

Towson University

Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Inquiry

Summer Research Grants for Undergraduate Students

The Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Inquiry's Summer Research Grants are designed to provide undergraduate students with an opportunity to propose and pursue advanced undergraduate research projects during 12 weeks of the summer months, with or without credit, within their majors/minors or on other topics. The awards program seeks to emphasize individual curiosity and initiative, intellectual ambition, and scholarly work conducted individually or in groups. Each project requires a Towson University faculty mentor. Stipends of \$5000 will be awarded on a competitive basis to students whose applications demonstrate a sound conception of the proposed work and evidence of the interest and ability to complete the project successfully. Faculty mentors will receive a stipend of \$500 for their work in advising a student and overseeing the project.

Eligibility:

Any student may apply for the awards who is:

- A currently enrolled undergraduate student who will continue working toward a bachelor's degree at Towson University in the fall semester following completion of the summer project.
- A student who completes and submits all portions of the application by the application due date and agrees to meet all responsibilities of the award.
- If the student is working as part of a group, the individual student's role, expected contributions, and benefits as compared to what faculty and other students on the project are doing must be clearly delineated. An additional paragraph describing each member of the group's role, including faculty if a faculty-led project, must be submitted with the application.
- The project may not be part of a regular class for the major or minor, though it could build from a project which originated in a regular course offering.

Responsibilities of Recipients:

Students who receives a TU Summer Research Grant agree:

- To devote a **minimum of 300 hours** during the summer to the approved project. Please note that this is more than the time formally expected of students in fully meeting the requirements of two three credit courses. Recipients cannot both take courses and have work, internship, or volunteer commitments. Students who cannot meet this expectation should not apply for the awards.

- To enroll in a maximum of one three or four-credit summer course, whether at TU or elsewhere, OR to make no commitment to other fixed work obligations (whether as employment, internship, or as a volunteer) for more than ten hours per week while conducting summer research. (Please see note 2 below on the incorporation of volunteer work as part of a project.)
- To provide a written report to the faculty mentor for review and an electronic copy of the final version of this report to the Office of Undergraduate Research by September 30. Although no minimum length for this report will be specified, it should reflect a scope of research and writing associated with the time invested. In doing so, each student agrees that the report may be posted on a college or university website as evidence on the academic outcomes of the Summer Research Awards program. (See note 3 below.)
- To make a public presentation of the results of the project work within an existing context for student research presentations or at an event created for the purpose of this presentation by the second Friday of October of the award calendar year.
- To complete any informational surveys connected with the Summer Research Awards requested either before or after the summer of work.
- Students are expected to attend bi-weekly meetings chaired by the Director of Undergraduate Research – in person or via virtual means – to discuss their progress. Meeting times/dates will be determined at the beginning of the award period.

Faculty Expectations:

- The Faculty supervisor is expected to communicate at least once per week during the award period to advise the student and assess progress.
- The Faculty supervisors is responsible for reviewing the final report before it is submitted to the Office of Undergraduate Research and confirming that the terms of the grant were fulfilled regarding time spent on research and outcomes.
- If project results are part of a group or faculty-led faculty project, the student recipient should have co-author credit. If, after the completion of the project, the faculty member does not feel that such credit is earned, an exception must be granted by the department chair and Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research.

Award Administration:

Each Summer Scholar will receive a \$3500 stipend at the beginning of the summer, no later than June 10, and a \$1500 stipend at the end of the summer after all reporting requirements are complete.

The faculty advisor will be asked to certify that the student has completed a project in line with the proposal made during the application process, has accomplished work appropriate to the time commitment associated with the grant, and has delivered a written report/analysis or creative product (as applicable) and made a public presentation on the project. If the faculty advisor is

unable to make a positive affirmation that these expectations have been met, the final \$1500 stipend will not be paid. If the student believes a decision on final payment is unfair, the student may appeal this determination in writing. The final decision will be made jointly by the department chair of the faculty advisor and the Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research.

Special Considerations:

Note 1: In specific circumstances, if additional funds are available, limited funds may be available to the student for supplies, in addition to the stipend. A budget and explanation of need for and purpose of materials for the project are required. Due at time of application.

Note 2: In some instances and in some disciplines, a case may be made that voluntary engagements in the community or with an organization are part of a research process. It is the responsibility of the student to make a credible case in proposing a project that this engagement is essential to the research, that the research aspects of the project are fully and substantively defined, and that the result of the project will be a meaningful research report meeting the scholarly, theoretical, and analytical standards of the project's discipline. The proposal must also establish the maximum number of hours per week that would be devoted to volunteer engagements and the time committed to scholarly research and analysis.

Note 3: Students may propose projects that include activities or products other than a scholarly paper as a report. A particular project might include performance of a work being studied, as when a person organizes the performance of a play or plays, music, theater, or dance, for example, associated with analysis of the work or of reception of it. Or a student might produce a creative work, physical or digital works of art, write poems, prepare an advanced translation, build a data set, edit a set of papers, or assemble an anthology that would be presented as part of the project report. In all cases, a substantive critical essay or academic reflection on the work accomplished and presented will be required as part of the report.