

Blazer Summer Research Institute Pilot Program Guidelines

Program Description:

The Blazer Summer Research Institute (BSRI) is a competitive program for VSU faculty and undergraduate students that is internally funded by **Academic Affairs, University Advancement, and private donations**. The goal of the BSRI pilot program is to support faculty lead undergraduate student research projects during the summer term, which aligns with VSU's Strategic Planning Goal 2. The programs preliminary objectives are to:

- Apply research mentorship as one way for undergraduate students to experience experiential learning.
- Apply lab research or a creative/artistic activity to real world outcomes or field work.
- Take knowledge acquired in the classroom to applications or assessment of literary or artistic works.
- Take some popular phenomena and understanding the process of how it works (physical, social, learning and/or processes) by logically analyzing components that build up a phenomenon, then determining what influences critical aspects of what is being studied.
- For collaborative projects involving multiple undergraduate students, experiences in how to build or maintain a team to develop a research project or assessment outcome.
- Create and disseminate knowledge based on research findings with professional presentations or publications.

Definition of Research from the VSU Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Administration:

Research and creative activity are broadly defined as any creative, critical, scholarly, and/or empirical activity that expands, clarifies, reorganizes, or develops knowledge or artistic perception. Research is more specifically defined as a systematic process of investigation or study that will produce facts or theories or will demonstrate or apply such knowledge to problem-solving within the discipline or in society.

Award Information:

Given the funding for the pilot year, it is anticipated that 5 to 6 awards will be made this year. Maximum award amounts are as follows:

- One faculty member with one undergraduate student - \$5,000 (\$1,000 scholarship for student and \$4,000 for faculty compensation, travel needs, or any other allowable expenditures as described below.)
- One faculty member with two or more undergraduate students - \$5,500 (\$1,500 scholarship divided equal between all student participants and \$4,000 for faculty compensation, travel needs, or any other allowable expenditures as described below.)

Currently the award does not provide funding for collaborative projects between faculty.

Application Timelines:

- Applications Open: February 15, 2019
- Applications Deadline: March 15, 2019 by 5:00 PM EST
- Award Announcements: April 1, 2019
- Institute Dates: June 3 to July 26, 2019
- Final Presentations by Students: July 26, 2019
- Final Reports Due: August 26, 2019 by 5:00 PM EST

Eligibility:

All tenure-track faculty and all tenured faculty at the instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor level are eligible for BSRI funding, including those with administrative assignments. Lecturers/senior lecturers, full-time temporary instructors, visiting faculty, part-time personnel, Department Heads, and Deans are not eligible for BSRI funding.

Allowable Expenditures:

BSRI funds may be used for the following types of expenditures to support research or creative activity:

- Summer compensation for nine-month faculty (including employer's share of fringe benefits on summer compensation);
- Travel required for data collection;
- Supplies and materials that are directly related to the conduct of the project, such as postage, photocopying, datasets, illustrations and photographs, art and performance supplies, chemicals and other expendables, software, and small equipment items (<\$3,000 per unit), etc.;
- Contractual services provided by an external vendor, such as transcription services, data entry assistance, analytical services, editing and indexing services, etc.;
- Telecommunications costs for telephone surveys or for Internet survey services
- Equipment (>\$3,000 per unit) that is specific to the proposed project, not normally provided by the department or other university departments, and/or is not an appropriate request for the University's equipment pools (requires explanation with signature of department head);
- Repair of used equipment donated to the University in the current fiscal year, provided the equipment is required for completion of the proposed project; and
- Research participant payments.

Ineligible Activities:

BSRI funding is not intended to support the following:

- Faculty development activities, such as learning a new technique, language, or methodology or completing a thesis or dissertation;
- Departmental curriculum development, such as preparation of curriculum materials, curriculum modifications, and student interest surveys;
- Tuition, fees, or costs associated with credit bearing courses;
- Professional or public service or provision of consulting services;
- Projects judged to be profit-oriented (i.e. production of a textbook or development of works intended for sale); or
- Institutional research (i.e., studies related directly to the operation of the University that are not generalizable and have little application beyond VSU).

Review Process and Evaluation Criteria:

Late proposals will not be accepted. In order to be eligible for review, a proposal must be complete and in a single package (either a single PDF file or a one-sided hardcopy). All applications must be submitted by the deadline of March 15, 2019 at 5PM EST to Dereth "Jan" Drake, Co-Coordinator of Undergraduate Research and Associate Professor of Physics, djdrake@valdosta.edu. Questions about eligibility for review will be decided by the Undergraduate Research Council upon proposal submission. Undergraduate Research Council members will independently review eligible proposals and assign a preliminary score to each based on the criteria below. Preliminary scores will be averaged for each proposal and a preliminary ranking will be established. The committee will meet face-to-face to discuss the applications, using the preliminary rankings to guide discussion. Following the group discussion, committee members will independently finalize their scores. A final average score will be calculated for each proposal and a final rank order established. The maximum proposal score is 100 points. Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Alignment with goals and objectives for the BSRI and with the VSU strategic plan (maximum 20 points)
- Student learning outcomes clearly articulated and appropriate for the length of the program (maximum 20 points)
- Clarity and appropriateness of the research/project design and procedures (maximum 35 points)
- Appropriateness of the budget and strength of the budget justification (maximum 15 points)
- Nine-month Faculty members not teaching at VSU during the period of the program (maximum 10 points)

Only those proposals with an average score of 70 and higher will be eligible for funding. Awards will be made in rank order until available funds are exhausted or until all proposals scoring 70 or higher are funded, whichever occurs first. Funding of any proposals below the 70 score will be decided by majority vote, and the committee may require changes to the proposed project as a condition of award. The committee may also allow funds to

lapse if remaining proposals are not deemed appropriate for undergraduate students during the eight-week term. At all times, the committee's decisions will be based on proposal quality without regard to discipline, department, college, or faculty rank/status represented. Following the selection process, all applicants will be informed of funding decisions and the final average proposal score will be provided to each applicant. The funding decisions of the Undergraduate Research Council are final and cannot be appealed.

Other Terms and Conditions of Award:

- All BSRI funds must be expended in accordance with University policy and procedures.
- If a proposal is withdrawn before the Undergraduate Research Council makes a final funding decision, the submission is not counted.
- Awards may not be deferred to a future fiscal year.
- All faculty members who participate in the BSRI must be present throughout all student presentations on the final day of the program.
- BSRI recipients must acknowledge support of the research/creative activity by the Valdosta State University Blazer Summer Research Institute in any publication or presentation of results.
- In the event a project funded by the BSRI program generates *unanticipated* sales or royalty income for the faculty member at any time in the future, the faculty member agrees to report such income to the Undergraduate Research Council and to reimburse the University the amount of the award from the first proceeds received.

Questions about the BSRI should be directed to Dereth “Jan” Drake, Co-Coordinator of Undergraduate Research and Associate Professor of Physics, djdrake@valdosta.edu, ext. 4852.