Falcon Promise
FY14 Annual Report

Falcon Promise Area: Expanded Undergraduate Research Opportunities
Project Manager: Elizabeth Schneider-Rebozo

Please use the space below to briefly describe the use of funds in your Falcon Promise area. Please keep responses to two pages.

A description of how funds were used:
Expanded Undergraduate Research Opportunities—Falcon Promise funds are intended to provide support for undergraduate research through student stipends, project support and faculty mentor support opportunities. Funds are awarded to students and faculty through a competitive grant process. The URSCA Office administered the funds. Two grants in FY 14 were supported from this fund: 1) Undergraduate Course Redesign Grant and 2) the Undergraduate Stipends and Expenses (USE) Grant. Both grants were reviewed by the newly formed URSCA Council, a 9-member faculty group with representation from all four colleges.

A description of the location(s) where the funding was used:
Funding was used to conduct research on the UWRF campus at the library and in various lab and lab farms, and at local, regional, national and international venues from Whitewater State Park in Minnesota to Wiesbaden, Germany.

Identify the amount of funds used for salaries and fringe benefits, supplies and expenses, equipment, and remodeling by location. Purchases in excess of $5,000 shall be individually itemized:

- A total of $11,233.00 was paid in stipends to students and to faculty ($7250.00 to students via USE grant, with funds disbursed through payroll, and $3,983.00 to faculty for successful a) Undergraduate Course Redesign Grants—encumbered from FY 13--and b) USE grant mentor awards paid on completion of their students’ projects.)
- An additional $1,223.00 was paid out in Fringe benefits ($78.34 in student fringes and $1,145.00 in faculty fringes).
- A total of $19,048.00 was paid to undergraduates and to faculty in supplies and expenses, (Undergraduates received $15,872.00 in receipted supplies and expenses via the USE grant; undergraduates also benefited from $1,369.00 in expenses associated with Spring RSCA Day, an URSCA dissemination event. Faculty supplies and expenses associated with the USE grant equaled $388.00; Faculty were also involved in the UWL CUR Conference, with expenses equaling $1,419.00).  
- There were no equipment purchases over $5000.00.

Describe the goals/benchmarks for your area:

- Promote undergraduate student and faculty participation in URSCA across all disciplines
- Provide undergraduates in all disciplines with resource opportunities to conduct research
- Initiate sources of faculty mentor support to help sustain undergraduate research on our campus
- Increase competitiveness for high-quality URSCA projects
- Provide URSCA-related trainings for undergraduates and faculty ("How To" workshops on developing a research plan; finding a mentor; writing a research proposal; creating a research budget; applying for a grant; developing research presentation and dissemination skills; workshops on research ethics; and so on. . .)

If a competitive process was used to allocate funding among students, 1) describe the process for allocating funds and 2) identify the total number of students that applied for funding and the number of students that received funding.

Funds were allocated via a competitive review of all funding proposals conducted by URSCA Council, led by ex officio, nonvoting chair, Lissa Schneider-Rebozo. URSCA Council scores all grant proposals in two categories: quantitative and holistic. The holistic category has three possibilities: award/don’t award/award after minor proposal revisions. The quantitative category allows reviewers to numerically score each of the grant categories (Introduction, significance, methods and timeline, objectives, budget). The numeric score will be especially useful if fund balances require us to limit awards even when all reviewers have agreed it is holistically a worthwhile project. The numeric score also reinforces the assessment criteria in a proposal review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dollar amount</th>
<th>Total Requested</th>
<th>Total Awarded</th>
<th>Total in FY 14 PAID OUT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Undergraduates</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Faculty</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
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******Note that FY 15 is underway, and the URSCA Office has rolled out several new grant funds to make use of the available resources in the Expanded Undergraduate Research Opportunities fund. The new grants include the Mentor Travel Grant, which fills a previously unmet need on our campus by providing mentors with the resources to travel with their URSCA students to dissemination events. In the inaugural Fall 2014 round, we have had $7440.00 requested in this category. In addition, we are piloting a new grant fund that we are tentatively calling the URSCA Service Learning Award, for URSCA projects that will provide a special service to the UWRF campus community, and that offer developmental research skills opportunities for 1st and 2nd year undergraduates: in this pilot phase, we have committed $10,000 in five different pilot projects.

In addition, the Course Redesign grant paid out $4000.00 at the start of FY15.

Other new URSCA opportunities that will be forthcoming, or for which we are awaiting final approval: 1) a "poster mini grant" fund, which needs about $60,000 to make it sustainable for a three year period; 2) a Program Redesign Grant, which will allow departments to apply for up to $20,000.00 (award amount based on size of department) to develop and infuse course-embedded research projects into their major programming; and 3) we have committed to supporting ten student researchers associated with the UWRF proposals for the UW System Discovery Grants in FY 15.

In addition, we would also like to increase award amounts for Summer scholars (from $3000/1000 to $4200/1400) to make that elite program more competitive with national REUs and, pending approval of these increases, we would then raise the USE individual and group grant award amounts from $2100/700 to $3000/1000, and 3000/700 to $4500/700. At present we must maintain caps on the USE grants so that they do not exceed or undercut the more competitive and elite Summer Scholars program.

Finally, just as we have in the most recent FY15 round of Falcon Grants seen a considerable uptick in proposals (almost doubling previous requests), we anticipate an increase in traffic on the USE grant applications, with 1st round deadline for FY15 coming up later this week.