SURF Program Description and Guidelines
Summer Undergraduate Research with Faculty

**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 during the summer. Research and creative activities are defined in different ways by different disciplines, but in the context of this program these endeavors 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.” 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 definition of roster faculty per the Faculty/Administration Manual 2010-2011: “Roster faculty members are those individuals holding full-time faculty appointments and assigned to a state supported line. Roster faculty appointments include those made for tenured faculty, tenure-track faculty, instructors, senior instructors, and visiting faculty.”
The student applicant must be a degree seeking College of Charleston undergraduate student with a minimum GPA of least 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.

SURF 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 start date or 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 at 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 SURF 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 SURF project per summer. A faculty member may not submit proposals for more than two SURF grants in a single summer. Faculty members who have received URCA funding during the previous academic year may submit a SURF grant for the same project or a different project. 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 and as many different projects as possible in a given fiscal year. Therefore, faculty members should understand that multiple grant awards to the same faculty member within a single fiscal year will be given a lower priority.

Amount and Duration of the Grants:

The funds for SURF awards are limited and will be awarded by the Director on a competitive basis, based upon the recommendation of faculty reviewers and available funding. The maximum award is $6,500, although applicants should understand that the maximum award is not always given. Project funds may be used to support specific material costs of the project, student salary, faculty (CofC) salary, travel directly associated with the project (this does NOT include travel for dissemination of results), and other direct costs of the project. Grants will be awarded for activity conducted between the first Monday after spring graduation (May 13, 2013) and the last day of classes in Summer II (Wednesday, August 7, 2013). The dates of the project are flexible within that time period, but it is expected that the student work on the project will be for 40 hours a week for a 10 week period. Only half of the awarded funds will be available through the end of June, and the other half of the awarded funds will be available on the first day of July. This is to accommodate the fact that the grant spans two fiscal years. In specific and well-justified circumstances, grants may be awarded in full either before June 30 or after June 30, although applicants should not expect nor should base project plans on such latitude. Projects occurring only during Maymester should be submitted as a MAYS grant.

All project funds must be fully expended by the first day of the fall semester.
**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 is prepared to work on the project full-time (40 hours per week) for 10 weeks in the summer, 4) performing the work of the project will not have an adverse effect on other obligations of the student, 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 SURF 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.

Students and their faculty mentors are required to present the results of their projects at the annual Summer Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Poster Session held on Convocation Day (Monday, August 19, 2013). Information about the details of the presentation is sent to the grantees at least one month in advance of the event.

**Faculty Role:** Faculty mentors must convince the reviewers that they have the time and resources to effectively mentor the student(s) working on this project while meeting any contractual obligations during the summer. 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 salary 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 expense report form 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 after the project end date.

In collaboration with student participants, faculty mentors are expected to submit a formal final project report within 4 weeks of the project end date. The report should summarize the results of
the project and should include a final expense report. The final report form can be accessed from
the URCA website. Failure to submit a report will jeopardize the eligibility of the faculty mentor
and/or the student to obtain future funding from URCA.

Students and their faculty mentors are required to present the results of their projects at
the annual Summer Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Poster Session held on
Convocation Day (Monday, August 19, 2013). Information about the details of the presentation
is sent to the grantees at least one month in advance of the event.

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 by the
   application deadline to the Director of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities
   (Trisha Folds-Bennett, 10 Green Way) 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 along with the Faculty Recommendation form should
   be completed, printed, and signed by the faculty, then submitted ONLY with the hard
   copy application in a sealed envelope that is signed on the flap. All Letters of Support
   will be scanned and uploaded by URCA program staff into the student’s electronic
   file.

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 both the hard copy and electronic versions of the application. (Note:
   Degree audits are not accepted.) Please note that failure to submit transcripts from
   an institution other than CofC where a student has earned grades that count toward
   CofC graduation will eliminate an application.

