



Funding Request Form FY2022

Department should complete one form for each individual request

Department:

Graduate and Professional Student Council

Program, Service or Operation Requested:

Student Research Week Director: Graduate Assistant Non-Teaching (GANT)

General Description:

Student Research Week (SRW) is a week-long event showcasing student research at Texas A&M. The event draws people from all levels of Texas A&M and includes undergraduate students, graduate students, and Faculty members. This year's SRW had 803 students presenting in a total of 106 sessions with 146 volunteers and 158 judges (faculty, graduate students, and alumni). The SRW Director is tasked with planning and executing all logistical tasks to ensure a high-quality conference experience for all attendees. As the conference is scheduled the week after spring break, the SRW team received the notification regarding the spring break extension due to pandemic. The SRW team cancelled the in-person conference and later planned a virtual conference.

Request Type:

Full Increase One-Time Partial/Matching

Type of Funds Requested:

UAF Other

General Questions

How does this address an important need and/or positively impact students?

As a top-tier research institution, Texas A&M consistently conducts and supports high-quality research. The research community disseminates the findings and influence of their findings by publishing and presenting papers at various conferences. Conferences serve as a forum for innovation, professional development and networking. Presenting a full-length research paper at a conference is often a daunting and challenging task to new and experienced presenter's alike. SRW provides a platform for students to gain valuable experience and feedback by showcasing their research and practice all other aspects of attending a conference. The experience isn't limited to a single college or degree level and garners participation from all students. Students are also presented with monetary awards for exemplary research and presentations.

The Director will be responsible for every logistical operation of SRW functionality, recruiting

and organizing volunteers and managing a tight budget. This allows the hired individual to have a unique experience that allows for professional development and valuable leadership experience. With conference attendance organically growing larger each year, the SRW Director needs to be a graduate student of high caliber. Each year the event becomes more complex and requires greater expertise to execute at a high-quality level. One of the complexities this year is planning for a virtual conference if in-person meeting is still not allowed next spring.

What department/Division strategic plan item does this support?

The desired outcomes of SRW fit into many of the Vision 2020 imperatives that have guided Texas A&M decision making for more than a decade. Particularly, the second and third imperatives to “Strengthen our Graduate Programs” and “Enhance the Undergraduate Academic Experience” are directly served by participating in SRW. Both graduate and undergraduate students alike have the “opportunity for intellectual exchange between distinguished faculty and undergraduates” through their presentation and networking.

If this position is not funded, there is a strong possibility that we may not be able to hire an SRW Director. This directly impacts the quality of SRW. A volunteer Director will not have enough stake in the success of the event compared to a paid and dedicated director.

Please provide data, evidence, and/or input (student faculty, staff, other) you gathered to help you determine the need for additional resources.

The main reason that we request funding to ensure that a capable and dedicated student is recruited to execute the event. Qualified students have rejected offers to be the SRW Director, or they have not applied at all. Consistently, the stipend for the SRW Director is lower than the stipend offered from other assistantship opportunities.

What actions have you implemented or discontinued internally to address the identified need?

The GPSG has reached out to various administrators to pursue various opportunities for SRW funding. Particularly, we met with Dr. Pugh (VPSA), Dr. Barteau (VPR), Dr. Butler-Purry (Associate Provost for Graduate Studies), and Dr. Datta (Exec. Director of Undergraduate Research), and are in ongoing conversations for how SRW can better serve students. We have also explored creating a de-centralized executive committee of volunteers to help organize the event but quickly realized that we need a dedicated GANT to take ownership of executing SRW at a high-quality level.

If funding is granted, what metrics will you use to evaluate success of this program/service/operation?

Conference attendance and attendee satisfaction would be our primary metrics of success. Our goal is to serve as many students as possible by continuing to provide a high-quality conference experience. We would maintain the 800+ student presenter benchmark as an indicator of our success. If the conference has to go virtual this year, we may need to adjust this number accordingly. Attendee satisfaction will be measured via surveys sent out to all attendees.

***Have other sources of funding (fundraising, sponsorship, reserves, etc.) been considered?
Please explain.***

Yes. We have constantly explored avenues of permanent funding for the SRW Director. The GPSG has had conversations with several University stakeholders on securing full time funding for the position. We also get funding from OGAPS for \$8,000, half the required amount, each year specifically to support this assistantship.

Total Estimated Cost

Funding Description	Amount
Total Estimated Cost	\$ 16,000.00
<i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if Applicable)</i>	<i>\$ 8,000.00</i>
TOTAL INCREASE REQUESTED	\$ 8,000.00