

Student Success Fund Summary of Policy and Procedures

The Student Success Fund (SSF; formerly the Discretionary Fund) is used primarily to support research and educational activities for students in the UT Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences (EPS). This includes funds for research for graduate thesis research, undergraduate research projects, and travel for conferences and workshops. Funds are also provided for special needs (such as for non-course related student field trips).

Requests for SSF money should be sent to the Chair of the Student Success Fund Committee, Prof. Bradley Thomson (bthom@utk.edu). In the cases of travel to a professional meeting at which the student is presenting (section 1 below), the SSF Chair can approve the funds directly. All other requests are sent to the entire Committee for a vote. The Head of the Department also has the authority to award Student Success Funds in accordance with the Departmental Bylaws.

Student Success Fund application procedures:

1. Conference Travel

Any EPS graduate or undergraduate major student can apply for travel funds *to present their research* as a talk or poster at a conference (normally one trip per academic year). This can be done at any time by sending an email to the Chair of the SSF with the following information.

- Name, location, and dates of the conference.
- Title, authors, and a copy of the abstract for the conference presentation.

Please carbon-copy (CC) your advisor on the request email to the SSF Chair. The advisor will affirm by email that the advisor acknowledges and confirms the student's travel support request. Students are awarded \$300 for regional conferences (e.g., Southeast meeting of the Geological Society of America or SE GSA), \$500 for national conferences (e.g., GSA or AGU Annual Meeting), or \$600 for international conferences (e.g., a Penrose conference in the UK). The award is paid through a travel expense claim submitted to the departmental office staff (Angie Staley, astaley@utk.edu) and the student must observe all of the UT travel rules, including submitting a pre-trip "Travel Authorization Request" form. Normally, students will receive travel funds for one conference trip per academic year.

2. Workshop Travel

Any EPS graduate or undergraduate major student can apply for travel funds *to participate* in a workshop or advanced-training session, such as a software training course or geophysics short course. The application consists of an e-mail to the Chair of the SSF with the following information:

- Name, dates, and location, and a short description of the workshop
- A discussion of the student's reasons and goals in attending the workshop
- A short budget or list of expected expenses
- A statement of support from the advisor, including any necessary supplemental funding
- A list of other funding sources applied for and/or received

Requests for funding for workshop travel are normally reviewed by the full SSF committee. Award amounts and payment procedures are the same as for conference travel.

3. Undergrad Conference Travel Awards

EPS undergraduate students (but *not* graduate students) can also apply for SSF support to *attend* a professional conference, even if they are not presenting a talk or poster. The application forms are attached and are reviewed by the SSF Committee and the Chair of the Undergrad Program Committee.

4. Undergrad Research Grants and Otto Kopp Research Awards

Otto Kopp Research Awards honor the memory of former EPS professor Otto Kopp and his dedication to undergraduate research. The Kopp awards recognize exceptional potential in research by an undergraduate early in their academic career (i.e., sophomore or junior years). Awardees will be determined by the Student Success Fund committee based on nominations submitted by EPS faculty. To nominate a student, the faculty member should send an e-mail to the SSF Chair with:

- An outline of the research the student will be engaged in during the upcoming academic year
- A description of the indications of exceptional potential
- Some indication of the student's academic performance (e.g., unofficial transcripts, testimonials of performance in core classes)

Three awards, each with a \$500 research stipend, will be given out each year. ***The due date for nominations for the Otto Kopp Research Awards is Sept. 30.***

Undergraduate Research Grants support undergraduate research within the department, with the goal of preparing students for a scientific career. Students awarded Undergraduate Research Grants will be expected to carry out research of publishable quality and present the results at a scientific conference and in appropriate publications. Proposals for these grants are submitted by a student-advisor team and must include the following:

- Proposed Research – one-half to one page, single spaced, description of the proposed work in as much detail as possible
- Budget – including amount requested (up to \$450 per academic year), description and itemization of need, and advisor contribution
- Unofficial transcripts
- Letter of endorsement/recommendation from advisor

All materials should be e-mailed in a single packet to the Chair of the SSF. The student-advisor team is required to submit a one-page, single-spaced summary of research accomplished at the end of the academic year, also e-mailed to the Chair of the SSF.

Specific Research Expenses: Undergrad students can also apply for funds to allay specific research costs (e.g., thin-sections, chemical analyses) by sending an email to the SSF Chair.

These requests should outline the goal of the research and the purpose of the funds. The student's faculty supervisor must also send an email to the SSF endorsing the request. The amounts of the undergrad awards varies according to their need and are usually paid through departmental purchasing, rather than being paid directly to the student.

Students will not receive both the Kopp Research Award and the Undergraduate Research Grant in the same academic year, though they may apply/be nominated for each. Students may request Student Success funds to allay specific research costs even if they have received the Kopp Research Award or Undergraduate Research Grant, but the request must demonstrate why the Award/Grant could not cover the additional expense.

5. Other Requests

Requests other than those types listed above will also be considered by the SSF Committee. However, if they do not directly involve supporting student research or education, the chances of success are slim.

Acknowledgement of Support

Student Success Fund awards are possible only because of the generosity of EPS alumni, faculty, and friends who created the endowments that support this fund. In peer-reviewed publications that result from research supported by the SSF, support from the EPS Student Success Fund should be noted in the Acknowledgements section of the manuscript. Students are encouraged to consider SSF awards as "loans" rather than "gifts." Once you are actively employed after graduation, we hope that you'll continue to support our EPS Department through annual giving, participation in departmental social activities, involvement in collaborations, hiring our students, etc.