



**THE
UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA
SYSTEM**

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FISCAL YEAR 2020-21**

August 7, 2020

University of North Carolina System
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

UNC UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAM AWARD

Request for Proposals (RFP) Undergraduate Research Program Award Fiscal Year 2020-2021

Introduction

The University of North Carolina Undergraduate Research Program Award (URPA) is a grant mechanism to provide funding to universities or consortia of universities within the UNC System to support and enhance undergraduate research. Undergraduate research, defined by the Council on Undergraduate Research as “an inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline,” is recognized as a high-impact practice.¹ Therefore, undergraduate research is aligned with the UNC System’s mission to “impart the skills necessary for individuals to lead responsible, productive, and personally satisfying lives.” Specifically, undergraduate research supports UNC’s teaching mission of applying multiple approaches to student learning while allowing students and faculty to pursue scholarly activities of the highest intellectual caliber.

RFP Focus and Scope

The UNC System’s Undergraduate Research Directors Council (URDC) has identified three areas of focus for this RFP: ***Course-based Undergraduate Research Experiences (CUREs), Inclusive Excellence, and Digital Learning***. The areas are broadly defined, and the URDC welcomes proposals related to the scope of these three areas, either separately or in combination. Each proposal should include an assessment plan. ***Successful proposals will articulate a clear plan to have continued impact after the grant period and expand its reach and effectiveness.*** Competitive proposals will include Interdepartmental and/or inter-institutional collaboration (see rubric). Suggested topics include one or more of the following:

CUREs: Development or expansion of novel and/or innovative curricula that substantively include UR, recognizing that the goal of CUREs is to enhance research skills development toward the expansion of access to UR opportunities.

Inclusive Excellence: Development or expansion of novel and/or innovative strategies/methods to expand awareness, access, and participation in UR opportunities to all students, especially students from underrepresented groups.

Digital Learning: Development or expansion of novel or innovative methods that include digital learning tools in support of undergraduate research by distance learning students (e.g., online learning).

Award Information

A total of \$75,000 is budgeted for FY2020-2021 solicitation. Awards will range from \$7,500 to \$35,000; therefore, the maximum budget per award is \$35,000 and for use in FY21 only. As the UNC System is

¹ Kuh, G. and O’Donnell (2013) *Ensuring Quality & Taking High-Impact Practices to Scale*, AAC&U: Washington, DC.

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awaiting a certified budget, projects recommended for funding are contingent upon expected budgets and some awards may require modifications if expected funds are not provided. Funds should be available at the institutions by November 2020. **All awards are non-recurring state funds, must be expended by the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2021—carryover/forward is not allowed), and are subject to state fund regulations**, which includes restrictions on uses, including, but not limited to: no food or beverages for meetings/conferences, no out-of-country travel, and no uses for students' tuition. Consult your campus budget office for guidance on allowable uses of state appropriated funds. Institutional spending policies may dictate an earlier deadline for expending the funds.

Guidelines for Proposal Submission

Proposals will be accepted from any institution in the UNC System. Although inter-institutional collaboration is not a requirement, proposals that significantly involve two or more UNC institutions are encouraged and have the potential for a higher overall score and priority funding. The URPA is not a limited submission solicitation.

Each institution may submit two proposals, and ***the Undergraduate Research (UR) Coordinator of the lead institution must submit all proposals*** to the UNC System Office. Proposals are due by **5 pm on October 1, 2020**; UR Coordinators at the institutions may wish to set an earlier institution-level deadline to ensure sufficient time to evaluate and submit all proposals. Proposal writers should contact their respective UR Coordinators early in the process so that Coordinators can make arrangements to be available to submit the proposal(s).

UC Coordinators will submit their proposals to the following link:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/41c15ae230be49fcb3806e8e4aeaf701>.

Proposal submissions must include a **single pdf file**. Please use margins no smaller than one inch (all sides) and font of either Calibri or Times New Roman, and size of either 11 or 12. The application must include the following:

- **Front matter** (1 page) including project title; institution name; principal investigator name, title, and contact information; unit/department; names of collaborating institutions; primary focus area (CUREs, Inclusive Excellence, or Digital Learning); name and contact information for co-PI(s) if applicable; names and contact information for key personnel; and amount requested.
- **Project description** including a detailed description of the proposed project (no longer than 1500 words); expected outcomes and assessment methods for the project; and timeline for project activities. (Note: Projects must include an assessment/evaluation and support for such a plan is an allowable cost). References, if used, may be included in the footnotes using a size 10 font (no smaller).
- **Letters of support:** A maximum of three letters of support are allowed and should be from constituents close to the proposal (e.g. Dept. Heads/Chairs, Unit Heads, others contributing to

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the success of the proposal). A letter from the Chief Research Officer is allowed but not required.

- **Budget** (in a matrix/spreadsheet) with accompanying justification (up to 600 words) specifically describing how the funds will be used. Please include any matching funds.

Timeline

October 1, 2020 at 5 pm: Proposals due

October 26, 2020: Award notice (not later than; may be earlier)

June 30, 2021: Deadline for expending all funds (institutional deadline may be sooner)

July 31, 2021: Final progress report due. The UNC System Office will provide awardees with a link and final report submission instructions. The final report must include the following:

- 1) A narrative that highlights major project activities,
- 2) A summary of how well the project met its stated goals, along with supporting data or other supporting information as appropriate, and
- 3) A detailed final expended budget.

Proposal Review and Evaluation

A panel of UNC System Office staff, university representatives, and possibly external reviewers will review and score the proposals. **Proposals will be evaluated using six primary criteria and, if applicable, collaboration:**

- **Project goals:** Goals for the project are clearly described and thoroughly documented; proposal supports the RFP goals and objectives.
- **Project design:** Strong and innovative project design with procedures and activities that are well defined, fully explained, and clearly aligned to project and RFP goals.
- **Sustainability:** Project identifies clear plans to continue after the grant period expires.
- **Plans for Project Evaluation:** Proposal includes a variety of reasonable and realistic methods to evaluate the project.
- **Budget:** Budget is complete, contains all required information, and is within the stated limit. Budget is cost effective and linked to activities and outcomes.
- **Scalability:** Project identifies clear plans to scale program to expand reach and effectiveness.
- **Collaboration (if applicable):** Proposal includes a well-defined plan identifying appropriate collaborative partners, each of which adds value to the program.

Each category offers a maximum of 3 points for a total of 21 points. Proposals will be ranked by score, and then reviewed by the UNC System Vice President for Academic Programs, Faculty, and Research and

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the UNC System Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer, who has final approval authority. The UNC System Office will award as many proposals as possible given available funds and the requests of the top-scoring proposals.

Inquiries

Questions regarding this solicitation may be directed to Michelle Mayo or David English:

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