PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Request for Proposals

CAPSTONE RESEARCH PROJECTS

Senior Studies Students:

You are invited to submit a proposal in accordance with the requirements of Request for Proposals entitled "Capstone Research Projects."

The completed budget and technical proposal is due to the Psychology 601 course folder on April 12th, 2016. The proposal must be accompanied by a letter of support from the advisor, stating that the proposal has already been reviewed by the advisor and is ready for peer review.

Your proposal must be prepared in accordance with the attached "Contract Provisions and Instructions to Offerers."

Funds are presently budgeted for this procurement. It is the Department's desire to support all proposals submitted.

Requests for information concerning the RFP should be referred to Dr. Webster.

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BACKGROUND

In 1976 the Psychology Department at Westminster College instituted the Senior Studies Program. This innovative student research program has enabled Westminster students to obtain hands-on experience with the process of scientific psychology. Through Senior Studies, students have gained:

a) An in-depth understanding of a specific area of psychology,
b) Experience in forming their own hypotheses and testing them with their own research,
c) Practice in communication of their findings to other students and faculty, and
d) A learning relationship with their faculty advisor.

The Senior Studies experience should be valuable in personal goal clarification, and in securing employment or opportunities for further education.

SCOPE OF WORK

A. Objectives

The RFP requires that each student project be psychological research designed to test a specific hypothesis (or group of related hypotheses). It further requires that these hypotheses be firmly grounded in psychological theory and related to prior empirical work.

B. Period of Performance

The research project should be designed so that appropriate preliminary research can be accomplished during the last weeks of Spring Semester, and data collection to commence very early during Fall Semester. The final report shall be delivered at the end of Fall Semester.

C. Reporting Requirements

Specific reporting requirements will be determined by the Class Instructor for Capstone II and the Faculty Advisor.
TECHNICAL PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Format of the Technical Proposal

The technical proposal should be organized as follows:

Title page

The title page should indicate:
1) The title of the proposed research project
2) The name of the principal investigator
3) The name of the faculty advisor
4) The date (day, month, year)
5) The organization (Westminster College)

Abstract

A brief (under 70 words) summary of the project as it is described in the technical proposal.

Introduction

The first paragraph should present a clear statement of the thesis of the proposal. The body of the introduction should be organized and use APA style headings. Previous research should be integrated so reviewers can see the connection to the project thesis and the path to the specific hypothesis to be tested. A final paragraph should describe these hypotheses.

Method

Provide a detailed description of the method to be used, with technical details and a thorough evaluation of the limitations and feasibility of the methods proposed. Indicate what special populations are to be studied along with the nature and scope of the data to be used.

The method section should contain the following sections:

a) Design. Experimental studies should develop a formal figure of all variables (and levels). Correlation studies should picture criterion variables and the order of importance of predictor variables in a figure.

b) Participants and/or Subjects. Who will the participants be? How will they be selected? Are there requirements for participation? What incentives, if any, will be provided?
How many participants or subjects will be needed?

c) **Materials and Apparatus.** What materials and/or apparatus will be used in the study? Be specific.

d) **Procedure.** Exactly what procedure will be used to conduct the study? If not specified under the participant/subject section, how will subjects be assigned to treatment condition?

**Analysis Plan**

What statistical tests will be applied to the data to test the experimental hypotheses proposed? What descriptive statistics will be used? Present projected results in graph or figure form.

**References**

References must include all sources cited in the proposal. Only sources included in the proposal should be in the reference section.

2. **Style of the Technical Proposal**

APA style should be used throughout. Poorly written proposals (bad grammar, spelling, incoherence, etc.) will be considered unresponsive to this RFP and will not be evaluated until they meet acceptable collegiate standards. Proposals should be both clear and concise.

There is no space limitation for this proposal. However, a recommended length is 8 to 15 pages.

**BUSINESS PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS**

1. **Period of Performance**

Provide an estimate of the time required to achieve the objectives of the proposed research project, a schedule for the completion of the work, or an outline of the phases or segments into which the proposed project can be logically divided and performed. Be sure to include a schedule of pilot testing.

2. **Budget**

Provide an estimate of costs of equipment, materials, travel and incentives necessary to perform the proposed research. The budget proposal should be prepared according to the Senior Studies Budget Form No. 1. Additional comments may be appended to the budget form.
3. **Qualifications of Scientific Personnel**

Describe the duties and responsibilities envisioned for (1) the principal investigator, and (2) each other person who would be assigned to the proposed project.

Include a Professional Vitae for the principle investigator.

4. **Facilities and Equipment**

Describe the existing space and equipment needs and how these needs shall be met.
Threats to Internal Validity:

1. **History**, the specific events occurring between the first and second measurement in addition to the experimental variable.

2. **Maturation**, processes within the respondents operating as a function of the passage of time per se, including growing older, growing hungrier, growing more tired, and the like.

3. **Testing**, the effects of taking a test upon the scores of a second test.

4. **Instrumentation**, in which changes in the calibration of a measuring instrument or changes in the observers or scorers used may produce changes in the obtained measurements.

5. **Statistical regression**, operating where groups have been selected on the basis of their extreme scores.

6. Biases resulting in differential **selection** of respondents for the comparison groups.

7. **Experimental mortality**, or differential loss of respondents from the comparison groups.

8. **Selection-maturation interaction**, etc., which in certain of the multiple-group quasi-experimental designs is confounded with the effect of the experimental variable.

Threats to External Validity:

9. The **reactive or interaction effect of testing**, in which a pretest might increase or decrease the respondents' sensitivity or responsiveness to the experimental variable and thus make the results obtained for a pretested population unrepresentative of the effects of the experimental variable for the unpretested universe from which the experimental respondents were selected.

10. The **interaction effects of selection biases and the experimental variable**.

11. **Reactive effects of experimental arrangements**, which would preclude generalizations about the effect of the experimental variable upon persons being exposed to it in non-experimental settings.
12. **Multiple treatment interference**, likely to occur whenever multiple treatments are applied to the same respondents, because the effects of prior treatments are not usually erasable.