

URECA FALL APPLICATION DEADLINE

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs administers University funds to directly support mentored undergraduate research through Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity (URECA) grants. These grants provide students an opportunity to work on a research or creative project and get paid for their time and commitment, while gaining valuable experience and transferable skills desired by employers and graduate schools. Awards range from \$500 for beginners to \$3,500 for experienced researchers.

Please check out our "[Information and Applications](#)" page for more information.

**Deadline for Fall proposals:
Thursday, September 3, by
4:30pm**



URECA TEAM APPLICATIONS

More info on page 3

WHAT IS THE UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH CENTER?

Welcome to our first issue of the Undergraduate Research Center newsletter. In this monthly communication, we hope to share the success stories of our students and faculty mentors, present funding opportunities offered through the URECA grant program, highlight upcoming workshops and events, and elaborate upon scholarly advances in the field of undergraduate research.

As stated in the Quest for Student Success 2025, MTSU is committed to graduating students "who are prepared to thrive professionally, committed to critical inquiry and life-long learning, and engaged as civically, globally responsible citizens". The activities and programs offered by "URC" are the Office of Research and Sponsored Program's contribution to the University's goal to provide each student with a distinctive learning experience that lays the foundation for his or her own success.

The Undergraduate Research Center aligns with this strategic path by providing students with opportunities to engage in mentored research during which faculty mentors lead, guide, and engage students in intellectual pursuits and recognize that commitment to an enriched faculty experience lies at the core of an enriched student experience. Our goal is to promote mentored research at the undergraduate level, and provide university support for students and faculty members who engage in critical inquiry and life-long learning.

The URC hosts several annual events such as the Fall Open House, Scholars Week, the Summer Research Celebration, Posters at the Capitol, and Undergraduate Research Week. MTSU invests approximately \$120,000 into the Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity (URECA) grant program, which funds student research experiences and creative projects each year, and supports students by providing opportunities for dissemination, hosting an annual URECA luncheon to celebrate successes, and offering support throughout the grant program. We also offer travel support to academic conferences, both nationally and internationally, and provide free academic poster printing, workshops to aid students in their research endeavors, and support the Student Organization for the Advancement of Research (SOAR).

We hope you enjoy the newsletter and look forward to your comments, suggestions, and feedback.

Sincerely,
Jamie Burriss, Program Manager
Jeffry Porter, Director

URC'S MISSION

The Undergraduate Research Center's (URC) mission is to be the central hub for communication about undergraduate research grant programs and other related opportunities on and off campus, to distribute university funds for undergraduate research and creative projects, and to promote dissemination of results through travel grants and by offering opportunities for students to present their research findings.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

➔ Research Spotlight

Omar Ali, a Fall 2019 URECA Scholar, was recently published in the Journal of Forensic Science International. The article *Bayes factor: A useful tool to quantitatively evaluate and compare performance of multiple stature estimation equations* can be viewed [here](#).

Faculty Mentor:
Yangseung Jeong, PhD

➔ Creative Activity Spotlight



Beatriz Marie R. Dedicatoria created a magazine called *Speak Now!: A Look at Diversity at MTSU* was greatly inspired by the author's own diverse experiences, the Me Too movement, coming-out stories, and the fight for equality.

The first issue of the magazine, *Speak Now!*, features articles, interviews, and visuals highlighting the several areas of diversity among students and professors at MTSU. Click [HERE](#) to view *Speak Now!*

Faculty Mentor:
Poushali Bhadury, PhD



RESEARCH TEAM OPPORTUNITIES

The Undergraduate Research Center is pleased to offer two team opportunities for undergraduate students and faculty for the upcoming academic year -- Autonomous Transportation and the Blue Mars Initiative. Both of these teams will be led by Dr. David Butler, Vice Provost for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies.

Descriptions of the Research Teams and how to apply can be found on our website: https://mtsu.edu/urc/ureca/URECA_GroupProjects.php.

We welcome students with any level of research experience. Faculty are also encouraged to join our teams. If you have an interest in either of these projects, please email Jamie.Burriss@mtsu.edu.

New URECA Team Application Structure Allows for Year-Around Funding



IMPORTANT CHANGES

Exciting news! Effective Fall 2020, the URECA Committee has implemented a new URECA Team structure. The URECA Team program is designed to involve 2-4 students in intensive, high quality research or creative project experience.

Successful applications will describe a well-thought out approach in which each team member has a defined role, yet benefits from teamwork. The projects should include significant faculty participation with a strong mentoring component.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE NEW TEAM STRUCTURE

- Teams applications are available each semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer).
- Teams may consist of undergraduates with varying levels of experience. For example, a team could include (1) Assistant level student, (2) Silver level students, and (1) Gold level student, or some variation thereof.

- The application process is a collaboration between the mentor and team members.
- The mentor will submit the following components of the proposal: Introduction & purpose, proposed team structure including meeting frequency, check-ins, etc.; budget request, if applicable, \$500 max per team.
- Each undergraduate team member will submit the following components of the proposal (page requirement depends upon the level at which the student is applying): background; methods; individual role, responsibilities, and contributions to the project; personalized timeline outlining project milestones; travel funding request, if applicable, \$300 max per student.

Team applications will be available on our website by August 1st.



Email Jamie.Burriss@mtsu.edu



DID YOU KNOW?

The URC has a facebook page!

Follow us :

Undergraduate Research Center at MTSU or click the facebook icon for updates and stories.

WHAT IS SOAR?

SOAR stands for Student Organization for the Advancement of Research and is a new student organization comprised of undergraduate students who are committed to developing and sustaining an active and successful undergraduate research environment at MTSU. SOAR's mission is to enhance student's research capacity through increased awareness, collaboration and skill building.



The Founding Members of SOAR hosted their first business meeting in the MT Center on Nov. 20, 2019. David Butler, Vice Provost for Research, and Jeff Porter, Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, joined the members for lunch and a conversation surrounding the importance of undergraduate research and creative activity.

➔ WHY JOIN SOAR?

SOAR members engage in several professional development opportunities throughout the academic year such as:

- hosting and attending workshops,
- social media takeovers,
- serving as a peer mentor, and
- attending the National Conference on Undergraduate Research.

We welcome new members to join us at any level of engagement. To check out our SOAR member profiles and learn more about their current projects, research interests, professional aspirations, and advice to fellow students, click the "learn more" button.



THANK YOU to the 2019-2020 Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity (URECA) Committee members for their time and commitment to undergraduate research. The committee awarded 76 individual proposals and 3 team proposals for a total of \$114,171 in funding.

2019-2020 URECA Committee Members

Seth Jones, Chair, Educational Leadership

Michelle Boyer-Pennington, Psychology

Mary Farone, Biology

Sean Foley, History

Margaret Brooker, Theatre & Dance

Justin Miller, Chemistry

Misty Jones Simpson, Recording Industry

Hanna Terletska, Physics & Astronomy

fun fact

100%

OF URECEA RECIPIENTS WOULD
RECOMMEND THE PROGRAM
TO OTHER STUDENTS



TRAVEL SUPPORT FOR UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

The Undergraduate Research Center strives to support students in dissemination of their research.

Undergraduates who are accepted to present their research at a regional, state, national, or international conference are eligible to receive travel funding.

Support includes:

- \$400 yearly maximum for domestic travel and \$500 yearly maximum for international travel.
- Awarded travel funds are payable on a reimbursable basis only.

Check out our [website](#) for more information.



questions or comments?

We welcome them!

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