Purpose of the Grants:

The purpose of these grants is to expand the opportunities for undergraduate students and faculty to work collaboratively on scholarly projects in the academic year. Research and creative activities are defined in different ways by different disciplines, but in the context of this program these endeavors might be 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." As part of this program the work must be done under the direction of a CofC faculty member. Projects may be initiated by students or may be faculty projects in which students are invited to participate. Where possible, 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 serve as ambassadors of excellence both on and beyond the College of Charleston campus.

Students who participate in these projects are expected to 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.

It is 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 all aspects of the process. It is up to the applicants to explain the nature of the student and mentor involvement in the project, as it cannot be assumed that the reviewers will know.

Who May Apply?

Each application requires at least two participants: an undergraduate student and a CofC faculty member. Preference will be given to roster faculty members, although non-roster faculty members are encouraged to apply as well. The student applicant must be a degree-seeking College of Charleston undergraduate student with a minimum GPA of 2.5 in the major and cumulatively. Applicants who have cumulative and major GPAs of at least 3.0 are significantly more competitive than those with GPAs below 3.0. Preference will be given to full-time students (i.e., those who are registered for 12 or more hours), although students with fewer than 12 hours may be considered if funds are available and their part-time status is clearly justified. MAYS awards are not intended to support research efforts of recent graduates of the College of
Charleston, nor do they support graduate students. Therefore, undergraduates who will graduate before the project end date should not apply for funding. A faculty member of the College of Charleston must serve as the primary mentor on the project, although students who are working with faculty in partnership universities (e.g., MUSC, The Citadel) may apply as long as a CofC faculty member serves as the primary mentor.

More than one student may work on a single project mentored by the same faculty member. However, each student must submit a separate MAYS proposal to be considered for funding and each student/faculty mentor must make clear each student applicant’s distinct role in the project. A student may only receive funding on one URCA-supported project per semester (RPG grants are not included in this limit). A faculty member may not submit proposals for more than two grants (AYRA/MAYS; RPG grants are exceptions) in any given semester (Fall, Spring), although faculty members may submit more than two grants in a given academic year (e.g., two in the fall semester and two in the spring semester – these grant proposals may be for the same project or different projects). In the review process, strongest consideration is given to the highest quality grant proposals; however, the panel will also be interested in supporting the work of as many different students and faculty as possible. Therefore, faculty members and students should understand that multiple grant awards to the same faculty member or same student in an academic year will be given a lower priority.

Amount and Duration of the Grants:

The funds for MAYS awards are limited and will be awarded by the Director on a competitive basis, based upon the recommendation of a faculty review panel and available funding. Funds are not held in reserve so that awards may be issued to worthy proposals later in the academic year. For this reason, applicants are encouraged to apply as soon as possible in the academic year for funding from the program. The maximum award is $5,000 per application. Project funds may be used to support specific material costs of the project, student stipend, travel directly associated with the project (this does NOT include travel for dissemination of results), and other direct costs of the project. The dates of the project are flexible, but requested support for MAYS projects must be within the fiscal year of application, which begins on July 1 and ends on June 30th. Applications for MAYS funds may include projects that occur during the Fall Semester, Spring Semester, December break, or Maymester. Projects occurring primarily during the summer should not be submitted as MAYS proposals, but instead should be submitted as SURF proposals.

Team Member Obligation to the Project:

Student Role: It must be made clear in the proposal that 1) the student is academically prepared to have a significant role in the project, 2) that the student’s role is more than apprentice or research assistant – the student must have a substantive and central role in the project, 3) the student will have sufficient time to conduct the proposed work, 4) performing the work of the project will not have an adverse effect on the student’s continued academic coursework, 5) the student understands the significance of participation in scholarly work with a faculty member, and 6) the student intends to participate in the dissemination of the results of the project, even if dissemination occurs after graduation. Any obligations that the student has in addition to the proposed work on this project (including courses, employment on or off campus, tutoring, serving as a supplemental instructor, leadership position in a club or organization, etc.) must be
described in the **Student Statement of Intent** section of the application. The **Student Statement of Intent** is where the student explains how he/she will balance commitments to meet all of his/her obligations.

In collaboration with faculty mentors, student participants in funded projects are expected to submit a formal final report within 4 weeks of the project end date. The report should summarize the results of the project and should include a final budget report. The student-mentor team should use the MAYS final report form that may be accessed on the URCA website. Failure to submit a report will jeopardize the eligibility of the faculty mentor to serve as a mentor on any future requests, and it will jeopardize the eligibility of the student to obtain future funding from URCA.

The student and faculty mentor are expected to communicate the results of the project in an appropriate forum (see below).

