

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF SPONSORED AND UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

In 1991, the College of Arts and Sciences established the Lumina Center for Research and Program Development, now the Office of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research, to meet an increased need for the College's academic departments and programs to pursue external funding for their projects. The concept for the Center grew out of the College's strategic planning sessions and the need to secure resources beyond what the University could reasonably support. From its inception, the Office of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research has assisted departments and faculty members in preparing proposals and securing external funding for research and departmental projects. Many of these programs have been instrumental in attracting excellent faculty and students to Valpo.

The Office of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research has had three directors since its inception: Dr. Linda Ferguson (1991-1995), Dr. Rick Gillman (1995 to 2003), and Sandy McMullen (2003 to 2009). Over the years, the role of the Office of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research has evolved and expanded beyond the College of Arts and Sciences. In 1997, the Office of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research director was designated as the Sponsored Research Officer for all proposals to the National Science Foundation (NSF), a role that continues to this day. In this capacity, the director of the Office of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research assists faculty, primarily from the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Engineering, with the development and submission of their proposals to the NSF. In addition, under Dr. Gillman's leadership, the Office of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research became increasingly involved in the development of interdisciplinary projects that impacted the broader university community and paved the way for the Office to support academic grantseeking University-wide.

In 2003, the Office of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research and the Office of Institutional Advancement (OIA) initiated a joint system of support for campus grant initiatives. The objective of the cooperative system is to implement a systematic and strategic approach for grantseeking and fundraising to support the mission and priorities of the university. As part of this system, the Office of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research coordinates faculty and departmental research grant applications while OIA focuses on campus-wide projects on a much broader scale, such as capital improvements, enrollment enhancements, and endowed chairs. The support services available through the Office of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research and OIA include identifying potential funding sources, organizing ideas and projects, gathering data, writing proposal narratives, developing budgets and justification narratives, and editing and reviewing proposals. The joint approach encourages the development of challenging projects; maximizes use of limited resources; fosters improved communication, collaboration and coordination; and increases the potential for success with outside funding sources.

Due to necessary budget cuts in May 2009, the position of full-time SRO was eliminated. Currently, the Assistant Provost and his staff are serving in this capacity.

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