

Economics Department Student-Faculty Research Grant

Call for Proposals, 2020

The purpose of this grant is to promote undergraduate economics research under the mentorship of economics faculty members. The grant is intended to promote serious undergraduate research rather than provide funding for general undergraduate research assistance. The department will only consider projects where the student plays a significant role in both development and execution. The expectation is that work funded through a research grant will be undertaken during the summer of 2020 or during the 2020-2021 academic year.

Examples of projects that would be consistent with the goals of this grant:

- A project in which the student is engaging in original research while being mentored by a faculty member. This grant can be used to begin a project or fund elements of a project that will be continued as either an independent study project or an honors thesis.
- A faculty research project for which the student will have a major role in the research process. This role could range from doing fieldwork to being a full coauthor on the project.

Examples of projects that would not be consistent with the goals of this grant, and thus will not be considered for funding:

- A project that involves reading and assessing the existing literature on a topic. This type of project may be suitable for an independent study but not a student-faculty research grant.
- A project where the undergraduate's role is limited to data collection, data cleaning, writing literature reviews, etc. It is essential the undergraduate be involved in some element of the design of the project or the execution of the analysis for the project.
- A project that does not have clear economics content.

Grant Amounts

- Prior to submitting the application, the student and faculty mentor should discuss what constitutes reasonable project costs. The typical budget is approximately \$3,000, though the department will consider both smaller and larger budgets.
- The department encourages students to look for other sources of grant support to augment what the economics department provides, especially if their proposal is ambitious and requires substantially more than the typical department contribution.

Use of Funds

Acceptable uses of funds include travel associated with data collection or conference presentations, purchase of data sets or funding of research assistants, and purchase of materials needed to conduct research including supplies for experiments or surveys, books and specialized software. Funds can also be used as a student summer stipend if the student will be engaged in research throughout the summer. Funds may not be used for local housing. The college, however, typically provides on-campus housing for students engaged in summer research. A small stipend will also be provided to faculty members sponsoring projects.

Choosing a Faculty Mentor

While the faculty mentor's area of research need not overlap with the student's proposed project, the mentor must be involved in supervising project progress. Biweekly assessment meetings across the summer or an equivalent level of engagement of the faculty mentor would satisfy this requirement. When meeting with a potential faculty mentor, be certain to discuss how the student will provide progress updates to the mentor and how the mentor will provide feedback.

Application Components

Student materials necessary for a complete application are listed below. These materials should be submitted by email to Professor Parman (jmparman@wm.edu). For full consideration, all materials should be received by March 9, 2020. Proposals submitted after that date will be considered if funding remains. Students must discuss the project with the proposed faculty mentor before submitting an application. The department will contact the mentor to confirm approval of the project and discuss its merits and feasibility.

- A current resume
- A current copy of the student's transcript
- A brief description of any previous research experience
- A brief description of any other previous or pending grants and scholarships
- A 500-800 word description of the proposed research project summarizing the goals of the project and including a projected timeline of work on the project (this should be prepared by the student)
- The name of the faculty project mentor and a brief description of the role they will serve
- A budget that includes the total requested grant amount and the breakdown of how the grant will be used

Criteria for Awarding Grants

The number and size of grants awarded will depend on the quality of received grant proposals. In general, grants will go to proposals deemed to have the greatest merit and likelihood of success. The number of grants will depend on the amounts required to fund selected proposals. The general criteria for evaluating the merit of the proposals will be:

- Demonstrated academic ability and research potential of the applicant
- Quality and relevance of the research topic
- Feasibility of the project
- Effective use of the funds as demonstrated by the proposed budget
- Input of the faculty mentor

Timeline

Relevant dates for the proposal process are the following

- February 10, 5:30pm – 6:30pm: Information session in Tyler 121 (please RSVP here: https://wmsas.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bki4XWpm170mdVP)
- February: Students should discuss possible projects with potential faculty mentors
- February 25 and March 3: Professor Parman will hold open office hours from 11am to 12:30pm to answer questions about the grant and provide comments on proposal drafts
- March 9: Initial review of applications, all applications received by this date will receive full consideration for funding
- March 10 through April 19: Rolling application window will be open, applications will be considered on an ongoing basis if funds remain available
- September 15: Recipients submit a 1,000- to 1,500-word report detailing the status of the research project

Any questions should be directed to Professor Parman (jmparman@wm.edu).