Request for Proposals for Research-Related Skills Courses Initiative

Introduction
The University’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) seeks to improve awareness of what it means to be a research university, align the missions of producing world class research and providing a world class undergraduate education, and promote opportunities for students to engage in research and scholarship.

One such opportunity supported by the QEP is participation in Research-Related Skills (RRS) Courses. While many undergraduate students at Carolina engage in mentored research, the focus is typically limited to the research itself, and students do not gain the skills necessary to communicate their work to the scientific community and broader society. The RRS course initiative will support courses that promote development of scholarly writing, critical scholarly literature review, and research presentation skills that are not part of the typical undergraduate research experience.

Students in RRS courses will be enrolled in an undergraduate research course (e.g. RELI/ANTH/PSYC 395) for a total of 3 credits. In addition to their assigned research hours, students will enroll in a recitation section that will meet weekly for 1 hour in group settings similar to “journal club” or “lab group” meetings. Courses could be organized around a specific area of research or more general in nature. A variety of assignments could be implemented, including in-class critical analyses of literature and writing associated abstracts, and “chalk talks” about students’ own research, as well as other discipline-specific assignments, and should involve peer review and guided participation led by the instructor.

Essential Characteristics of RRS Courses
- Critical analysis of scholarly literature
- Scholarly writing
- Presentation of research

Instructor Eligibility
Proposals will be accepted from any department within the College of Arts & Sciences or the Professional Schools. Course instructors may be faculty or postdoctoral fellows mentored by a faculty member. Departments with small numbers of undergraduate students involved in research may collaborate and offer joint RRS sections where appropriate. Similarly, departments, schools, or programs that do not have formal undergraduate research course offerings may collaborate with those that do where appropriate (e.g. Cell Biology in the School of Medicine and Biology in the College of Arts & Sciences), or may create a course via the Course Request Approval System. For more information on creating a section of the undergraduate research course, please contact Nick Siedentop (nick_siedentop@unc.edu), Curriculum Director in the Office for Undergraduate Curricula.

Award Information
A total of $30,000 has been budgeted to fund this initiative for FY 2017-2018. Awards will provide $3,000 in salary support for course instructors (i.e. overload for faculty or stipend support for postdoctoral fellows).

Guidelines for Proposal Submission
Proposals will be reviewed by a committee of faculty and staff, and should include the following:

1. A brief narrative (1,500 words max) that includes:
   a. A description of the course including specific objectives, activities, and assignments
   b. Anticipated student enrollment
   c. Anticipated timing of course offering (i.e. Fall vs. Spring semester for FY 2017-2018)
   d. Anticipated benefits to students
2. Statement of feasibility
   a. Relevant experience mentoring undergraduate researchers
   b. Existing lab/department infrastructure or organization to support undergraduate research
3. A signed letter from the department chair endorsing the course

Proposals should be submitted by 5pm Friday, August 4th as a single pdf file via email to Troy Blackburn, PhD, Associate Dean and Director of the Office for Undergraduate Research (troyb@email.unc.edu).