

Scholar of the College

Program Description and Guidelines for 2011-12 (vers. 3/24/2011)

Scholar of the College (SOC) is a designation given at Commencement to exceptional students who have excelled academically in their undergraduate studies and who have done substantial, independent work of the highest quality for a significant part of their senior year under the supervision of faculty scholars. The McCarthy Prize is a recognition awarded at the Scholars Banquet for what is judged by dean's reviewers as the best scholars project(s) in the areas of the Natural Sciences, the Social Sciences and the Humanities. The program is administered by the Arts and Sciences Dean's Office.

Qualifications

To qualify for Scholar of the College consideration, students in the class of 2012 need to have and continue to maintain an overall cumulative GPA in all subjects of 3.700 or better as an indication of their mastery of the entire undergraduate program. In addition they must gain permission to complete a substantive research project under the direction of a faculty scholar with appropriate expertise in the field of inquiry in a special 6-credit Advanced Independent Research course as described below.

Students interested in becoming eligible for SOC designation at graduation should discuss this possibility with their research advisor and follow the steps and timetable outlined below. The chairperson and undergraduate program director are also valuable resources for information about obtaining required departmental support for entry into the SOC program.

In outline form the basis steps for the Scholars Program are:

1. Discuss this possibility with a research advisor
2. In April of junior year, register for 3-credit Undergraduate Research, Senior Honors Thesis
3. Obtain department approval before the end of drop/add for first semester of the senior year.
4. Enroll in the department's Advanced Independent Research course both senior semesters.
5. Have the advisor send a Progress Report with a second reader and possible nomination by **March 11th**
6. Submit two copies of the project by the deadlines specified

Detailed information on each of these steps follows.....

Department Approval for enrollment in 6-credit Advanced Independent Research

To apply for acceptance into the Advanced Independent Research course, students, in consultation with their faculty research advisor, must prepare a written proposal sufficiently substantive to warrant a two semester, 6-credit/semester, advanced independent research project (in general this means about 240 hours of work per semester). The student's proposal and a supporting letter from the faculty advisor should be submitted to the department Chair* *prior* to the beginning of the senior year. The Chair should review this material and decide whether or not to admit the student into the department's restricted Advanced Independent Research course. In reviewing student proposals the department Chair and advisor should consider the scholarly nature and level of sophistication of the project, the feasibility of the research, the preparation of the student to undertake the project, and how the research fits the overall academic development of the

student. The Chair should forward his/her decision along with copies of the proposal and advisor's letter to Dean Petri in Gasson 109 prior to the end of drop/add in early September. The dean's review will include confirmation that the student's cum GPA is at least 3.700 with no outstanding incompletes, missing grades, etc.

During April registration, rising seniors anticipating applying for the 6-credit Advanced Independent Research course should enroll in a regular 3-credit Undergraduate Research, Senior Honors Thesis, or equivalent course. *** Departmental advisors should be consulted for the most appropriate course in each case. Students whose projects are approved will be given permission to switch their enrollment to their department's restricted six-credit Advanced Independent Research course in both senior semesters. **

Award Process

While completion of two semesters of Advanced Independent Research is normally required for Scholar of the College status, it does not guarantee the Scholar's designation for a student. Candidates must also maintain their overall outstanding academic record, their 3.700 cum GPA and their projects, when near completion, must be formally nominated for Scholar review and upon completion be submitted as a substantive document or thesis to both the research advisor and a second, independent reviewer appointed by the Chair for evaluation.

Nomination for McCarthy Prize

Normally, formal nominations for a Scholar of the College award must be submitted by the advisor to the Dean's Office no later than **March 13th** of senior year for students graduating in May.***

Nominations consists of:

- (1) a report from the faculty advisor on the status of the project;
- (2) and, *if successful completion of the Scholar's Project is anticipated*, the submission to Dean Petri of a form appointing a second "independent" scholar, approved by the Chair who agrees to evaluate and grade the completed project in the required timeframe.

(Note that both of these requirements can be most easily met by completion of the attached two page form.)

As the evaluations of the advisor and second scholar are critical in determining whether or not the project merits Scholar's status, Chairs should appoint ***second reviewers who are reasonably independent of the project and who have appropriate expertise to judge the student's work.*** The solicitation of faculty reviewers from outside the student's department is encouraged.

In cases where the progress of the student in the Advanced Independent Research course is judged by the advisor to not merit further consideration for Scholars status, no second reviewer letter is required and the student can simply be graded in the Advanced Independent Research course or, if more appropriate, the advanced course reduced to a regular 3-credit UG Research course by consulting with the dean.

Submission & Evaluation

Note that **2 bound copies** of the final project need to be submitted

To be considered for Scholar of the College recognition and for the McCarthy Prize, two copies of the final and complete version of nominated projects:

- (1) must be submitted to the Dean in Gasson 109 no later than **April 20st 2012**;
- (2) must be accompanied by confidential written evaluations from both the advisor and second reader;
- (3) must receive a final grade recommendation of A- or better from both the advisor and second reader as indicated in their evaluation letters.