5. If applicable copies of IRB/IACUC approvals should be submitted with the electronic
   and hardcopy applications. Grant funds will not be transferred until all approvals are
   received.
When to Apply:

For the 2012-2013 academic year, SURF materials (both electronic and hard copies) must be submitted before 5 pm on February 4, 2013.

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 signatures by the department chair and school dean are 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 and deans complete their review by the deadline; this is the responsibility of the submitting faculty member.

Applications received after the 5:00 pm deadline will not be reviewed. Incomplete/partially submitted applications will be eliminated from the review process.

Proposal Review Process:

Each grant application will be go through a two step evaluation process:

1. First-Level Evaluation: Proposals will be grouped according to the focus of the project. An interdisciplinary panel of faculty members will be selected to review each group of proposals with particular emphasis on the quality of the project and the mentoring plan. It should be assumed that the reviewers will not be knowledgeable about the specific area of the proposed work; therefore the application should not be characterized by highly technical jargon of the discipline. Each application will be reviewed independently by each faculty reviewer. The reviewers will then meet to discuss their evaluations and to prepare a summary evaluation and ranking of proposals which will be submitted to the Director of the URCA program. The summary evaluation will recommend which applications should move to the final evaluation step.

2. Second-Level Evaluation: The set of recommended proposals will be reviewed by a panel comprised of one faculty member from each School. These reviewers are appointed by the School Deans. Together with the Director of the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities program, this panel will make the final decision as to which applications will be funded and at what level of funding. Award decisions will be sent by email to the student, mentor and the chair of the department for each application.

Any faculty member who submits a SURF grant may NOT serve as a school-level reviewer or on the Campus Review Panel.

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

- Intellectual and academic merit of the project
- Availability of the faculty member to effectively mentor the student
- Availability of the student to work 40 hrs/wk for 10 weeks during the summer
- Ability of the student to balance the project commitment with other commitments
- Academic preparation of the student to conduct the project
- Motivation of the student
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 and persuasive terms, the importance of the knowledge and skill 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 a 3.0 or grades of C or lower in courses relevant to the project, he or she must include an additional statement (no more 250 words) explaining why the GPA or grades are not a valid reflection of his or her academic preparation. 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 SURF 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 Non-Technical Project Abstract is a critical component of the application. This abstract 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 and should make a clear attempt to translate the objective, methodology, and predicted outcomes of the project into terms that would be understood by a general academic audience. 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. 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.

(4) A **Project Description**, no longer than five pages (12 pt font, 1 inch margins, Times New Roman, single spaced). 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.

(a) **Technical Abstract**: A brief summary of the project in terms typically used in the discipline of the primary mentor.

(b) **Project Objectives and Expected Outcomes**: Primary objectives of the project and expected results (stated hypotheses, if applicable) 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 this 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.
- Describe the projected results of the project and their importance to the discipline.
- 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. Please note that mentor role descriptions that are “cut and pasted” from one student application to another are not typically looked upon favorably by the review panel. 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, that person’s role in the project and as a mentor should be described – 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 SURF 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 SURF grant 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:** Outside of the Summer Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Poster Session to be held on Convocation Day (Monday, August 19, 2013), 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 SURF 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.

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

(6) **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 $6,500. It should be clear that at least half of the funding is going to direct support of the student effort.

Grants will be awarded for activity conducted between the first Monday after spring graduation (May, 13, 2013) and the last day of classes in Summer II (Wednesday, August 7, 2013). The dates of the project are flexible within that time period, but it is expected that the student work on the project will be for 40 hours a week for a 10 week period.

When preparing the budget, it is important to clearly indicate how expenses will be applied in each fiscal period. **Only half of the awarded funds will be available through the end of June, and the other half of the awarded funds will be available on the first day of July.** This is to accommodate the fact that the grant spans two fiscal years. In specific and well-justified circumstances, grants may be awarded in full either before June 30 or after June 30, although applicants should not expect nor should base project plans on such latitude.

