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Student researchers value experience

Megan Callewaert was excited when she learned about the **University Student Research Scholar Awards**. "I hopped on it as soon as I could. I thought it was a great opportunity to build my resume and gain professional career experience at the same time," says the recent anthropology graduate who is continuing her post-bachelor work at Oakland University.

Callewaert's research focuses on the Pontiac area Hmong community and Hmong artisans whose traditional crafts help support and preserve their culture. She plans to produce an anthropological documentary using library research, videotaped interviews and participant observation.

"I'm hoping to pursue a career in research and filmmaking, so this will give me great experience," Callewaert says.

The University Student Research Scholar Program supports research projects from juniors and seniors as well as exceptional proposals from other undergraduate and graduate students. The deadline for the next series of research proposal applications is Tuesday, Oct. 8. Recipients will be announced in November.

"Oakland University is continuing to create a distinctive undergraduate experience by exposing our students to the challenges and excitement of research through the provost-office-sponsored University Student Research Scholar Program," says Virinder Moudgil, interim vice president for Academic Affairs and provost. "Through this program, students receive yet another opportunity to develop and strengthen the skills they will need to lead in tomorrow's workplace, laboratory and society."

To date, 18 students have been selected for the University Student Research Scholar Awards, giving them the opportunity to work with faculty mentors while gaining valuable experience. Current projects range from biological sciences, sociology, psychology and mathematics to engineering, computer science, and art and art history.

"I have been quite impressed with the quality and diversity of the student projects and pleased with the enthusiastic involvement of our faculty members," Moudgil said. "The dedication of these outstanding projects will likely result in work that will be publishable in journals and help OU students further distinguish themselves with their Oakland experience."

Award recipients receive up to \$1,000, which may be stipend, to support a research project for a minimum of one semester and have the opportunity to apply for up to \$500 for supplies or for travel support to present their research results at a professional conference.

Students are selected based on their academic strengths as well as the quality, significance and potential impact of their proposed research projects.

Matt Rizzo, a senior electrical engineering major, received a University Student Research Scholar Award in March. Through his project, he led a team to design and build an autonomous ground vehicle. Called Grizzly, the unmanned robotic vehicle competed in the 10th annual Intelligent Ground Vehicle Competition (IGVC) at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla., in July.

"The Research Scholar program has given me a way to incorporate my research into coursework and learn while I go," Rizzo said. "Plus, I gained experience in other areas. I learned how to write a proposal, organize a project and work with a group of people. All this is great for my resume. I also get to publish a paper on my research."

Rizzo's ground vehicle was navigated using only onboard sensors, including GPS (global positioning system) and an omni-directional vision system. Grizzly placed sixth in the GPS navigation competition.

"Grizzly amazed Matt, his team and other spectators, when it drove itself from point A to point B, avoiding obstacles along the way, without human intervention. We engineers get tremendous thrills when we watch the computer control system that we built perform intelligent autonomous tasks out in the field," said Rizzo's sponsor, Ka C. Cheok, professor of engineering.

"Matt was already putting efforts towards learning about engineering and becoming creative in solving problems in the lab. The Research Scholar Award refueled his enthusiasm and gave him recognition. The program is great because it encourages probing and creative thinking early in their professional education."

To apply for a University Student Research Scholar Award, students must submit an application, which can be submitted online through the [OU Research](#) Web site.

Applicants must provide an abstract, project narrative, budget and budget narrative, and a narrative of their motivation and qualifications to conduct the work. Abstracts should clearly state research goals, methods and significance, and a narrative explaining the importance of the proposed research.

Each applicant must have the endorsement of a faculty member. The mentor must be willing to supervise the student through the proposed project period and provide an assessment of the quality, significance and potential impact of the research project. The mentor also will evaluate the applicant's capability to complete the proposed project, confirm the availability of appropriate research facilities and submit the project through the research application manager system.

A faculty research advisory committee reviews the applications to make award selections.

For more information, guidelines and application material, visit the [University Student Research Scholar Award](#) Web page.

SUMMARY

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