Distinction through Discovery Undergraduate Research Grants Program

**Purpose:** To encourage undergraduate students from all disciplines to participate in independent research and creative projects in collaboration with FAU faculty. The research or creative activity conducted by the student generally takes diverse forms of directed research, such as independent study, work on an honors thesis or part of a larger ongoing study under the direct supervision of a faculty member, rather than work conducted to fulfill regular course or seminar requirements.

**Student and Faculty Eligibility:**
- Any full-time, continuing, undergraduate student in good standing (academic and disciplinary) at Florida Atlantic University
- Students may receive only one Undergraduate Research Grant every twelve months.
- Faculty mentors may receive no more than two grants per grant cycle for students they mentor. (Additional grants may be awarded if funds are available.)

**Deadlines:** Grant package deadlines are due by October 15th for Fall/Spring funding, and March 15th for Summer/Fall funding. Should these dates fall on a weekend day or holiday, the deadline will become the next business day.

**Grants:** Grant allocations are categorized based on the following
1. Individual students engaged in research or creative activity under the mentorship of a FAU faculty member may apply for a grant of up to $600 to support their work.
2. Group projects, consisting of two or more students working on the same or similar projects under the mentorship of a FAU faculty mentor may apply for a grant of up to $1,200.

Applicants will be asked to identify the maturity of project (Exploratory, Developing or Advanced) to facilitate the review process. Please see Appendix A for definitions.

**Grant Expenditures:** Grant funds must be applied to tangible research expenditures. Applicants should discuss research needs with their faculty mentor before submission of their proposed budget. Any purchases, such as equipment and remaining supplies, must remain at FAU after the project is completed as property of the mentor’s department. Please see Budget section for more details.

**Grant Period:** Funds associated with the Undergraduate Research Grant must be spent within one year from the date the grant is awarded. The project can continue past this date.

**Judging criteria:** All grants will be judged by a panel of faculty, staff and students who will evaluate the merit of the proposal based on an evaluation rubric (see also Appendix E):

a) **Strength of Proposal** - Proposals must be clear, concise, and understandable for reviewers from varying disciplines (broad backgrounds). Strong proposals should also meet the following criteria:
- Clear focus on research question or scholarly problem addressed in this study: The grant explicitly states what the project will accomplish. There is a clear central idea, hypothesis, or objective.
- If a group project is selected, each group member must have a clear role/task supporting the overall research question(s).
- Background theory: provides an evaluation of previous work conducted in the area related to the question or the problem.
• Sound methodology: Methodology clearly conveys the steps that will achieve the purpose of this project and how data/information will be obtained.

• Contribution to the field or discussion of potential impact: There is an explanation of
  o the importance of the proposed project, “in the big scheme of things”
  o the value of the project’s impact
  o The project’s contribution of an original, intellectual, or creative work to the discipline

b) Timeline/Plan of Work- The student outlines the time necessary to complete the project successfully. It is justified that the project can be reasonably completed in that time (including allocating time for research compliance requirements), and that the student will present at a FAU Research Symposium.

c) Appropriateness of Budget - The requested budget is justified and necessary for the completion of the project. The budget provides detail associated with what will be purchased (item and quantity) and an explanation of the needs evidenced by the methodology section, as well as detail on where and how the funds will be spent (see Appendix C for samples).

d) Faculty Mentor’s Letter- The mentor endorses the project and the merit of the student conducting the project, and assures the reviewers that no other funds exist for parts/all of the project. The mentor provides appropriate research compliance information as it applies to this project (see Appendix D for more information).

Research Compliance/EHS: Please refer to Appendix B for more information. Please keep in mind that IRB/IACUC protocol and IBC approval may take 6 – 8 weeks and must be submitted by your Faculty Mentor. EH&S trainings and certifications are offered once per month. Please register for required training as soon as possible. If you are unsure which trainings you need, check with your Faculty Mentor.

We highly recommend students conducting any research or scholarly activities participate in the CITI (Collaborative Inter-Institutional Training Initiative). This provides access to courses that are designed to be used by institutions and organizations to provide comprehensive training in a variety of areas.

Award Notification: Within one month to six weeks of the closing date of the Undergraduate Research Grant package guidelines, grant awardees will be notified by an email sent to both the student and faculty mentor. Grant funds will be released to the department of the FAU faculty member for disbursement once all research compliance issues have been resolved. It is expected that compliance issues be addressed in a timely manner (within 2 months of the award notification).

Grant Recipient Requirements: Individuals awarded grants must:
1. Be able to complete the project as an enrolled undergraduate at FAU.
2. Present this work at the annual Undergraduate Research Symposium, in April each year.
3. Participate in pre- and post-grant award surveys regarding experience of research project.
4. Reference the grant in future presentations and/or publications resulting from this work.