**Faculty Role:** Faculty mentors must convince the reviewers that they have the time and resources to effectively mentor the student(s) working on the funded project while meeting the contractual obligations of instruction during the academic year. They must ensure that the grant proposal clearly articulates the role of the student in the funded project. They must agree to supervise all grant activities and obligations of the student, including the required final report.

Faculty mentors are entirely responsible for proper administration of the grant funds, including proper procedures for travel arrangements and student stipend disbursement. Faculty must submit a final expense report, along with the project report, **no later than 4 weeks after the project end date.** The final report forms may be accessed on the URCA website. Faculty mentors of funded projects are responsible for reporting any funded projects into the Faculty Activity System (FAS) **within two weeks of receiving the funding.** The FAS must also be updated by the mentor within four weeks of the project end date.

Failure to submit a final report may jeopardize the eligibility of the faculty mentor to serve as a mentor on any future requests, and it will jeopardize the eligibility of the student to obtain future funding from URCA. The student and faculty mentor are expected to communicate the results of the project in an appropriate forum (see below).

**Presentation of Project Results**

Where possible, team members of funded projects are expected to present the results of their scholarly work in a public forum. They are strongly encouraged to present summaries of their projects at an appropriate Departmental, School, College-wide, regional, or national public forum. 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. The participants agree to acknowledge the support of the URCA program and the College of Charleston in any presentations or communication of the results of the project.
What to Submit:

1. A typed, completed hardcopy application with ALL signatures must be submitted to the Director of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (Beth Meyer-Bernstein, 6 Green Way, 2nd Floor) no later than 5pm on the stated deadline.

2. A completed electronic copy (MS Word or PDF) of the entire application (signed or unsigned) must be submitted no later than 5pm on the stated deadline to the Director of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (urca@cofc.edu).

3. The Letter of Support by Faculty should be completed, printed, and signed by the faculty mentor, then submitted with the hard copy application in a sealed envelope that is signed on the flap. This should NOT be included in the electronic copy.

4. A complete unofficial transcript from EACH higher education institution attended by the student applicant and a schedule of intended coursework during the project period must be submitted with the hardcopy application. This should NOT be included in the electronic copy. All transcripts and schedules will be scanned and uploaded by URCA program staff into the student’s electronic file. Degree Audits will not be accepted.

5. If applicable, copies of IRB/IACUC approvals should be submitted with the hardcopy application. Grant funds will not be transferred until all approvals are received.

When to Apply:

For the 2014-2015 academic year, MAYS materials must be submitted before 5 pm on one of the dates indicated below:

- September 1, 2014
- October 27, 2014
- January 16, 2015

Under no circumstances will late applications be accepted. For an application to be considered on time and complete, both the FINAL electronic and hardcopy must be submitted by 5pm on the deadline. Faculty members should note that the signature by the department chair is required; therefore, an appropriate amount of time should be set aside for their review before the deadline. The URCA program staff will not be responsible for ensuring that chairs their review by the deadline; this is the responsibility of the submitting faculty member.

Proposal Review Process:

A review panel made up of faculty representatives from all Schools of the College will evaluate the proposals; it should be assumed that the reviewers are not knowledgeable about the specific content area of the proposed work. It generally takes about five weeks after submission of an application for notification of the final status of an application.

The reviewers will be asked to assess each application using the following criteria:

- Intellectual and academic merit of the project
- Academic preparation of the student to conduct the project
- Motivation of the student
- Quality of writing in proposal (e.g., sophistication of sentence structure, grammatical precision, absence of careless errors)
- Availability of the faculty member to effectively mentor the student
- Ability of the student to balance project commitment with other academic commitments
- Clarity and appropriateness of the roles of the team members
- Appropriateness of the budget
- Likelihood of communication of project results to the academic community

**Proposal Preparation:**

1. **Application Cover Page**: All items on the cover page should be completed. The signatures required do not reflect approval or recommendation for funding; they merely attest to the accuracy of the administrative details.

2. A **Student Statement of Intent** (12 pt font, 1 inch margins, single spaced, Times New Roman, no more than 500 words) written by the student applicant, in which the student discusses his or her academic and career goals and explains, in specific terms, the importance of the knowledge and skills gained from participation in the project to his or her academic and career development. The student should also address how the project will coordinate with coursework and other commitments (e.g., jobs, student organizations, service organizations). The student must disclose in the statement whether he or she will receive academic credit for work on the project and a description of that credit (i.e., course number, number of credit hours, semester that credit will be awarded) must be incorporated into this statement of intent. In cases where the student has a GPA lower than 3.0 and/or is taking fewer than 12 hours of coursework, he or she must include an additional statement (no more 250 words) explaining why the GPA is not a valid reflection of his or her academic preparation and/or why the student is enrolled on a part-time basis. This statement should provide convincing evidence to the review committee that the student is adequately prepared academically and fully committed to carrying out the project successfully.

