

EFSC Office of Undergraduate Research Constitution and Bylaws

Mission Statement

The Eastern Florida State College (EFSC) Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) was established in the Fall of 2014 to organize, promote, and support student research. The overarching purpose of the OUR is to assist students and connect students with faculty, staff, administrators, and community leaders with student research opportunities that will enhance student academic progression and nurture deeper engagement in academic fields of interest. The OUR encompasses all academic disciplines and supports integrative research experiences for EFSC students.

The OUR mission goals are to:

1. Support the mission of EFSC by providing opportunities for student enrichment.
2. Promote undergraduate research at EFSC through publications, presentations, and mentoring.
3. Educate all academic disciplines at EFSC in the value of undergraduate research and provide resources and avenues to assure success for the students and research mentors.
4. Obtain extramural funding to support undergraduate research.
5. Collaborate with community partners and other institutional partners to promote and enhance undergraduate research.

Article I: Name, Purpose, and Location

Section 1. The name will be the Eastern Florida State College Office of Undergraduate Research, hereinafter designated as OUR.

Section 2. The purpose of the OUR is to support and promote high-quality undergraduate student-mentor collaborative research in all fields of academia as stated in the mission statement.

Section 3. The administrative location of the OUR will be located at 3865 N. Wickham Rd., Building 2 Room 108, Melbourne, Florida, 32935. Research will take place on all four EFSC campuses and off campus.

Article II: Organization

Section 1. Organizational Structure

- A. The OUR will be governed by a Coordinator. The Coordinator is an administrative position which reports directly to the Dean of Academic Excellence & Support. The duties of the Coordinator are to oversee all aspects of the OUR, connect students with research mentors, obtain funding to support the OUR, obtain funding to support undergraduate research, maintain and build community and institutional partnerships, and other duties as they pertain to the OUR.
- B. The academic and professional requirements for the Coordinator are they must have an earned master's degree that is accredited from one of the six (6) federally recognized accrediting bodies, must be able to work well with administration, must have a

- working knowledge of and experience with administrative and institutional structure, and have the ability to obtain outside funding.
- C. The Coordinator will have the authority to hire and dismiss employees employed under the OUR. Hiring of any employee is contingent upon available funding acquired specifically for the OUR.

Article III

Section 1. Funding for the OUR

- A. The OUR is a partially self-funded program, relying on grants, donations, and endowments. Research space, equipment, and supplies utilized for student research may belong to individuals, departments, EFSC, or community partners.
- B. The budget is the sole responsibility of the Coordinator. At the end of every fiscal year a detailed audit of the OUR spending will be submitted to the Dean of Academic Excellence & Support no later than July 30 for the previous year's budget as applicable.

Article IV

Section 1. Eligibility

- A. Any student who is actively enrolled in courses at EFSC may be eligible to participate with the OUR upon OUR Coordinator approval. It is highly recommended students maintain a minimum GPA of 2.5 to participate.
- B. Although not a requirement in all cases, it is highly recommended that students enroll in a research course in their field before or while pursuing research through the OUR.
- C. Any faculty, staff, administrator, or community partner may be eligible to self-nominate as a mentor through the OUR, provided they have written approval from their supervisor, approval from the OUR Coordinator, and in the case of community partners approval from the host campus administrator. Faculty will receive credit towards tenure, rank change, and/or maintenance of continuing contract (MCC) for participating as a mentor through the OUR.

Article V

Section 1. Mentoring

- A. Research mentors must have expertise in the area of research that they are supervising.
- B. In most cases, students will contact a desired research mentor and it is the choice of the mentor to accept that student.
- C. Length of research is contingent upon the type of project but not exceed 2 years. Additional years may be added upon petitioning of the OUR.
- D. Termination of research relationship is outlined in the student-mentor contract.
- E. Before research can commence, the student-mentor contract must be signed. Approval of the OUR and IRB may also be necessary before research can commence.
- F. Mentors are expected to guide students in their research. Mentors are expected to help students overcome research hurdles and help develop solid research projects that when completed are publishable in quality. They are also expected to work

with students and create an atmosphere of learning, critical thinking, enrichment, and excitement.

- G. Mentors are not expected to conduct research for the student, write student proposals, write student papers, nor maintain research projects.
- H. Faculty mentors will receive credit towards tenure, rank change, and/or MCC for participating as a mentor through the OUR.