In addition, the student will be expected to have maintained their cumulative average of 3.700 throughout the senior year.

Projects submitted after **April 20th** will *not* be considered for the McCarthy Prize, but may still be submitted for consideration in Scholar of the College recognition until the last day of classes of the relevant semester.

Final determination of Scholar of the College recognition is the responsibility of the Dean. The Dean's Office will notify the registrar of those students who have been granted Scholar of the College recognition. This prestigious award will be noted on the student's transcript and recognized at the Senior Awards Ceremony and in the Commencement brochure in May.

* In all cases "Chair" refers to the department chairperson or his/her designee.

** If during the first semester of senior year, a 3-credit senior honors thesis or advanced undergraduate research project, or equivalent, should develop into a significantly more ambitious & advanced project, the faculty advisor and chairperson may in consultation with the dean propose a change to a 6-credit Advanced Independent Research project in the second senior semester. Such "9 credit" projects would qualify for consideration for Scholar of the College and would encompass work done in both senior semesters. Regular and **complete** application packets as described above must be delivered to Dean Petri by **December 10th**** for review. Importantly, letters in the packet must specifically address how the project has gone significantly beyond its initial conception and a normal, 3-credit thesis project and therefore merits the requested change. Note that such spring entry into the SOC program is relatively rare.

*** Students with a December graduation term can participate in the SOC Program, but they must consult Dean Petri at least one year in advance of graduation for alternative deadline dates and special instructions.

For more information contact Patricia McLaughlin in Gasson 109 (617) 552-3272
Version 3/24/2011

Scholar of the College 2011-12

Important Dates & Deadlines for 2011-2012 Scholar of the College Applicants

Note: Students waiting to learn if they are accepted into Advanced Independent Research should register for regular research and/or thesis courses and then drop/add if accepted into the program.

For May 2012 grads

Submission of application for enrollment In 6-credit Advanced Independent Research courses <i>to department Chair.</i>	August 22 nd 2011
Forwarding of packet with chair's comments & decision, advisor's letter, and proposal to Dean Petri in Gasson 109	Prior to end of September Drop/Add***
Expected Enrollment in Advanced Independent Research courses	Fall and Spring of Senior Year.
Nomination for Scholar's status & Progress Report from advisor to Dean Petri Approval of Second Reviewer	March 13 th , 2012
Submission of <i>2 copies</i> of final version of Scholar's projects and 2 evaluation letters to Dean for review for McCarthy Prize.	April 20 th , 2012
Final deadline for submission without McCarthy consideration	On or about May 4 th , 2012

***Applications to enter SOC Program during the last semester of senior year must be received in the Dean's Office by **December 10th**.

Scholar of the College
College of Arts and Sciences, Boston College

Progress Report & Nomination for Scholar's Status (page 1)
Appointment of Second Reviewer (page 2)

Due to Dean Petri in Gasson 109 by March 11th 2012

Student Name _____

Grad. Term _____

Title of Project:

Part 1 - Progress Report & Nomination from faculty advisor

The above named student is enrolled in an Advanced Independent Research course numbered

_____ and their faculty advisor is _____.

The status of the project is (please check appropriate box):

- Project is progressing well, nomination for Scholar's status is recommended, and successful completion is anticipated in time for the McCarthy Prize competition on **April 20th**.
- Project is progressing well, nomination for Scholar's status is recommended, but McCarthy deadline unlikely to be met. Submission will likely be by final deadline on the **last day of classes (ca. on or about May 4th/Dec 11th)**.
- Project does not merit nomination for Scholar's status and possible conversion of Advanced Independent Research credits to regular Undergraduate Research and/or Honors Thesis credits should be discussed. Please contact Dean Petri for a discussion (petri@bc.edu). Part 2 need not be completed for students in this category.
- Other:

(attach additional sheet if needed)

(Signature of faculty advisor)

Scholar of the College
College of Arts and Sciences, Boston College

Part 2 - Appointment of Second, Independent Reviewer

Please complete and send to Dean Petri in Gasson 109 by March 11th 2012

*Chairs should appoint second reviewers who are reasonably independent of the project and who have appropriate expertise to judge the student's work. The solicitation of faculty reviewers from outside the student's department is encouraged. The evaluations of the advisor and a second scholar are critical in determining whether or not the project merits final Scholar's status. Both the second reviewer and the department Chair should endorse the appointment outlined below. Both Evaluation letters are due to Dean Petri in Gasson 109 by **April 20th, 2012**.*

Name of second reviewer: _____
(please print)

Reviewer Department/Institute affiliation:

Reviewer Email: _____

Student Name: _____

(Signature of 2nd Reviewer)

(Approval of Chairperson)