



AY 2024-2025 SPArCS Awards

Student-led Projects in the Arts, Creative Activity, and Scholarship

Application Period: Applications will be accepted
February 1 through March 1, 2024, at 11:59 pm

Applications and faculty recommendations must be submitted electronically using the online application system link below:

nau.edu/sparcs

The Student-led Projects in the Arts, Creative Activity and Scholarship (SPArCS) award program is soliciting applications from full-time NAU undergraduate students for research, scholarly, or creative projects in the arts, humanities, letters, photography, and film. The program encourages undergraduate students in these areas to pursue academic interests outside of their regular coursework by providing funding that will enable them to work on special projects of their own and benefit from hands-on learning opportunities in studios, libraries, laboratories, and field sites.

Eligibility: To be eligible, students must be:

- Enrolled as a full-time student in an undergraduate program for the semesters they are receiving the award. If the student works during the summer, enrollment as a full-time student in spring 2024 and fall 2024 is required; the student does not need to be enrolled in summer courses
- In good academic standing at the time of application and during the period in which the project is funded.

Funding:

Students will be able to request funding for student-led projects in the arts, creative activities, and scholarship. Proposals with one or two applicants can request up to \$5,000 and proposals with three or more applicants can request up to \$7,500. Funding may be used to pay an hourly rate to the student, purchase materials relevant to the project, or cover travel expenses related to the project, including travel to present the outcomes of the work. **Funds not expended during the award period will be forfeited.**

Funds cannot be used to replace existing funding being used to support undergraduates already involved in research, scholarly, and creative activities. This program is not intended to fund

students working on faculty projects; it is intended to support student-initiated projects. More than one proposal for the same project will be considered as one application.

Award Time Period

Awards can be activated May 15, 2024, if all award conditions are met. Projects must be completed, and all funds spent on or before May 10, 2025. If you will be graduating in December 2024, all funds must be spent by your graduation date. Award notification will be made by **April 3, 2024**.

Submission Process

The student initiates the application process, completes all sections of the application described below, and submits the required documents through the online application system. The faculty mentor and one additional reference reviews the application portfolio and completes the Recommendation section prior to the deadline.

1. Download the Application Template as a Word document and download the Budget Template as an Excel document.
2. Complete the application as outlined in this document.
3. Upload the completed Application and Excel budget into the online application system.
4. Provide your faculty mentor's name and email address in the system to generate an automatic request for them to fill out a recommendation form. You will need one additional recommendation from a faculty, staff, or field-specific expert who can speak to the importance and feasibility of your project and the reasonability of your timeline. It is the student's responsibility to verify that both recommendations are submitted by March 1.
5. Formatting (applies to entire application):
 - Font: Any standard font (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial, Tahoma, etc.) may be used
 - Type size: 12-point or larger
 - Spacing: Text may be single- or double-spaced; must be consistent throughout document
 - Margins: Page margins must be no less than one-half inch on all sides

Complete application must be submitted through the online application system by March 1, 2024, 11:59PM.

Applications will be assessed on the significance of the proposed work, quality of the proposal, feasibility of the proposed timeline, educational benefit to the student, diversity of disciplines represented in the proposed work, and inclusion of community engagement.

The Application Components

The proposal should provide a clear and concise description of the proposed project and **must include the following section headings in the order shown below**. If a given section is not applicable to a proposed project, the section heading should still be included, followed by the text "Not Applicable."

1. Project Summary

The applicant will need to provide a short summary of the project that includes an overall statement on the background of the project, potential importance, general overview of the methods, and expected outcomes. The project summary is limited to 200 words.

2. Personal Statement (a through c may not exceed 1 page)

A personal statement is a piece of writing by you that helps the audience access or understand your artistic or scholarly work. It's important to give the reader a visual and to set your work in time and/or space. This section provides a clear and concise description of the proposed project.

- a. **Introduction.** Describe the purpose and relevance of the project (i.e., the how, what, and why of the project).
- b. **Potential Importance.** Describe the benefit of the proposed work and its importance to the student, university, the community, and how it attempts to make a unique contribution to the academic discipline.
- c. **Expected Outcomes.** Describe what do you expect to find, learn, and/or produce as a result of conducting this project.