**All project funds must be fully expended by the first day of the fall semester.**

(6) **Budget Justification:** In this section of the proposal, each item request from URCA must be specifically justified as essential to the success of the project. Identify sources of additional support for each item as appropriate. **If this section is not adequately addressed, the grant proposal will not be funded.**

Allowable costs are as follows:

(a) **Student Salary:** The standard student stipend is $3,500 (taxable) with a maximum hourly rate of $8.75. This is with the expectation that the student will work full time (40 hours per week) for 10 weeks. Exceptions from this work load must be justified. If the student will not be able to work full time (40 hours per week) on the project during the project period, the level of student support must be pro-rated to accurately reflect the actual commitment of the student during the hours that the faculty member will be able to provide direct mentoring. The deviation must be clearly justified. Under no circumstance will a student be awarded more than $8.75 per hour. A compelling argument must be made that a student who will not be working full time on the project or who will have other obligations (academic, employment, or volunteer) will be able to succeed in reaching the objectives of the project and the necessary student development. Financial need of the student is **NOT** an acceptable justification. If the student will receive other compensation or academic credit for the project, that fact should be made clear and given full explanation regarding justification for SURF funding.
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 salary is necessary and how the CofC mentor will monitor the work of the student. All student salary must be paid to the student directly from the departmental budget of the CofC mentor. No URCA project funds will be paid to or transferred to the institutions of mentors outside of the College of Charleston.

(b) **Faculty Salary:** A maximum stipend of $2,500 (taxable) for CofC faculty is allowed. Faculty who are mentoring more than one student on a single project are not eligible for more than $2,500 (total) in salary. Faculty who are mentoring more than one student and on different projects **may** be eligible for salary support up to $4,000 maximum. The SURF program supports all types of URCA projects (those primarily designed by the mentor and those primarily designed by the student applicant). Regardless, it should not be assumed that the mentor stipend is uniformly deserved in all cases. Sufficient justification for the requested mentor stipend based on the frequency and nature of the interaction of mentor and student during the SURF funding period should be provided. Faculty stipends (or other support) may not exceed that of the student. No compensation to non-CofC faculty is available through the SURF program.

(c) **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 by more thorough use of literature or internet resources. Travel for the presentation of results is not allowed. (RPG grant proposals should be submitted for presentation travel expenses). Use ORGA *per diem* and mileage rates as applicable. 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. Travel should be listed in the fiscal year that the travel will be reimbursed from, not as pre-travel item. **Caution: If the reviewers deem that the travel is not justified these funds will be eliminated from the total budget.**

(d) **Faculty Travel:** Proposed faculty travel will be scrutinized very carefully. Any faculty travel must be justified in relationship to the students’ 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. Travel should be listed in the fiscal year from which the travel will be reimbursed, not as a pre-travel item.

(e) **Supplies and Materials:** The total cost of supplies and materials, including the sales tax and estimated shipping costs, should be detailed. (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 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 costing 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.

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

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

*Costs for personnel other than the undergraduate student and the faculty mentor are not allowed. 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.*

(7) **Faculty BioSketch:** A biographical sketch for each faculty mentor involved in the project using the BioSketch form provided should be included. 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:** An evaluation of the student using the form and scale provided as well as a narrative description of the faculty member’s impression of the student must be submitted separately by the faculty member to ensure confidentiality. The form should be printed, signed by the student and then given to the faculty mentor. The letter of support should be attached and 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. If the student has received grades lower than Bs in courses relevant to the project, the faculty mentor is expected to explain why he or she believes the student is academically prepared to do independent work on the project and to benefit from the scholarly experience.

After the mentor has completed the evaluation he/she should attach the letter of support and place it in a sealed envelope that is signed on the flap. **This is then turned in with the original application ONLY.** All Letters of Support will be scanned and uploaded by URCA program staff into the student’s electronic file.

(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 electronic and hardcopy applications. **(Note: Degree audits are not accepted.**). If a student has received grades from another institution on coursework that counts toward CofC graduation requirements, the transcript from that institution must be submitted with the application. It is not sufficient that the courses are listed on the CofC transcript.