Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Agricultural Research Division

Undergraduate Student Research Program

INTRODUCTION

The Agricultural Research Division (ARD) is committed to providing undergraduate students with an exceptional research experience to assist in fulfilling their thesis requirement or other scholastic research at UNL. Funds designated by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Reallocation Plan along with unit matching funds support the IANR ARD Undergraduate Student Research Program. The Program will support undergraduate students working with ARD faculty. This competitive grant program will also acquaint students with the scientific method, provide strong research and learning experiences, stimulate interest in teaching and research careers, and inform students about opportunities in graduate study.

GUIDELINES

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

The program is open to undergraduate junior and senior students proposing to conduct their research with faculty who have an ARD appointment. Students must be enrolled at UNL for the duration of the ARD Undergraduate Student Research Program. Enrollment in the appropriate undergraduate thesis seminar or other research oriented seminar courses before or during the period of mentored research is strongly encouraged. Undergraduate students that have previously received funding from this program are not eligible to apply.

FUNDING

ARD will provide funding of up to $2,500 per student, for a maximum of 12 months within one fiscal year (July 1 to June 30), and 50% matching funds from departments and/or faculty research programs are required. Funds will be available on July 1. Funds cannot be carried over to the following fiscal year. Funds may be used for research expenses, travel to conferences, registration fees, and student hourly wages. Unexpended funds will be returned to ARD at the close of the fiscal year.

Funds will be transferred to the faculty member’s research account to support the proposed research. Students will not receive funds directly.
**APPLICATION PROCESS AND FORMAT**

The proposal must be authored by the student with guidance from the faculty mentor. Proposals must be sent via email (one combined PDF file) to ardgrants@unl.edu and received by the published deadline. The proposal must include the following:

1. A cover page that includes:
   a. A concise title for proposed research topic
   b. The student’s name, major, name of the faculty member mentoring the student student ID number, campus address, telephone number and e-mail address
   c. Signature of the faculty mentor approving the proposed project

2. A clear statement of the problem and explanation of how the proposed research will address the problem (maximum 1 page)

3. A workplan that includes goals, objectives, methods and a timeline (maximum 2 pages)

4. A budget justification for the $ 2,500 request from ARD and the 50% matching funds approved by the home department (maximum 1 page)

5. A letter from the faculty mentor describing their expertise in the proposed research topic, support for the student’s research goals, and proposed working relationship with the student

6. A statement written by the student describing career goals (maximum 1 page)

7. An independent study contract (available from the CASNR Dean’s Office, 103 Agricultural Hall) that describes the joint expectations of the faculty mentor and student for fulfilling the grading requirement

**FINAL REPORT**

At the conclusion of the project, the student will submit a final report to ARD ardgrants@unl.edu within 30 days of project termination that includes a brief description of the project, budget/expenditure summary and a summary of the findings. A one-page executive summary should be included which provides potential impacts of the study.

**RESEARCH PRESENTATION**

Each student is expected to present their findings at one of the following:

1. UNL Undergraduate Research Conference
2. Nebraska Academy of Sciences Annual Meeting
3. Professional meeting in their field

The student is required to notify the ARD Office ardgrants@unl.edu prior to their presentation with the time and location so that ARD faculty can be encouraged to attend. Students are also encouraged to make presentations to the appropriate student club or organization and at departmental seminars.

SELECTION CRITERIA

SELECTION PROCESS

The Selection Committee will be comprised of a three-member subcommittee of the ARD Advisory Council, the College Directors of the Honors Program in CASNR and CEHS (ex-officio and non-voting) and the Dean and Director of ARD or designee.

Proposals will be selected based on relevance and quality of the proposed projects according to the following criteria:

1. Research addresses issues in agricultural sciences, biology/life sciences, human sciences, or natural resources that are important within ARD

2. Originality of research and potential to contribute to the discipline

3. Potential for successful collaboration with faculty

4. The potential for the proposed research experience to contribute to the student’s career goals

5. Appropriateness of proposed budget including matching funds.

6. Distribution of projects throughout disciplines that are relevant to ARD

7. Proposal submitted with all required elements