Consider the following questions (not all may be applicable to your project):

- What are the key ideas, issues, struggles, goals within your work or creative practice?
- What is the thematic focus of work (goal, purpose, intention, exploration)?
- What is the content of your work (themes, ideas, subject matter)?
- What influences your work (cultural, historical, theoretical, art historical, personal, biographical)?
- What is the form of work in terms of materials, processes, or tradition (e.g., abstract, figurative)?
- What process will be used and what will the work look or sound like?

3. Methods

Describe the research methods or creative techniques in detail that will be used for this project including a justification of why these techniques will be used to carry out project activities.

4. Roles of the Participants

Describe the expectations and responsibilities of the student and those of the faculty mentor. All applicants will need a faculty mentor who agrees to provide mentorship to the student for the duration of the project.

5. Dissemination Plan

All work will be presented in the OURCA Reception and the Undergraduate Symposium in April 2025. Describe how you will additionally present your results or outcomes. If this dissemination involves a presentation or performance, when, where, and to what audience? If published, what venue will be targeted? Applicants are strongly encouraged to incorporate community engagement in their dissemination plans, through exhibitions, presentations, performances, workshops, or other types of events—and this planning should consider and request support for needs to deliver a successful event. Examples include a gallery display, dance/music/theater performance, film, collection of poems, video, or other means of community engagement. Consider who the audience/participants will be. What will you need for successful execution of the event?

6. FOR PROJECTS WITH A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMPONENT. (Optional) NAU is committed to engaging the local and regional community in a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity. If your proposal engages the local or regional community, then your project will be considered for an additional \$500. Examples of eligible community engagement include but are not limited to: working with a local business or government entity to enhance data collection and address a specific need of the local partner; disseminating the outcomes of your project in a local or regional setting beyond that

of a traditional conference; or incorporating a service or knowledge exchange with a local or regional partner (e.g., hosting a workshop at a local school) based on your project.

Please answer these questions (max 300 words):

- With which community do you plan to work with?
- What are the steps you plan to take to engage this community?
- How do you plan to measure success for both your project and the community?

7. Timeline

Describe when various phases of the project will be conducted. Sufficient time should be allocated for writing up the final report upon completion of the project. The timeline template is included in the application template on the SPArCS website.

8. References Cited list (if applicable/optional).

9. Qualifications of the Applicant

The applicant's **resume not exceeding 2 pages** should reflect past activities and experiences related to the proposed project, if applicable. Resumes are intended to demonstrate that the applicant(s) is/are qualified to carry out the work. If other students will be involved, resumes of those students should also be included. **Do not include student applicant names in resumes.**

10. Support Materials (optional and only if applicable; uploaded as a separate document).

- a. Visual/Video Artists:
 - No more than 5 photos of your artwork that best represents your work
 - Video of up to 15 minutes or provide a web link for viewing, e.g., YouTube
 - Image/Video index numbered to correspond with slides (title, medium, dimensions, date)
- b. Performing Artist: Production/composition of original work, up to 15 minutes
- c. Literary Artists: Samples of original work, not more than 2 pages each

11. Budget (uploaded as a separate document)

There is no "typical" amount of funding per project as each project has different funding needs. Budgets should be developed according to the needs of the project. Project budgets may not exceed \$5,000 for one or two students or \$7,500 for three or more students for an academic year project. **Budgets must be submitted using the budget form provided** on the SPArCS website and **all expenses must be justified.**

- a. **Personnel:** Funding may be requested for up to 15 hours/week for a maximum of 15 weeks during the fall and/or spring semesters, depending on the needs of the project. Teams of three or more are eligible for additional funds to ensure all grant members receive fair and equitable pay for the time required for the project. Therefore, if personnel requests vary among team members, the team must explain the reason for the variation in the budget justification. During the summer, funding may be requested for up to 40 hours/week for up to eight weeks between May 15 and August 25. The student will not be required to register for summer classes. The hourly wage is \$16.50 per hour. All personnel costs must be justified in terms of the number of hours each specific project task and activity will take to complete. (See examples provided on budget template spreadsheet.)
- b. **Operations/Equipment: Up to \$1,500** of funding may be requested for necessary **expendable** project supplies and contractual (e.g., service-based) expenses. Operations expenses must be itemized and clearly justified. Non-expendable equipment purchases will need to receive prior approval by OURCA staff and will remain the property of OURCA at

the conclusion of the project. If you plan to reimburse research participants, you can use gift cards but not cash.

