GPSC ReaP-POD-Student Showcase SSF Application

As the governing body for the nearly 10,000 graduate and professional students at the University of Arizona, the Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) supports programs that enhance the student experience and positively impacts research at the University of Arizona. GPSC runs several programs that support the research, innovation and learning aims of University of Arizona students including the Research and Project (ReaP) Grants, Professional Opportunities Development (POD) Grants, and Student Showcase. Together, these three programs support and advance the academic careers and professional development of students across the University.

ReaP Grants are awarded to graduate and professional students who put forward innovative and high caliber proposals for funding to support their research projects or professional projects in the arts and humanities. These grants are primarily awarded to compensate research subjects and fund the materials required to perform the kind of original projects for which the University of Arizona is well known. The requested SSF funding will support over 120 projects annually. For many students at the University of Arizona, ReaP Grants are the sole source of funding available to them for their projects. Please see the supporting document for data on the impact of this program for the 2018-19 academic year.

POD Grants support the research and learning of students through bringing relevant visiting scholars and emerging research to the University of Arizona campus. POD events include, but are not limited to, academic seminars, conferences, and roundtable discussions with scholars and professional representatives from across the country. The requested SSF Funding will support over 30 POD initiatives annually. All POD Grant supported events are open to all students at the University of Arizona. Please see the supporting document for data on the impact of this program for the 2018-19 academic year.

Student Showcase is an annual poster symposium, providing an opportunity for undergraduates, graduates, and professional students at the University of Arizona to present their research and projects. Requested SSF funds will support poster printing for 100 Student Showcase participants. This event includes partnerships with the office of the Vice President of Research, the BIO5 Institute, and the University of Arizona Libraries in the form of awards for exemplary research and projects. Our student showcase this January will also include peer awards (provided by ASUA and GPSC) and a Presidential Award from Dr. Robbins. In the 2018-19 academic year, there were 92 projects exhibited. We’re hoping to significantly increase participation this year, particularly with undergraduate students. By supporting Showcase through funding student posters, we anticipate an increase in participation by removing this financial barrier preventing students from showcasing their research.

Together, these three programs fill important needs by removing key financial barriers that prevents students from pursuing research and professional development opportunities. ReaP does this through providing necessary funds for materials and subjects to initiate research (often for graduate/professional students who lack other sources of funding); POD in providing graduate programs resources to create vital scholarly events on campus; and Student Showcase by providing students an opportunity to share their work and learn to better articulate their projects. Moreover, graduate and professional students are more likely to complete their degree program (or shorten their time to degree) when financially supported through grants and programs like ReaP, POD, and Student Showcase.

In addition to the direct benefits to the participants/awardees of these programs, the judges for the grant programs are graduate/professional students, whose own grant writing skills are bolstered through the process of reading and scoring these grants. The judges for undergraduate projects for Student Showcase are judged by graduate
and professional students. All three programs have been developed to be interdisciplinary and encourage students to share their research with the larger Tucson community through both presentation and application.

To administer these programs, we further request funding for a .50 FTE Graduate Assistant compensated at the Graduate College rate of pay with an additional $3,000 of professional development funding for the GA to attend a grant management conference and relevant workshops that will in turn support the strength and longevity of these three critical GPSC programs.

GPSC requests these funds to be established for the next three fiscal years. All three programs are well established under GPSC (with the Student Showcase running annually for nearly three decades, POD Grants for sixteen, and ReaP Grants being added in 2013) and consistently funded annually through the SSF Board. Three-year guaranteed funding will add further efficiency, allowing our directors to focus on meaningful development in these programs. As awareness of our programs continue to grow, we are conservatively projecting an annual increase in unmet need by approximately 15% and would like to request additional funds accordingly.