poster or oral presentation at a professional conference and/or a publication in a professional journal.

III. Narrative Summary and Analysis of Departmental or Program Accomplishments

The Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Program had a successful and exciting year of supporting the collaborative work of students and faculty across multiple disciplines at the College of Charleston.

Faculty Participation in Administration of Program:

Academic Year Grants: A group of 20 faculty members, representing 20 different programs/departments of the College served on the campus review committee for MAYS, AYRA, and RPG funding requests. At least one faculty member from each school served on the committee, as well as a representative from the library. Committee members participated in 3 rounds of proposal reviews: September, November, and January. Reviewers read all proposals submitted in the round and completed an online evaluation of each proposal. These individual evaluations were compiled, and the review team met to discuss/resolve discrepancies and to determine a ranking of proposals. Building on the work of previous years, the evaluation rubric for the proposals was refined so that final decisions about funding were based on more standardized, and thus valid, assessments of project quality and effectiveness of the mentoring plan.

Faculty on At Large Committee:

School of	Department	Name
SOA	Theatre	McCabe, Janine
SOB	Econ and Finance	Evan, Jocelyn
SOB	Marketing and Supply Chain	Blose, Julia
SEHHP	Health & Human Performance	Flynn, Michael
SEHHP	Teacher Education	Lanahan, Brian
SHSS	Communications	Kopfman, Jennifer
SHSS	English	Carens, Tim
SHSS	Political Science	Liu, Guoli
SHSS	Psychology	Ruscio, Mike
SHSS	Religious Studies	Siegler, Elijah

School of	Department	Name
SHSS	Philosophy	Nadelhoffer, Thomas
SHSS	History	Saar, Assan
LCWA	Classics	Gentile, Kristen
LCWA	Hispanic Studies	Weyers, Joseph
SSM	Biology	Harold, Tony
SSM	Chem & Biochem	Kinard, Frank
SSM	Computer Science	Anderson, Paul
SSM	Geo & Env. Geosci	Vulava, Vijay
SSM	Physics & Astronomy	Preyer, Norris
	Library	Profit, Steven

SURF grants: For the SURF review process, 23 faculty members from 14 different departments and at least one representative from each school served on the review panel. Reviewers were sorted into two levels. At the first level, 7 multi-disciplinary teams of 2-3 reviewers each were created. Each reviewed 6-8 proposals focused on similar research questions and methodologies. Each of these teams ranked their proposals, eliminating any proposals that were considered to be of a quality that did not merit funding. These groups of ranked proposals were submitted to a second level of reviewers, a team made up of one representative from each of the six schools. This team made final recommendations for funding. As with the academic year grant process, evaluation rubrics were refined to increase validity and reliability.

SURF 1st Level Review Committee:

School	Department	Name
SEHHP	Teacher Education	Brian Lanahan
SHSS	Political Science	Annette Watson
SHSS	Political Science	Guoli Lui
SHSS	English	Tim Carens
SOA	Theatre	Janine McCabe
LCWA	Classics	Kristin Gentile
LCWA	Hispanic Studies	Joseph Weyers
SSM	Chemistry & Biochemistry	Wendy Cory
SSM	Chemistry & Biochemistry	Marion Doig
SSM	Chemistry & Biochemistry	Jim Deavor
SSM	Chemistry & Biochemistry	Frank Kinard
SSM	Physics & Astronomy	Linda Jones
SSM	Physics & Astronomy	Joe Carson
SSM	Geology	Vijay Vulava
SSM	Biology	Tony Harold
SSM	Biology	Christine Byrum

SURF 2nd Level Review Committee:

School of	Department	Name
SOA	Theatre & Dance	Mark Landis
SOB	Marketing & Supply Chain Management	Jose Gavidia
SEHHP	Teacher Education	Reid Adams
SHSS	English	Trish Ward
SLCW	French, Francophone & Italian Studies	Lisa Signori
SSM	Biology	Eric McElroy
LIBRARY		Angela Flenner

Grant Application and Award Activity

Academic Year Grants (MAYS, AYRA, RPG): In total, 74 applications were received during the academic year, representing a total request of \$68,720. Of these, 40 proposals were awarded funding support for a total award of \$37,851, which exceeded the total available budget by \$1351. In order to distribute funding among a greater number of applicants, some requests received less than their full request for support.

Breakout by Award Type:

MAYS	13 Applications	\$ 49,357.00	Amount Requested
	10 Awarded	\$ 25,363.00	Amount Awarded
AYRA	10 Applications	\$ 3,000.00	Amount Requested
	4 Awarded	\$ 1,200.00	Amount Awarded
RPG	38 Applications	\$ 16,363.00	Amount Requested
	26 Awarded	\$ 11,288.00	Amount Awarded

One focus of our planning and outreach for the 2011-13 academic year has been to increase the diversity of disciplines represented among applicants and awardees. We have struggled to achieve that goal, as evidenced by the data in the graph below. Despite efforts to publicize that the opportunities for funding are not limited to the sciences (and psychology), to reach out to department chairs in disciplines outside the sciences, and to highlight the work of faculty and students in diverse disciplines through links to video and testimony on our website, we continue to receive the majority of applications from science disciplines (including psychology). In their defense, these applications are of the highest quality and represent an impressive record of mentoring students well; it is often tempting to fund all of the proposals in the sciences to preserve the quality of experience that we expect students to have in the URCA program. However, the review committee has focused specifically on reflecting the same diversity of disciplines in funding decisions that exists in the application process. This year in particular, we actively sought applications from the humanities, an initiative that was led by a team of faculty who attended a CUR conference on undergraduate research in the humanities in spring 2012. A representative from this team visited several departments in the humanities to talk about the URCA program and encourage applications. Although we did not see a noticeable increase in applications from the humanities during the academic year, we did see an increase in the SURF applications.