- c. **Travel: Up to \$1,500** of funding may be requested for travel expenses associated with site-based work, presentations of results of the project at a conference, professional meeting, or training. All travel expenses should be justified by category of expense (e.g., transportation, lodging, registration fees).

NOTE: To receive travel reimbursement for the use of a personal vehicle, or to use a NAU vehicle, you must become a NAU authorized driver and pass an online defensive driving course; information is located on the [NAU Facility Services Safety & Training](#) website.

The SPArCS program does not require or encourage cost-sharing, matching, or in-kind contributions. Projects that include outside support will not be given a more favorable review than projects relying solely on SPArCS program support. However, if a project relies heavily on outside support, applicants must describe these outside contributions in the green columns of the budget form and in budget justification so that the reviewers are clear that the applicant does have the necessary resources to carry out the work.

12. Faculty Mentor/Other Recommendations

Two recommendations will be required for each application:

1. one by the faculty mentor
2. one by another faculty or administrator who can speak to the importance and feasibility of your project; this recommendation will not ask about the particular student, it will ask about the importance of the proposed research project to your discipline, the current need for the project and the alignment of methods to standard practices within the discipline, realistic expected outcomes, sufficient budgetary support to complete the project, and a realistic timeline.

Students will be required to submit email addresses for both recommenders in the online application system. Once the emails have been submitted, the recommenders will receive an online request for the recommendation. Students should provide sufficient notice to the recommenders. The recommendations **must be completed after** reviewing the final version of application materials.

The Application Process: Who does what?

| Activity/ Responsibility | Student | Faculty Mentor |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Develop the idea for research, scholarly, or creative project | Students can find ideas for projects from a variety of sources such as courses they have taken, scholarly interests of a faculty member, or ideas of their own that they would like to explore further. Students may work within or outside of their major field of study. | A faculty mentor with a general area of interest may encourage a student to pursue a project in that area, but the formulation of the project itself should be primarily the student's responsibility . The faculty member may provide feedback and constructive criticism during the formulation of the project and proposal. |
| Review program guidelines and download application forms | The student should carefully read the Request for Proposals (RFP) guidelines and download the application forms from the SPArCS website. The student should forward a copy of the program guidelines to the faculty mentor. | Faculty mentors should identify and encourage outstanding students to apply. The faculty mentor should review program RFP guidelines to understand the role of the faculty mentor in advising the student throughout all phases of the application process. |
| Collaboration | The discussion between student and faculty mentor should lead to an agreement on the nature and scope of the project, the method of inquiry or creative activity, and expected outcomes. Discussions should also include a proposed budget and timeline for completing the project. Students and their faculty mentors should expect to meet multiple times during the application process. | |
| Complete the application | The student prepares all elements of the application described above. | The faculty mentor reviews the project description, timeline, and budget in the document to ensure that the proposed work can be performed and supervised within the space, time frame, or level of support indicated. |
| Submit the application | The student sends a request to faculty for recommendation through the application system and uploads the required documents no later than 11:59 PM on March 1, 2024. Late or incomplete proposals will not be accepted. | Faculty mentor reviews the final version of the application. The mentor then completes the mentor recommendation no later than 11:59 PM on March 1, 2024. Late or incomplete proposals will not be accepted. |

Role of the Faculty Mentor

The Faculty Mentor is expected to:

1. Provide guidance to the student in all aspects of project management.
2. Mentor the student throughout the project period and meet with the student a minimum of every two weeks.
3. Oversee the implementation of the project as described in the original grant application and any approved subsequent amendments or modifications.
4. Oversee this project for its entirety.
5. Actively mentor the student during the summer, if applicable.
6. Monitor the student's budget. Our department will not approve any expenses in excess to the awarded grant funding. Any overage may be the responsibility of the student or the mentor's department.

