Summer Research Program: Information for Faculty

Encouraging Students to Participate

This is the time of the year when students should start thinking about participating in the Oxy Summer Research Program (SRP). The Undergraduate Research Center’s surveys of SRP participants show that invitations from faculty members are among the important ways that students, especially those from underrepresented groups, are brought into the program. If you are interested in serving as a mentor next summer, an easy first step is to make mention of it in your classes or in conversations with students. That little bit of encouragement may be all it takes to get a student talking to you about the possibilities.

Research Projects

Faculty are free to set up requirements for potential research projects however they want. You may tell students that you will only consider projects on a specific topic, or in a general area, or using specific methodologies. If asked, you can choose to mentor a student on a topic outside your research area but you should also feel free to steer the student toward a more appropriate mentor. The URC serves to facilitate the program, maintain certain standards, and assure conformance with donor expectations; we do not wish to manage the research projects themselves.

How the SRP works

The on-campus summer research program is a full-time, ten week, independent research program where Oxy students work collaboratively with a faculty mentor on a project of mutual interest. The application process is supervised by the Undergraduate Research Committee (Andrew Shtulman, Chair); its members will read all proposals and decide which to fund. Our resources are limited and the program is a competitive one. For the last several years we have been able to fund about 60% of applicants.

Proposals are due by 4:00 pm on February 11, 2014. Guidelines for the proposals can be found at http://www.oxy.edu/undergraduate-research-center/summer-opportunities/oxy-summer-research-program

Only tenure-track or continuing adjunct faculty who will be on-campus during the summer are eligible to serve as mentors. A close and continuing relationship with the mentor is key to the success of a student’s research. The program does not expect that the mentor be available at all times, but we do encourage at least weekly face-to-face meetings between student and mentor. Remote mentorship by a faculty mentor who is away from campus for an extended period will not be supported.

The program begins on May 27, 2014 and ends on August 2, 2013. Students who cannot participate for the full ten weeks are unlikely to be funded. We assume a full time commitment to the program by the
student. This means that other jobs, on campus or off, are not approved. Academic course work may be approved, but only after an interview with Dr. Scott Bogue, the Associate Dean overseeing the URC.

Participating students receive a stipend of $390 per week during the program. In order to encourage the development of a research community, researchers are strongly urged to live on campus. To support that, on campus housing is subsidized by the URC. The amount of the subsidy depends on a student’s financial aid status. There is no support for off-campus housing. We provide a weekly Wednesday luncheon with a seminar given by faculty researchers at Oxy and invited guest speakers. Attendance at this event is expected for all researchers and their mentors. The final Wednesday, July 30th is devoted to an all-day research conference and students are expected to present their results as a talk or a poster.

The Undergraduate Research Committee has requested that all mentors complete the letter of recommendation form available at http://www.oxy.edu/undergraduate-research-center/get-support/letter-recommendation This form includes space for additional text, or you may attach a letter if you prefer. Please provide us with all requested information on the form, including your rank of the student (if you are working with more than one), along with your thoughts on the student’s readiness to do the proposed work, likely impact on her/his educational development, and degree of your commitment to serving as her/his mentor. If there are special circumstances that you feel the committee should know about, please be sure to include those in your letter. Recommendations must be submitted by February 11th by 4 pm.

The SRP for students funded by your grant or endowment

Departments and faculty with individual funding from grants or other sources are welcome to select students to work with them through the SRP. Projects of this kind lasting less than 10-weeks are acceptable, as long as the dates fall within the date range of our program. The URC will take care of all paperwork and provide subsidized on-campus housing for the duration of the student’s project. These students will be expected to attend the weekly seminars, submit a report and abstract to URC, participate in URC assessment efforts, and present their work at the July 30th research conference if they are still on campus. To be eligible for these benefits, you must have your summer research opportunity listed on the URC website. You can email a short description of your project to urc@oxy.edu by January 24, 2014 and we will do the rest.