Intent to continue similar research or creative activity beyond the period of MAYS support will be viewed positively by the review panel and should be addressed in the statement of intent. Intent to participate in the dissemination of results should be addressed.

A professional tone and strong writing ability are expected in the statement. Therefore, the student is strongly encouraged to work with the faculty mentor while preparing the statement.

3. A **Project Description** of no longer than five pages (12 pt font, 1 inch margins, Times New Roman, single spaced) should be provided. This section should be jointly written by faculty mentor and student collaborator. **Appendices or other attached materials are not allowed.** The project description should contain the following elements. Deviation from this format will be grounds to deny funding or to reduce the relative rank ordering of the application. Although faculty mentors may be primary authors of this section of the proposal, student applicants should be included in the writing of the project description as such experience serves an important role in the student’s development as a scholar.

Revised 06/10/2014
(a) Non-Technical Project Abstract: This section should be written collaboratively by the student and faculty mentor. The abstract is for the purpose of public dissemination of information about the funded project. The abstract should be written in 12 pt Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins and single spacing, and should be no more than 250 words in length. The team must provide a brief description of the nature of the research project or creative work so that a reader may understand the goals and predicted outcomes of the project. The abstract should be written in a tone appropriate for a general academic audience so that it is understandable to scholars from outside the discipline of the proposed project. Applicants should note that the review panel is particularly sensitive to non-technical abstracts that are full of discipline-specific language that cannot easily be interpreted by one outside the discipline – this error is one of the primary reasons that good proposals are eliminated in a competitive applicant field.

(b) Project Objectives and Expected Outcomes: Primary objectives and expected outcomes of the project should be stated with clarity. 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 effort ends should be included.

(c) Project Significance: Significance of the project to the applicable discipline should be described. After reading this, members of the review panel (who will most likely not be experts in the field of the proposed 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, including the specific techniques and tools of the discipline that will be used to complete the project. Budget request for specific materials, equipment, and/or other tools of the project should align with this description.
- Describe any special facilities, equipment, or travel that is necessary for the successful completion of the project. Budget request for specific materials, equipment, and/or other tools of the project should align with this description.
- Describe the nature, destination, length, and necessity of any student and/or faculty travel that will occur.
- Describe existing joint efforts of the project team members, any preliminary results that the team members have produced, 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 vertebrate animal subjects, describe the status of the IACUC request for the project.
- A timetable or timeline (presented in a table as shown on the application form) to delineate expectations of meeting projects goals and objectives is strongly recommended. There should be compelling temporal need to conduct the project during the specified time period. The temporal need should be related to issues other than availability of the student or mentor.

(e) Faculty Mentor and Student Participant Roles: Describe the role of both mentor and student and the nature and extent of their interaction. If the faculty mentor has more
than one student applicant for a single project, the mentor should make clear in each application what the student’s distinct role in the project will be. The description should explain how the faculty mentor will balance a commitment to the project with other responsibilities. If the project involves a secondary mentor from outside the CofC community, describe that person’s role in the project and as a mentor – make sure, in particular, that the collaborative nature of the project is made clear in light of multiple mentors.

(f) **Current and Pending Support**: If applicable, describe other current or potential sources of support available for the project. Include both external and internal sources: Title, Dollar Amount, Period of Award. Then, address the impact of current and pending support on work described in this application. For pending support, clearly state how the requested funding from this application will be affected by the outcome of other funding decisions. If URCA funding will enable the team to pursue additional goals, clearly delineate that impact (potential or actual) on the project. It is appropriate to submit applications for projects that are also supported by external funding, as long as the PI can clearly state how the MAYS funding is essential to the project and will enhance the development of student(s) working on the project. If funds are being requested for a project that will take place mostly off the CofC campus, make clear how the URCA will accommodate the needs of the CofC student and faculty applicants.

(g) **Student Development**: This section should be written by the faculty mentor and should complement the student’s statement regarding the role of the project in his/her development. Specifically, the faculty mentor should describe how funding of this proposal will enhance the development of both academic and career opportunities for the student(s).

(h) **Project Dissemination**: Describe when and how the results of this work will be internally communicated to the College of Charleston and describe when and how the project results will likely be externally communicated. Specify how the College of Charleston and the URCA program will be acknowledged for support of the project.

(i) **Student Involvement in Application Process**: Clearly indicate the involvement of the student applicant in the preparation of this project description. The reviewers may evaluate this section to get an indication of the nature of the student – mentor interaction expected on the project.

(4) **References**: List supporting literature references in the accepted format of your discipline.

