2016
Undergraduate Special Opportunities in Artistry and Research (USOAR)

ugresearch@niu.edu • www.niu.edu/usoar
What is USOAR?

• Oldest NIU undergraduate research program
• USOAR funds student-generated research projects
• Funds research that takes place:
  • on campus,
  • somewhere else in the USA,
  or
  • internationally.

Jamison Thorne visits the Berlin Wall
Be Creative!

• Students are encouraged to be creative in their proposals!
• Grants are intended to support a wide range of appropriate activities, such as visiting:
  – archaeological sites
  – libraries
  – museums
• Available funds depend on the quality of the project and the nature of the proposed expenses.
Examples of Past Projects

Kristen Mattison
Anthropology
*Study of the olive oil industry in ancient Greece*

Jeff Lamble
Public Health
*Study of environmental health risks to population surrounding Guatemala City landfills*

Gabriela Rodriguez
Speech-Language Pathology
*Study of efficacy rehab program for children with cleft palate in Mexico*
How Does USOAR Work?

• USOAR Process:
  – Share your idea with a faculty member.
  – Once the faculty member has approved your idea, complete and submit a proposal.
  – Submit your proposal electronically to ugresearch@niu.edu.
  – Proposal guidelines are available online at www.niu.edu/usoar.
How Much Money is Available?

Students whose projects are selected are granted up to $2,500!
Selected proposals are:

- To be carried out between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2016.
- Required to have complete report/documentation submitted to the OSEEL staff within six weeks of completion of their project.
Proposal Deadlines

• Fall proposals must be submitted by 11:59pm CST on **Friday, October 2, 2015**.

• Spring proposals must be submitted by 11:59pm CST on **Friday, February 12, 2016**.

• Submit your proposals electronically to ugresearch@niu.edu.
WHERE TO FIND THE PROPOSAL

Find the USOAR proposal at:

http://niu.edu/usoar/
I. Abstract:

- 250 words or less
- Brief overview of “project objectives and learning outcomes”
- Should be written for educated but not expert audience

Purpose: To provide committee with general idea of your project
II. Project Description:
A. Background & Context
B. Statement of Significance
C. Statement of Objectives
D. Methods
E. Outcomes

Purpose: To demonstrate how thoroughly you have planned your research project.
Contents of the USOAR Proposal

III. Literature Cited:
   • List of references that are cited in your proposal (Background & Context)
   • Use standard professional format
IV. Impact on Academic Experience

- Indicate how proposed project will enhance your academic experience
V. Timeline of Project
- Weekly or bi-weekly
- Bulleted or listed by week
- Include specific benchmarks to achieve throughout semester
- Timelines written in narrative form will not be accepted.
VI. Itemized Budget & Justification

- Budget items may not total more than $2,500
- Budget should be itemized
- Must include justification for each item in your budget
- Must keep all original receipts/invoices
- Remaining funds must be returned to NIU
VI. Itemized Budget & Justification (continued)

Eligible Items:
A. Travel
B. Equipment
C. Consumable materials (e.g., paper)

Purpose: To indicate EXACTLY HOW the USOAR grant money will be used to conduct your research.
VI. Itemized Budget & Justification (continued)

Ineligible Items:

A. Students cannot pay themselves to conduct research.

B. Students cannot pay/give incentives to participants for taking part in a study.
VI. Itemized Budget & Justification (continued)

**Good Example:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel to and from Boston</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two nights at hotel in Boston</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer software</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopying and printing surveys</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals while in Boston</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals for lab experiment</td>
<td>$800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Budget Justification:** The majority of the funds, $800, will be used to purchase chemicals for the lab experiment I will be conducting. $100 will cover the cost of survey preparation (xeroxing, color pictures, etc.). $500 is needed for transportation to and from Boston, where I will be conducting my lab experiment. $500 is needed to cover the cost of the hotel stay while I am in Boston and another $300 will be used to cover the cost of my meals. Computer analysis of data and final report production requires the purchase of Metaverse 4.0, at $300.
VI. Itemized Budget & Justification (continued)

Bad Example:

I will need $500. Part of the money will be used for books, and the rest will be used for lab supplies.
VII. Copy of unofficial transcripts

Sample Budgets Continued:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Chemicals for lab experiment</td>
<td>$800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Budget Justification: The majority of the funds, $800, will be used to purchase chemicals for the lab experiment I will be conducting. $100 will cover the cost of survey preparation (printing, color pictures, etc.). $500 is needed for transportation to and from Boston, where I will be conducting my lab experiment. $900 is needed to cover the cost of the hotel stay while I am in Boston and another $800 will be used to cover the cost of my meals. Computer analysis of data and final report production requires the purchase of Metaverse 4.0, at $300.

VII. Copy of Unofficial Transcript: You can download your unofficial transcript from MyNIU.

VII. Scholar/Mentor Contract (Signed by both parties): We will accept an unsigned electronic copy of this form only if it is sent from the faculty mentor’s NIU email address. If we receive this contract from any other email address, we will be unable to accept it.

