

Siebert WMU Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Award Program

Application for Fall 2008

Administered by the Carl and Winifred Lee Honors College

Overview

The WMU Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Award Program is designed for students at Western Michigan University who are committed to conducting significant research and creative projects.

An essential feature of the Siebert WMU Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Award Program is the apprentice/ mentor relationship established between a student and a faculty member. This relationship begins when the student and faculty member agree on a research project and submit a joint proposal. During the project the student's role should evolve from assistant to relatively independent researcher or creator, from apprentice to emerging scholar or artist.

The Siebert WMU Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Award Program provides an excellent opportunity for an industrious student to work closely with a faculty member on an academic enterprise of mutual interest. In many cases the project could result in an Honors College senior thesis. In all cases, the student completes his or her undergraduate career with an exciting educational endeavor.

To be eligible for participation, a student must have a GPA above 3.25 and have completed at least 60 credit hours at time of application. The student must be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours during each semester that the project is funded. The Program awards a \$1,000 stipend for the first semester. An award may be renewed once if there is sufficient justification. *A student does not need to be a member of the Lee Honors College in order to participate in the Program.*

Samples of successful proposals are on file at the Lee Honors College and are available for review.

Program Objectives

The Siebert WMU Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Award Program seeks to enrich the educational experiences of undergraduates at Western Michigan University by providing them with opportunities to work closely with faculty members in a student/mentor relationship on research and creative projects of mutual interest. Such efforts should go beyond the typical student's undergraduate educational experience and should involve student-initiated creative activity. Undergraduates and faculty members who wish to participate in the program are encouraged to collaborate in developing proposals for competitive review.

Projects

A suitable project can come from *any* academic area at the University. It includes, but is not limited to, research, development, design, field study, a visual arts project or musical performance. Ideally, the project should be initiated by the student and provide direct value for the student. However, faculty members may approach students about collaborative projects. In cases where the project is related to faculty research, the student's tasks should evolve from those that support the interests of the faculty member to those for which the student assumes increasing responsibility (Note: this award is not intended to be a substitute for work done by a student lab assistant). A suitable project is one that has closure including publication or public presentation. Normally, the project requires approximately 150 hours (or ten hours per week) of the student's time and should be completed in one semester. Should the project take longer than one semester to be completed, an extension must be granted; to do so please contact Ms. McMillon at 387-3230. A student may wish to register for academic credit as he or she works on the project. In this instance, Sue Oole should be contacted at 387-3230.

Qualifications and Criteria for Selection

The applicant must be a full-time Western Michigan University undergraduate (12 hours minimum), must have a grade point average of at least 3.25, and have accumulated at least 60 credit hours at the time the project will begin. While the Program is administered by the Lee Honors College, the student does not need to be a member of the Lee Honors College in order to qualify for an award. An honors student who does receive an award may use the project to complete the honors senior thesis requirement.

The research awards will be based, largely, on the past academic performance of the student, the experience and expertise of the sponsoring faculty member, and the merits of the proposed project. A University committee, appointed by the Dean of the Honors College, will review the proposals and make recommendations to the Dean each award period. Financial need is *not* a criterion.

Award Period and Stipend

Awarded project should be completed in *one* semester. However, there are occasions that a project evolves and grows requiring more than the one semester already funded. In these occasions an award may be extended if there appears to be sufficient benefit to the student. If no money is requested, students may request additional time to complete the project by writing to the Dean of the Lee Honors College. If money is requested, a new application, justifying the second award, must be completed by the appropriate deadline for the next award cycle.

When it is appropriate to the nature of the research or creative project, a project may be carried out in the Summer sessions. However, the grant itself is customarily awarded for the subsequent Fall semester. Each stipend awarded to the student will be \$1,000. The stipend will be distributed in two amounts: \$500 at the beginning of the semester, and \$500 when the final report is submitted to the Honors College.

Commitment and Conditions

Students who receive awards must be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours, *exclusive of any academic credit awarded for work on the project*, during the time of the project. Since it is anticipated the project will require about 150 hours during the semester, outside employment, assistantships, and other such commitments are discouraged. However, a student may earn credit for the project by registering for independent study through the Lee Honors College or through an academic department.

In addition, the following documents are required of an award recipient:

- 1) A comprehensive final report, *co-signed by the student and the mentor*. The final report is due at the end of the semester for which your project is funded. It should be at least 5 pages in length. If you need an extension to complete your research and/ or the report, a request should be made in writing to the Dean of the Lee Honors College *before* the end of the semester.
- 2) A 200-300 word abstract should accompany the final report.

Recipients should consider possible presentation at the National Council on Undergraduate Research or an appropriate academic conference.

Guidelines for Project Proposals

These guidelines support the application process. They indicate the criteria which are used to evaluate all proposals. Proposals should be no longer than 5 pages and be double-spaced, in 12 point type.

1) Clear statement of Thesis and Rationale for the Project

State exactly what your project is and why it is important. Specifically explain the way the project will contribute to the field or creative discipline selected. Your proposal must show signs of planning and forethought. You may include here some of the tangential work that has been done in the field or what has been left incomplete. Do include a bibliography.

2) Methodology

Explain how you plan to conduct your project. For traditional research projects, explain your hypothesis or research question. If you are using a questionnaire, give examples of the type of questions you will pose. Be as specific as possible. What are the steps or methods you will follow to achieve your end? What sources will you use? A note on format: The format should be that which is standard for your field of study and department. Samples of past winners' applications are available at the Lee Honors College.

