**Grant Submissions and Professional Development**

UROC collaborates with faculty to support grant submissions and ensures professional development opportunities are available for their grant supported students. Examples of support letter descriptions are listed below including SURI professional development workshops.

These are copied to UC Merced letterhead and signed prior to submission.   
If you have specific language or formatting, please forward documentation in your request for a letter of support.

Dear National Science Foundation Selection Committee,

If the proposal submitted by Dr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ entitled “*Grant Proposal or Program Title*” is selected for funding by NSF, it is my intent to collaborate and/or commit resources as detailed in the Project Description or the Facilities, Equipment or Other Resources section of the proposal.

Jorge L. Arroyo

Director, Undergraduate Research Opportunities Center  
Division of Undergraduate Education  
University of California, Merced

From: Undergraduate Research Opportunities Center at UC Merced

By signing below, I acknowledge that I am listed as a collaborator on the proposal titled “*Grant Proposal or Program Title*” with Professor ­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as the Principal Investigator.

Notably, with a 55% Hispanic undergraduate student enrollment, UC Merced has been designated by the U.S. Department of Education as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) since its inception; UC Merced is also a Minority Serving Institution with over 50% of students being members of underrepresented minority groups. The Undergraduate Research Opportunities Center (UROC) at UC Merced was established in Spring 2014 with a mission to encourage and facilitate faculty-mentored undergraduate research projects and creative activities across all schools and academic disciplines.

As the Director of UROC, I commit to help PI \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to recruit underrepresented undergraduate students to participate in research. UROC will also support PI \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to evaluate the outcomes of participating undergraduate students with assessment surveys taken during SURI.

Jorge L. Arroyo

Director, Undergraduate Research Opportunities Center  
Division of Undergraduate Education

University of California, Merced

Below is what I typically include in the letters of support for grant proposals. Feel free to use all or portions for your submission.

The Undergraduate Research Opportunities Center (UROC) at UC Merced was established in Spring 2014 with a mission to encourage and facilitate faculty-mentored undergraduate research projects across all schools and academic disciplines. Notably, with a 56% Hispanic enrollment for Fall 2021, UC Merced has been designated by the U.S. Department of Education as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) since its inception. The campus is also designated as a Minority Serving Institution with over 70% of students identifying as underrepresented minority groups.

Students in the UROC Programs participate in the nine-week [Summer Undergraduate Research Institute (SURI)](https://uroc.ucmerced.edu/suri) to conduct faculty-mentored research in their discipline and attend graduate school preparation and professional development workshops. The research experience is enhanced with professional development and graduate school preparation while also developing peer networking through program cohorts. This model provides a supportive environment for first generation and/or underrepresented minority students to develop with peers in structured, intentional workshops to aid their academic and career paths. They explore and become more familiar with the research environment, career possibilities in academia and national labs, and develop application portfolios for graduate school admission.

The workshops improve self-efficacy, establish a learning community and social network, and promotes URM and first-generation college student retention in the higher education. UROC SURI attend weekly workshops focused on:

* + Graduate school admissions, CV/resume review, writing for publication, abstract development, communicating and presenting research, fellowship applications, and career planning
  + Dissecting journal articles, research project management, and library research training
  + Lab safety and fire safety training provided by Environment Health and Safety with certification upon completion
  + Bootcamp options for skill development including Matlab, 3D modeling, Python, R, machine shop certification, data analysis, ArcGIS, library archival methods, NVIVO, STATA, SPSS, and Wetlab skills where participation is based on research projects and student development needs
  + Discussion about impostor syndrome and resilience specifically for overcoming challenges
  + Research ethics and conducting responsible research with a presentation by the Office of Research Compliance
  + Networking events and social activities including attendance at graduate admissions fairs at other institutions
  + Reflective writing and application statement development with graduate student mentors
  + Additional mentorship from current UC Merced graduate students, hired as Summer Mentors through UROC
  + Full participation in the Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium, including poster sessions and oral presentations

UROC’s outreach and recruitment efforts cross disciplines and all areas of campus through several avenues – promotion with student groups with a mission of graduate school and career preparation; collaboration with Office of Research and Economic Development series of events during UC Merced Research Week; and ongoing communication with faculty, both previous mentors and newly hired faculty during New Faculty Orientation.

As UROC Director, I work closely with faculty to further enhance the students’ experiences and preparation for graduate school. I also work closely with the program leads to discuss assessment to gauge student growth during and after the summer institute.

**Additional Information**

Summer Undergraduate Research Institute (SURI)

<https://uroc.ucmerced.edu/suri>

ORED Faculty Toolkit

Reference the faculty toolbox created by ORED for grant support and how to incorporate campus information.

[**https://research.ucmerced.edu/faculty-toolbox**](https://research.ucmerced.edu/faculty-toolbox )