

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
LA CROSSE

**Undergraduate Research Committee
2008-2009 Year-end Report
Submitted by Timothy B. Gongaware, Chair**

1. Funding for Undergraduate Research

- a. Continuing to acknowledge the importance of providing students with opportunities for engaging in professional experiences and activities, we were fortunate this year to have increased funds from both the Academic Initiatives and the Provost's Office.
 - i. The Provost's contribution increased to \$100,000 (from \$70,000 in 2007-08).
 - ii. Academic Initiative funding increased to \$23,200 (from \$23,000 in 2007-08).
 - iii. Our total budget this academic year, including the \$20,000 from the International Education Office, is \$143,200 (up from \$101,000 in 2007-08).
- b. On November 21, 2009, Kathryn Birkeland (URC Vice-Chair), VJ Agarwal, Amery Bodelson and I went before the Academic Initiatives Oversight Committee to request an increase in funding to cover the growth in proposals submitted to the URC. The AIOC's recommendation to the Student Senate was for a very modest growth of 2% for undergrad research (to \$23,654) for the next year.

2. The Grants Funded

- a. The committee conducted a fall grants competition resulting in 60 proposal submissions. Following extensive evaluation, 47 of the proposals were funded for a total of \$63,759. This was a substantial increase over previous years. For example, in 2007-08, we received a total of 89 grants (42 in the Fall and 47 in the Spring) grants and funded 67.
- b. The committee conducted a spring grants competition resulting in 32 proposal submissions. Following extensive evaluation, 25 of the proposals were funded for a total of \$36,117.21.

3. 11th Annual UW-L Celebration of Student Research and Creativity

- a. Held on Friday, April 3, 2009.
- b. There were 78 Poster presentations, 44 Oral presentations and 3 Art exhibitions/performances (these numbers includes graduate students).
- c. Approximately 870 people attended.
- d. For the first time, a system was established (by Amery Bodelson, Nicole Johnson and VJ Agarwal) to judge both the posters and the oral presentations. Teams of two (primarily a faculty member and a student) were sent to evaluate and score the presentations. Final scoring then led to awards of \$30 to the top 6 poster presentations and top 4 oral presentations.

4. NCUR

- a. For the year's NCUR here at UW-L, the committee was able to fund 79 student registrations.
- b. During the April meetings, the committee discussed a problem with using the "first come, first serve" basis for selecting who gets funding to attend NCUR. This is the system that has been used in the past. However, the committee developed and provided a series of guidelines to be used by the Grants and Contracts Office in making such a selection. The guidelines, listed in descending order or importance, are as follows:
 - i. Student must have presented at the Celebration of Student Research and Creativity (failure to do so would result in their loss of NCUR funding).
 - ii. Only one author per project.
 - iii. Priority given to students who have not received funding for travel to NCUR in the past (prior funding does not eliminate them from consideration, but puts them at the bottom of the list).
 - iv. Priority given to seniors, then juniors, then sophomores and then freshmen.
 - v. After following the above criteria, monies would be awarded so as to maintain fair distribution across departments using the following guides:
 1. each department which has students applying would get at least one funded slot; and,
 2. the larger the number of applicants a department has, relative to other departments, the larger the number of funded travel slots they would be allocated.

5. Process for the Submission of Grants

- a. In Spring 2009, the committee received grant submissions electronically.
 - i. Student put together the proposals and emailed them to the Grants and Contracts office. A few minor glitches were noted, but are being worked out for the Fall 2009 cycle.
 - ii. While the new system runs smoothly and saves resources, it also requires substantial work from staff in the Grants & Contracts Office. This could be considerably reduced if an on-line submission program were used.
 1. If it has not already been developed, then next year's committee should be charged to explore the implementation of an on-line submission system.
 2. I would urge the Senate and Provost's office to work together to secure funds for that system's continued maintenance after its initial development

6. Journal of Undergraduate Research

- a. Due to cost and underutilization, the committee recommended that we stop producing CDs of the Journal and, for now, make it an online journal.
 - i. Over the next year, the Associate Vice-Chancellor will be exploring and bringing to the committee options for the Journal's future and ideas for other ways to display/dissemination undergraduate research at UW-L.