	SSM	HUM	SS	SOA	EHHP	SOB	LWCA	Library
2010-2011								
Applied	67%	3%	18%	5%	2%	2%	3%	1%
Awarded	63%	5%	17%	7%	3%	3%	1%	1%
2011-2012								
Applied	59%	4%	25%	1%	11%	0%	0%	0%
Awarded	58%	4%	24%	4%	11%	0%	0%	0%
2012-13								
Applied	84%	5%	21%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Awarded	78%	8%	25%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%

SURF Grants: In total, 48 applications for SURF grants were received, representing a total request of \$352,812.50. Of these, 32 applications were awarded some funding support for a total award of \$227,033.

SURF	48 Applications	\$284,092.50	Amount Requested
	32 Awarded	\$189,182.00	Amount Awarded

Diversity with regard to Discipline:

SSM	HUM	SS	SOA	EHHP	SOB	LWCA
Applied: 63%	Applied: 17%	Applied: 13%	Applied: 2%	Applied: 2%	Applied: 2%	Applied: 2%
Awarded: 69%	Awarded: 13%	Awarded: 16%	Awarded: 0%	Awarded: 0%	Awarded: 0%	Awarded: 6%

Dissemination of Results: Although tracking of this outcome is ongoing, we have some insight regarding the dissemination of results through our RPG funding opportunity. Of the 35 students who received SURF grants during summer 2012, 11 received RPG funding to attend a regional or national conference during the 2012-13 academic year. Of

the 21 students who received MAYS grants during the 2011-12 and 2012-13 academic years, 2 received RPG funding in 2012-13.

Celebration of Scholars Event: At the end of each summer, the URCA program holds a poster session to showcase the faculty-student research that has occurred during the summer months. All faculty-student teams who receive SURF funding are required to present at this session. In summer 2011, we expanded the event to include submissions from faculty and students outside of the SURF program. In total, 79 faculty-student teams presented posters that displayed the results of their collaborations on Convocation Day 2012. The event was held in Physician's Promenade and Auditorium, and was coordinate with the Convocation schedule to encourage attendance.

Training and Outreach

Campuswide Information Sessions: In an effort to better inform faculty and students about the opportunities offered through the URCA program and to provide guidance regarding the application process, two information sessions were held, one in the fall and one in the spring. In addition, Trisha Folds-Bennett presented an overview of the program at New Faculty Orientation.

Faculty Development

Enhanced Institutional Membership in the Council on Undergraduate Research: For 2011-12, the College of Charleston moved to an Enhanced Institutional Membership in CUR. With this membership, all faculty and students on campus are eligible to be members of CUR and to receive their publications and other electronic communications. As a result, the College had 88 faculty and students register as members in CUR. If these same persons had joined as individual members, the cost to the College of Charleston would have been approximately \$5000 (vs \$3000 for the Enhanced Institutional Membership).

Looking Ahead

Over the past four years, we have worked to refine the review process, to increase diversity in the program, and to provide opportunities for faculty and student development beyond simply funding grants. We will continue to work toward improvement in these areas for 2012-13, but will pay particular attention to the following:

- 1) **Expansion of Academic Year Review Panel** – Although we have a diverse representation of disciplines on the review panel, our goal is to have one representative from every single department on campus. That way, we can ensure that the various types of scholarship and creative activity that characterize the academic departments on our campus are given voice in the grant review process.
- 2) **Assessment of Impact** – We would like to initiate a more formal assessment approach to the evaluation of the URCA program. With a new director in fall 2013, we hope to have the capacity to begin this process. We will also create a rubric to be used by faculty mentors that helps us to determine in a more standardized manner the extent to which students learn the tools of their discipline through the projects that URCA funds.
- 3) **Heightened Awareness of the Faculty-Student Research being Conducted at CofC** – Starting in summer 2012, the Celebration of Scholars event was better integrated with the Convocation Day activities, an initiative that will continue in 2013. The event is now located visibly on Physician's Promenade. Traffic through the event was much heavier than in the past when attendees had to make a more intentional effort to attend.
- 4) **Increased Publicity of Program Opportunities** – Through visits to departmental meetings and student organization meetings, partnerships with other programs (e.g., McNair, ROAR Scholars, Spectra, Honors College), updating of website information, and strategically-placed posters/flyers around campus, we will make a concerted effort to spread the word about grant opportunities.