

Idaho State Board of Education
HERC Committee
650 W. State Street
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720-0037

August 31, 2018

RE: Strategic Initiative, FY 2018 report

Idaho State University would like to thank the State of Idaho Board of Education for the award of Strategic Initiatives for \$55,000.

The funds were instrumental in continuing our Undergraduate STEM Research and Mentoring program. Students were awarded funds in two categories: for research projects, and to attend a professional conference to present their research project.

Research Projects:

We were able to fund 24 undergraduate student projects with this money. The application process for the undergraduate research awards involved faculty and student. The proposal provided an outline of the STEM research, the budget, and the purpose of the project and how the faculty would mentor the undergraduate research students. One of the deciding factors in awarding funds is the mentoring plan provided by the faculty. Being mentored by a scientist is as important as doing the science. We wanted to ensure that students had a well-rounded experience. The projects total divided into semester where some students had both a summer and fall project. The students reported on how the funds were of benefit to them academically, personally, continuing on to an advanced degree, and for future career choice. These project reports are included in this report.

Travel awards to attend a Conference:

We gave out a total of 12 travel grants. Students used this money to travel to professional conferences, as a strongly suggested requirement of receiving the funds was presenting at a conference. Attending a professional conference gives students an opportunity to learn how to present research and to network with professionals in their field.

As part of the application process for travel funds, we created an essay for the students that asked three questions. The purpose of this was to give us some information about mentoring directly from the students and not what the Office for Research or the Professor believe mentoring is or should be. The first question was "Do you have a research mentor?" The second question was "What makes a good research mentor?" The last and third question asked "What type of research mentoring is the most beneficial to you, and why?" The last two questions had a minimum word count of 100 words but the majority of answers were more than two hundred and most were over 300 words. This leads us to believe that students know what mentoring is and want us to know what helps them. That is a very positive indication that students value the undergraduate program and research mentors. We will use these comments as we develop our program in undergraduate research.

Budget:

The amount of funding was \$55,000.00. All funds were fully utilized with \$55,000 in expenses being covered by the State Board of Education funds and approximately \$920 in additional expenses that were covered by the Office for Research. Grants of \$3,000 were provided that paid student wages and materials and supplies for research projects. Travel costs were included if that was needed for the research (for example, going into the field).

ISU Office for Research also covered travel costs for several students who were not eligible for these funds because of the discipline in which they are studying. There is a definite need for research funds to help all our undergraduates.

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