IX. Letter of Recommendation from Faculty Supervisor: Faculty supervisors’ letters of recommendation must include the following:

- A description of how you know the student (how long and in what context)
- A candid and confidential assessment of the student’s ability to successfully complete the proposed research
- A discussion of your specific contributions to the project
- A statement of commitment of your time and appropriate resources to the proposed project

The completed form should be sent from the faculty supervisor’s NIU email address to apiresearch@niu.edu by the proposal deadline.

Please note: Receipts for travel expenses should be included with the final report. Each grant recipient will be expected to file a final report describing the creation and results of the project within six weeks of the completion of the project or the end of the funding period. The report must be signed by both the student and the faculty supervisor. If a student fails to submit a final report, he/she will be billed for any awarded monies received, and will be ineligible to apply for a future grant.
VIII. Scholar/Mentor Contract
- Must be signed by both parties
- Will accept an unsigned electronic copy of this form only if it is sent from faculty mentor’s NIU email address
Contents of the USOAR Proposal

VIII. Scholar/Mentor Contract

UNDERGRADUATE SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ARTISTRY AND RESEARCH
FOR PART OR ALL OF THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2015 – DECEMBER 31, 2015
Scholar/Mentor Contract

Student Name(s) (Please type or print):

Faculty Supervisor(s) (Please type or print):

Title of Project:

This agreement is designed to promote understanding and commitment to the role, responsibilities and expectations of both student scholars and research mentors who participate in USOAR program.

Students: To fulfill your responsibilities and remain in the USOAR program, you must:
1) Participate with your designated faculty supervisor (and fellow team members, if any) to develop, understand and substantially complete a research or artistry project.
2) Participate in formal programming as scheduled by staff and designated as required.
3) Complete a final narrative report and final expense report and submit them to the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning no later than six weeks after completion of the research/artistry project.
4) Notify your faculty supervisor AND the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning of any change in research focus or desire to change a research mentor.
5) Immediately address personal difficulties that arise during your research experience with the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential staff as problems arise.

Mentors: Faculty mentors are crucial to the success of the USOAR program. Each faculty member is committed to assist one or more students on research projects. The faculty mentor agrees to:
1) Provide learning resources and necessary tools for the research/artistry project.
2) Meet with the student to plan and complete the project.
3) Discuss aspects of academic and research life with student while working with the student on research.
4) Assist the student with preparation of project materials for presentation.
5) Attend major research presentations that the student makes on the NIU campus.
6) Notify OSEEL staff as needed of student progress, performance, change of research focus, or any problems in the mentoring relationship.

This contractual agreement is a binding agreement between the Research Mentor and the Scholar and specifies the responsibilities of the scholar to the USOAR program. Scholars are expected to show progress and meet the terms in this agreement.

Student Signature: Date:

Mentor Signature: Date:
IX. Letter of Recommendation from Faculty Supervisor

- Description of how he/she knows the student
- Assessment of student’s ability to successfully complete proposed research
- Discussion of mentor’s contributions to project
- Statement of commitment of time and resources to proposed project
Additional Proposal Information

• Students must indicate which college they are submitting their proposal to.
  – Students who have a double major may only indicate one college on their proposal.
  – Students with different majors who are submitting a joint proposal may only indicate one college.
  – Students who are undecided should submit proposals under his or her supervisor’s college.
A proposal may relate to an independent study experience which carries academic credit, such as a capstone project, an internship, or a special topics course which involves intensive one-on-one work with a faculty or staff member. However, the following restrictions should be noted:

- All proposals must include a component of independent study.
- Study abroad experiences must provide convincing evidence that he or she will carry out a significant program of independent research or artistry.
- Professional conference proposals must provide convincing evidence that students will present a paper or other record of artistic or scholarly achievement at the conference.
Reviewing Proposals

• Proposals will be reviewed by your college.
  – Rank proposals in that college and send to me

• A university-wide review committee reviews and makes final decisions.
Reviewing Proposals

• Priority given to those proposals which:
  – Are properly formatted.
  – Have a clearly designed plan for addressing the problem, question, or issue which motivated the proposal.
  – Include a thorough outline of budget.
  – Include a detailed timeline for carrying out the artistry or research involved.
  – Provide evidence that participation in the project will provide a substantial benefit to the student’s undergraduate academic experience.
Things you may need to do

• If your research involves the **collection of data from human subjects**, you will need to contact NIU’s **Institutional Review Board (IRB)**.

• If your research involves **travel abroad** you need to contact the Study Abroad Office.
If Your Proposal is Approved...

• Students whose projects are selected:
  – Can begin work on January 1, 2016 or anytime during the 12 months afterward
  – You are responsible for expenses beyond $2,500.
  – After your project is completed, you must submit a final report to the OSEEL Office (Altgeld Hall 100).
Guidelines for Your Final Report

• Must be tied to your original proposal.
• The report is due within six weeks of the completion of the project.
• The report must be signed by the student and the faculty or staff supervisor.
• Turn your final project report and expense report in to the OSEEL Office (Altgeld Hall 100).
• If a student fails to submit a final report, he/she will be billed for any award monies received and will be ineligible to apply for a future grant.
Questions?