

Wehner Student Research Program (WESTREP) Description

1. The intent of this program is to create and maintain a science honors research program within the Department of Biology that provides support for well-qualified undergraduate and graduate students to conduct in-depth research that can lead to a publication in a peer-reviewed journal. The goal of this program is to enhance student research opportunities as well as the Department's image as a rigorous program in the sciences.
2. This fund is specifically limited to high quality undergraduate majors with sophomore, junior, or senior standing or graduate students within the Department of Biology including AQUA majors. Projects can be multidisciplinary, but the primary recipient of funds must be a Department of Biology major. All applicants must have an overall GPA equal to or greater than 3.30. No faculty member can have more than one student funded through this program per year.

For students receiving 2 years of funding, the funds will be disbursed as follows: up to \$5,000 for research, up to \$3,000 for summer stipend, and up to \$2,000 for travel to a professional meeting. The \$5000 for research can be spent on items deemed necessary to complete the research successfully. This can include, but is not limited to: travel to a site, small equipment, supplies, computer programs, and lab analysis fees (note: purchase of a computer is discouraged and must be well justified to be considered). All purchased equipment and unused materials must stay in the Department of Biology after completion of the project. It is important to note that only the summer stipend amount will be fixed. The remaining \$7000 can be earmarked as indicated, but funds may be shifted to best suit the needs of the student (i.e. more could be allocated for travel and less for supplies or the other way around). The summer stipend will be made available to the student in two installments (middle and end of the summer or semester) based on successful completion of work. Successful completion of work is to be indicated by a written report to the review committee by the deadlines given (to be determined).

For students who receive one year of funding, the funds will be disbursed as a lump sum to the advising faculty mentor. The allocation of the funds must follow closely what is stated in the budget statement and no more than half of the sum can be allocated for a stipend. The stipend must be claimed within a specified semester (to be stated in the proposal).

The committee reserves the right to review all expenditures for all projects funded.

3. Students will apply to a review committee for funding. **The deadline for applying is January 27, 2017.** The application should consist of a research proposal co-developed with a mentor. Every effort must be made to ensure that the student applicant is the primary author of the proposal. It is understood that the student applicant will work closely with a mentor to develop the plan, but the onus is on the student to be the primary author of the proposal and to show ownership of the project. To this end, the primary mentor must indicate what percent of the proposal was written

by the student and what percent was written by the mentor (the mentor can not contribute more than 30% of the proposal). The proposal should include an initial budget with a best-guess estimate of research cost needs.

4. Sophomores, juniors, seniors, and graduate students are allowed to apply for funds. No faculty member can have more than one funded student per year. Students are encouraged to work on multi-disciplinary projects, but within those projects one faculty member must be the designated mentor, who is also responsible for disbursing the funds. Preference will be to fund previously unfunded faculty and students. Funding will be based on the quality of the proposal. It is possible that fewer than the total possible new students could be approved for funding if the proposals are not of sufficient quality.
5. Application process: Students will apply for the Wehner Student Research Program in the spring semester prior to starting their research. The current deadline is set as the first Friday of April. The application will include a proposal with budget (see above), letter of support from the primary advisor, and a copy of their transcript indicating courses taken and GPA. The proposal shall not exceed 4 pages including the budget and sign-off form from the mentor indicating percent of student input to the proposal. The proposal shall include a rationale for why the research is of value, what is currently known about the topic, what the main question and hypothesis(-es) are, the methodology to be used to address the hypothesis/question, and a timeline for completion.
6. Evaluation process: The review committee will review each proposal and rate it according to specific categories of criteria: likelihood of completion, quality of the proposed project (this includes uniqueness of the question, and projected outcomes), quality of the writing, and past performance of faculty advisor within the Wehner Student Research Program.
7. Period of funding is 1 or 2 years. Students must present research at a regional or national conference as well as the Wehner Student Research Symposium. Prior to leaving the research program, the student should submit a draft for publication of their work. The student's research should also result in a submitted peer-reviewed publication within 3 years of the initial funding. This publication can be based solely on the student's research or include the student's research as part of a larger study. Faculty advisors must show successful completion of student work (i.e. presentation at national/regional meeting, student draft for publication and, where applicable, submission of paper for publication) to qualify for repeat funding.