7. Understand that this award has been granted to the student(s) on the initial proposal and cannot be transferred to another student should the grantees no longer be able to carry out the project.
8. Understand that the student is required to present at the Undergraduate Symposium in April 2025.
9. Agree to assist the student with IRB, IUCAC, or Field Safety Checklist, if applicable.
10. Agree to attend the Faculty Mentor orientation meeting or watch an online video of the meeting.

Proposal Review

The review committee is made up of faculty from NAU departments in the arts, humanities, letters, photography, and film. Because review committee members vary in their areas of expertise, it is important that applicants use clear non-technical language and refrain from using unexplained jargon specific to their field of study in their project descriptions; your proposal will be reviewed by at least one faculty member *not* from your department.

The review committee scores each proposal, paying close attention to project design, faculty and student roles, outcomes and dissemination, and feasibility of budget and timeline. Applicants may request copies of their reviews after May 10, 2024.

Terms and Conditions of Award

Students may not receive more than 2 SPArCS awards per undergraduate academic career.

1. **Mandatory Awardee Meeting:** Recipients are **required** to attend an information meeting following the announcement of award winners in April 2024. Faculty mentors have their own awardee meeting.
2. **Award Activation Documents:** All documents requested in the award letter (e.g., signed award acceptance and faculty acknowledgement forms, proof of academic standing and full-time status) must be on file with the Undergraduate Research Coordinator **prior to beginning the project** to activate the award. Institutional Review Board or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee approval, a field research safety, or any other project-specific conditions plan must be completed before the student can start that portion of their research.
3. **Full-time Student in Good Standing:** Recipients must be full-time students in good academic standing with NAU during each semester of financial support. It is the student's responsibility to provide documentation of this requirement for the award to be activated and continued during the year.
4. **Academic Credit:** Recipients can enroll for up to three-credit hours per semester of undergraduate research, independent study, internship, field work, or other appropriate course academic credit for every semester that they receive funding.
5. **Dissemination of Results:** SPArCS recipients are **required** to present at the NAU Undergraduate Symposium and at the OURCA Reception in April 2025. Additionally, all awardees are also encouraged to make presentations at other public venues or professional meetings and should mention all such presentations in the interim progress and final reports

described below. Any posters, publications, or presentations should credit or acknowledge the funding for the project to the SPArCS Award.

6. **Project Reporting:** Two one-on-one meetings and two reports are required from recipients:
 - a. One-on-one meetings with the SPArCS Coordinator each semester: October and February
 - b. **Interim progress report** (due December 15, 2024)
 - Use the template provided on the SPArCS website.
 - Describe and assess progress toward outcomes compared to timeline included in application
 - Review (and revise) project timeline and/or budget, if warranted
 - Photos of you working on your project, if available.
 - c. **Final report** (due May 10, 2025)
 - Description extent to which the goals and objectives of the project have been achieved
 - Description of the outcomes/results of the project and how they were disseminated
 - Statement describing the benefits to the student as a result of the project
 - Summary of how funds were used (e.g., budget vs. actual)
 - Summary of the departmental, community, and/or other contributions to the project
 - Photos of you working on your project, or presenting your results, if available
 - Completion of online questionnaire about your experience

These last two steps may or may not apply to your project.

7. Institutional Review Board: Applicants proposing projects that involve human subjects **must contact** the [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#)

- a. **Read the materials on the IRB webpages before you complete your IRB application:** [Institutional Review Board](#) and follow links to additional pages.
 - b. Build sufficient time for IRB approval into your plan.
 - c. Obtain Letters of Authorization to conduct research at off-campus locations in advance.
 - d. Work closely with your faculty mentor.
 - e. For additional questions, contact the IRB office at 928-523-4340, irb@nau.edu.
- 8. NAU Field Safety Checklist:** Recipients whose projects involve field work off campus must complete the [NAU Field Research Safety Checklist](#) to activate their funding. This document includes details regarding dates of travel, location and description of activities, emergency procedures, physical demands of the work, assessment of risks associated with the activity or physical environment, and methods for mitigating those risks. The form should be completed in collaboration with **the faculty mentor, who then signs it as the “University Contact.”**

Questions? Contact the Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity at ug-research@nau.edu (with “SPArCS Question” in subject line), 928 523-5569, or by appointment.