Article VI

Section 1. Research

- A. Any research conducted by a student must first be reviewed and accepted by the assigned mentor. The OUR Coordinator can review the project but will not have the authority to accept or reject the project. If the research proposes to use humans as test subjects, such as surveying students, then it must have approval from the EFSC Institutional Review Board (IRB) before research can be conducted. If the research proposes to use vertebrates as test subjects whether dead or alive, for observation or other use, then it must have approval from the EFSC Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and, possibly, the EFSC IRB before research can be conducted. Additional approval from outside research body's IRBs and IACUCs may also need to be obtained if the research is being conducted at a site other than EFSC. These bodies have the authority to discontinue or disallow research.
- B. Research projects may be conceptualized by (1) the mentor with openings for students to conduct the research, (2) by the student and guided by the mentor, or (3) by a partnership of the mentor and student. Research projects consist minimally of one mentor and one student but may consist of multiple mentors and/or students if appropriate for the research.
- C. Students must hold up ethics in research.

Article VII

Section 1. OUR Funding Review Board

- A. The OUR Funding Review Board is the entity that determines distribution of EFSC research funds for directed student research. Grants monies from non-EFSC entities awarded to specific projects are not distributed by the OUR Funding Review Board.
- B. The OUR Funding Review Board membership will consist of faculty and each appointment will be for two years. The Board will consist of a minimum of three (3) members and a maximum of nine (9) members. The membership of the board must always consist of an odd number of members, thus membership at any time can only be three (3), five (5), seven (7), or nine (9). All members of the OUR Funding Review Board must vote and must vote either yes or no. Abstaining from the vote will not be permitted. In the event of a non-responsive or abstaining member the vote will be automatically counted as a yes vote. Voting may be by proxy, silent ballot, or show of hands as determined by the OUR Coordinator.
- C. The OUR Coordinator will be the permanent non-voting chair. The OUR Coordinator will be responsible for choosing, maintaining, and removing OUR Funding Review Board members, membership, and membership seats. Although the OUR

Coordinator is a non-voting member, he/she can make funding suggestions and will have the authority to adjust the distribution of funds if the reason for adjustment is significantly valid (e.g., to provide more student opportunities).

Article VIII

Section 1. OUR Funding for Research

- A. Note: Funding may be obtained outside the OUR for student research and is not subject to the following.
- B. OUR funds for research will only be allocated for directed student research. Directed student research is any research project where the student and/or mentor conceptualize the idea, the student constructs the formal proposal, and the student conducts the research under mentor supervision. The funds will be distributed on a term by term basis. Before funds can be assigned a full research proposal and application must be submitted to the OUR Coordinator for review by the OUR Funding Review Board.
- C. The OUR accepts student research proposals and applications at any time during the term. The OUR Funding Review Board reviews funding requests on a rolling basis and votes to assign funding.
- D. If funding is available, the OUR Funding Review Board will determine if and how much funding will be given to student projects. The OUR Coordinator may award up to \$100/project to directed student research without consent of the OUR Funding Review Board when necessary.
- E. Students awarded funding are required to complete the research and either publish or present their findings based on faculty mentor time period. In the event the student fails to complete, publish, or present their research they will be required to refund the monies to the OUR. There will be a hold placed on their EFSC account until the funds are recuperated. Exemptions for the repayment protocol would be in the event of military reassignment or deployment, medical leave, incarceration, or ejection from EFSC.

Article IX

Section 1. Transcripts

- A. Student research through the OUR is a rare opportunity. Students who successfully complete research which includes publishing or presenting their findings will be recognized for their efforts on their transcripts.
- B. It is the responsibility of the OUR Coordinator to ensure students who complete research through the OUR are recognized on their transcripts.

Article X

Section 1. Recruitment

- A. A centralized database will be constructed and maintained by the OUR Coordinator for the purpose of allowing mentors to advertise their research and students to advertise their research interests. This will be a central hub to connect students and mentors and will be available through the EFSC website.

- B. All advertisements for research must be submitted to the OUR Coordinator for approval. The OUR Coordinator can deny any research projects or research interests that may violate any federal or state laws, be discriminatory in nature, or be morally questionable in nature. The OUR Coordinator should consult the Dean of Academic Excellence & Support before denying any advertisement of research or research interests.