(5) **Proposed Budget**: A completed project budget using the budget form must be submitted. The total cost of the project (URCA funding and other funding) must be clearly indicated on the budget form. The total budget request from the program may not exceed $5,000. It should be clear that the full amount of the funding is going directly to support of the student effort.

Allowable costs are as follows:

(a) **Student Stipend**: Student stipend requests must be clearly justified as essential to ensuring the student’s success in the project. It is expected that students will spend

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approximately 10 hours per week working on a project for which a stipend is requested. Financial need of the student is NOT an acceptable justification for a stipend in and of itself. If the student will receive academic credit for work on the project being proposed, under most circumstances, a stipend will not be awarded. In cases where both academic credit and stipend is being requested, the faculty mentor must provide justification.

The maximum student stipend that will be awarded per semester is $1250. Note that this maximum allowable amount should be determined based on the appropriateness of the project and the amount of time the student will devote to it.

If the student will carry out the research on site at a partner university, the CofC faculty mentor must provide clear justification for why the student stipend is necessary and how the CofC mentor will monitor the work of the student. All student stipends must be paid to the student directly from the departmental budget of the CofC mentor. No URCA project funds may be paid to or transferred to the institutions of mentors outside of the College of Charleston.

(b) **Student Travel:** Only travel needed to conduct the work may be supported. If travel support is requested it must be justified that comparable project results could NOT be obtained thorough use of professional literature or internet resources. Travel for the presentation of results is not allowed (students should apply for an RPG for presentation travel expenses). Use ORGA per diem and mileage rates as needed. Faculty members should not submit travel forms on students’ behalf and then reimburse the student. Instead, faculty members should assist the student in completing his or her own forms.

(c) **Faculty Travel:** Proposed faculty travel will be scrutinized very carefully. Any faculty travel must be justified in relationship to the student’s work and effort and the project goals or objectives. The program will not fund faculty travel without concurrent student travel. Faculty travel is expected to have substantial departmental or school support to be considered. Travel funding is only available to College of Charleston faculty.

(d) **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). List items over $250 separately. Items under $250, such as photocopying, may be listed collectively. The relevance to the project of each request listed must be described. All items purchased with these funds (in part or in whole) are considered to be the property of the College of Charleston, and must remain in the custody and possession of the College of Charleston at the conclusion of the award period. Departmental or School matches for individual items in excess of $500 are encouraged. If a match will not be made available, the reason must be addressed in the justification section. Items that cost over $1,000 will require justification based upon student need in this project and by proposed use in future student projects at the College of Charleston.

(e) **Other:** Must be justified in relationship to the students’ work and effort and the project goals or objectives. 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.

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(f) **Cost-Share and External Support:** Indicate in the appropriate categories any in-kind or cash cost share to the project provided by the Department or School. Show any in-kind or cash support for the project from external sources as appropriate for each budget category. It is appropriate to submit applications for projects that are also supported by external funding, as long as it is made clear that the URCA funding will enhance the project and development of student(s).

*Costs for personnel other than the undergraduate student and the CofC faculty mentor are not allowed. Salary support is only allowed for student participants. Faculty or students 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. No consultant costs or subcontracts are allowed.***

(6) **Budget Justification:** Each item requested from URCA must be specifically and clearly justified as essential to the success of the project. Often, submitters omit this section – please be advised that if this section is not addressed sufficiently the application will not be funded.

(7) **Faculty BioSketch:** Include a biographical sketch for each faculty mentor involved in the project 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:** Faculty should complete a confidential evaluation of the student using the form and scale provided. These forms should be submitted separately by faculty mentors to ensure confidentiality. **In addition to the rating scale, a narrative evaluation should describe the student applicant’s aptitude for the work, nature of the mentor’s previous interaction with the student, and the mentor’s opinion on the likely effect of the experience on the student’s development.** In cases where the student has a GPA lower than 3.0 and/or is registered as a part-time student, the faculty mentor must provide clear evidence that the student is academically prepared to carry out the project and is sufficiently committed to the educational process to benefit from the research experience.

(9) **Transcripts:** A complete unofficial transcript from each higher education institution attended by the student applicant and a schedule of intended coursework during the project period must be submitted with the hardcopy application. All transcripts and schedules will be scanned and uploaded by URCA program staff into the student’s electronic file. Degree Audits will not be accepted.

(10) **Student Course Schedule during Project Period:** Attach either a proposed or actual student course schedule for the semester(s) in which the project will be carried out. This schedule should only be included with the hardcopy application. URCA staff will scan and upload them to include with the electronic copy to be reviewed by URCA committee members. If this schedule changes, the new schedule must be reported to the URCA office.

(11) **IRB/IACUC:** If applicable, copies of IRB/IACUC approvals should be submitted with the hardcopy application. Grant funds will not be transferred until all approvals are received.