3) Individuality/Independence of the Project

While it is difficult to conduct original research at the undergraduate level, it is important to demonstrate that there is an element of independent research involved in what you do. While ideas for a project may begin with a mentor and the initial stages be directed by the faculty member, the work of the student should evolve toward increasing independence. In general, the project should not be lab assistant work, course work for a faculty member, or simply research for a professor in which the student does much of the functionary work (i.e., compiles questionnaires or tabulates numbers). If you will work on one aspect of a larger project, the faculty member should explain clearly your role on the project.

4) Outcome

A student should indicate the nature of anticipated closure or culmination for the project (e.g., a paper, report, art show, performance or Senior Honors Thesis). The proposal should clearly state the kind of final product that the student is producing. In general, projects or aspects of projects should have some closure after one semester.

5) Technical Projects

Many disciplines use highly specific language or jargon. Proposals should be written with minimal use of such language. The proposal should be written using clear, comprehensible language that can be understood by an educated layperson. The language and concept presentation of the proposal, in other words, should elucidate the proposal, not obfuscate it. Also include appropriate diagrams and illustrations.

6) Mentor's Letter of Support and Closure Guidelines

The letter of support from your mentor should contain at least three points of explanation: 1) the value of the project for the student; 2) time available for the mentor to work with the student; and, 3) the mentor's familiarity with the student and his or her work. There should be a clear statement of mentor involvement and support in the project. The mentor should help to plan the project, develop the proposal and actively participate in its implementation. At the end of the project the mentor must sign off on the final report. This will indicate that the project has been completed.

Application Instructions

The *complete* application for an award *must* include:

- 1) The attached form (Application Form and Project Information), completed by the student and signed by the student, faculty member, and department chair (or unit head);
- 2) A copy of the student's transcript;
- 3) A clear description of the proposed project (including thesis, rationale, outcome, and bibliography);
- 4) A letter of support from the mentor (No awards will be made without this letter of support);
- 5) A budget: especially if other financial support is included;
- 6) A copy of the WMU Human Subjects Institutional Review Board* decision (if required).
NOTE: This decision can be forwarded, if necessary; and,
- 7) A copy of the WMU Institution Animal Care and Use Committee** decision (if required).
NOTE: This decision can be forwarded, if necessary.

* Any research proposal that involves people such as interviewing, questionnaires, observations and experiments must have the approval of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. Consideration by this board usually takes 4 to 6 weeks. The review committee cannot give approval to projects that have not been given prior approval by this board.

**Any research proposal that involves animals must have the approval of the Institution Animal Care and Use Committee. The review committee cannot give approval to projects that have not been given prior approval by this committee.

Return the completed forms and accompanying material to:

Siebert WMU Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Award Review Committee
The Carl and Winifred Lee Honors College
Western Michigan University
1903 W. Michigan Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5244

Application Deadlines

For Fall 2008 Semester Award: March 5, 2008 @ 5 PM

Awards will be announced by April 7, 2008

Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities Award Application Form

Application Form for: _____

Student Information:

1. Name _____ Western Identification # _____

2. Local Address _____ Local Telephone _____

3. Home Address _____

*International students please use permanent address as home address.

4. Are you a member of the Honors College? Yes _____ No _____

5. Major(s) _____ Minor(s) _____

6. Current Accumulated Credit Hours _____ Current GPA _____ (Be sure to attach a copy of your transcript.)

7. How many credit hours, exclusive of those in item 9 below, do you anticipate taking while an awardee? _____

8. List any academic honors or awards you have received or any special project(s) you have completed in the area of your proposed project.

9. Will you receive academic credit for the project in addition to the stipend? Yes _____ No _____.
If yes, give the number of credit hours and whether these hours will count toward your major or minor requirements.

10. Will you be receiving any financial support for your work on the project from other sources?
Yes _____ No _____. If yes, explain in the space below.

11. Will this research be used for an Honors College thesis? Yes _____ No _____.

Project Information

1. Title of project: _____

2. Proposal Essay: After consultation with your faculty mentor, write a two to five page proposal in which you: a) explain the proposed project; b) describe how you will be involved in the work during the semester and how your responsibilities will increase; c) indicate how the research experience will contribute to your undergraduate education; and, d) include a preliminary bibliography. (See Guidelines for Project Proposals, p. 4.)

3. Budget: The project's budget should include all expenses associated with the conduct and completion of the project. Include the anticipated timeline for completing the project. The award is a stipend to aid students in completing their research. Accordingly, it should be anticipated that a portion of the budget will include compensation for the student's time and research.

4. Will the project require approval of the WMU Human Subjects Institutional Review Board? Yes _____ No _____. If yes, make appropriate arrangements for a hearing and include a copy of the Board's decision. This determination should be done with the counsel of the faculty mentor.

5. Will the project require approval of the WMU Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee? Yes _____ No _____. If yes, make appropriate arrangements for a hearing and forward (or include) a copy of the Committee's decision. Board approval must be received before an award can be given.

Please read and sign: If I am granted an award, I agree to work according to the provisions of the Siebert WMU Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Award Program. At the end of the semester, I will submit a detailed written report of my work (at least 5 pages) and a 200-300 word abstract describing the project.

Signature _____ Date _____

Faculty Mentor:

1. Name (please print) _____

2. Department (or Unit) _____ WMU Telephone _____

3. I have evaluated this application and approve it as proposed by the student. If this student is granted an award, I agree to serve as his or her mentor and to supervise the work according to the provisions of the Siebert WMU Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Award Program. I have discussed the proposed project with the student, and I believe his or her participation will be an enriching educational experience. He or she should be able to assume greater responsibility for the project as the semester progresses.

Signature _____ Date _____

Faculty Mentor's Department Chair (or Unit Head):

I support this application for a Siebert WMU Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Award. I believe the faculty member has the experience and expertise to support the proposed project.

Signature _____ Date _____