Undergraduate Research Summer Institute 2024

We are excited to invite faculty project proposals for the 2024 Undergraduate Research Summer Institute (URSI) program. Proposals are due by 5 pm on Friday, February 2. The 2024 URSI summer research program will begin on Tuesday, May 28. This year, we invite proposals for both 8- and 10-week URSI projects ending on either July 19 or August 2.

We are also soliciting faculty participation in two collaborations with Grand Challenges:

1. The Summer Catalyst Research Experience, which encourages URSI research projects focused on Belonging and Inclusive Excellence in STEM.
2. The Rising Sophomore Research Experience program, which aims to support students from groups historically underserved/excluded in science and math fields by increasing the number of opportunities for students to engage in faculty-mentored research experiences early in their college experience.

More details about these two opportunities appear below.

URSI

During URSI, faculty members mentor student URSI fellows, selected by individual faculty. Successful projects engage the faculty mentor in an instructional and supervisory role, both for the duration of the summer project and in preparation for the URSI Symposium held during the academic year. Faculty are expected to meet regularly with their URSI fellow(s) during the summer. Projects must involve significant student participation and exposure to research methods of the discipline (i.e., not merely photocopying, word-processing, or filing) with the intention of creating a sense of ownership of the project by the student. URSI proposals can be submitted in collaboration with colleagues to encourage shared mentoring and scholarly pursuits. Faculty members are welcome to contact Hadley Bergstrom, the URSI director, to discuss possible project ideas.

Project selection will be based on the following criteria:

- Faculty participants must be continuing members of the Vassar faculty (i.e., under contract for the following academic year).
- Preference may be given to tenured or tenure-track faculty members.
• Preference may be given to faculty members who did not participate in URSI in the previous year.

STIPENDS/FUNDS

• Faculty: $2,000 (10-week project) or $1,600 (8-week project)
• Students: $5,000 (10-week project) or $4,000 (8-week project) from which student pays for room and board. If the budget allows, URSI may be able to fund more than one student fellow per faculty mentor.
• Research Supplies: up to $500 per project, regardless of the number of students being mentored. These funds MUST be spent by October 1, 2024, with no exception.

Throughout the summer, URSI fellows will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of workshops. Faculty are also expected to ensure that their URSI fellow(s) receives all safety training necessary for their proposed project. Finally, faculty are expected to advise their students on the requirements for URSI and the URSI Symposium. All student URSI fellows must serve as an author or co-author of an URSI abstract (due at the end of the summer) and of an URSI Symposium poster. URSI fellows who are on campus during the fall are required to present or co-present their poster during the Symposium on Wednesday, September 25, 2024.

Submit your project proposal by clicking the link at the bottom of this document and filling out the form no later than 5 pm, Friday, February 2, 2024.

You will have the option to “save and continue” your application by clicking the button at the bottom of the application. This will allow you to complete and revise your application in more than one sitting. Just make sure you hit the “submit” button once you are ready! After submitting the form, you will receive an email confirmation. If you do not receive an automated email confirmation, then your submission has not been received and you should submit it again.

HHMI GRAND CHALLENGES

URSI 2024 is continuing its partnership with the Grand Challenges program, which seeks to support faculty who are interested in (A) supporting students traditionally underrepresented in science and math and (B) pursuing projects on inclusion, diversity, and equity in science and math. Faculty can express an interest in a project focusing on either of these goals via the URSI proposal form accessed by clicking the link below, and the Grand Challenges team will follow up with a request for a short proposal and budget.

GRAND CHALLENGES CATALYST RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

The Grand Challenges Catalyst Research Experience is a summer program that reflects on the culture of belonging in STEM at Vassar and works to design student-driven interventions that will make Vassar a more welcoming place to teach and learn science. Since 2020, the Catalyst Research Experience has engaged students for eight weeks
over the summer in research and outreach projects at the heart of the Grand Challenges vision for a more just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive community of scientists.

This summer, we are continuing to support URSI research projects focused on Belonging and Inclusive Excellence in STEM. These URSI Catalyst Projects would pair a faculty member with 1-2 URSI fellows interested in DEI issues in STEM. Projects are meant to be evidence-based design exercises to create possible interventions for our Vassar community. The stipend for faculty and students for Catalyst projects will be the same as those for traditional URSI projects. Faculty who do both a traditional URSI project and a Catalyst project will receive an additional stipend of $500.

Please propose Catalyst projects using the regular URSI project proposal form.

**RISING SOPHOMORE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

The Rising Sophomore Research Experience program aims to support students from groups historically underserved/excluded in science and math fields, by increasing the number of opportunities for students to engage in faculty-mentored research experiences early in their college experience. Rising Sophomores will receive the same stipend as other URSI fellows. Faculty who mentor a Rising Sophomore will receive the following additional funding:

- Additional $500 stipend (can be used as a stipend or for research/professional use)
- Additional $500 research funds
- Funds to support student presentation of research at a conference (by application)