

# Scholar of the College & McCarthy Prizes

Program Description & Guidelines for 2020-21

**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 in the areas of the Natural Sciences, the Social Sciences and the Humanities. The program is administered by the Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office.

## SCHOLAR OF THE COLLEGE

### Qualifications

To qualify for Scholar of the College consideration, students in the class of 2021

- must have and maintain an overall *cumulative* GPA of 3.700 or better as an indication of their mastery of the entire undergraduate program;
- receive departmental approval to complete a substantive research project under the direction of a faculty scholar with appropriate expertise in the field of inquiry;
- and be registered in a special 6-credit for both Advanced Independent Research course as described below.

### Procedures – fall semester senior year

1. Students interested in becoming eligible for SOC designation at graduation should discuss this possibility of a Scholar's project with their research advisor during the spring of their junior year and register for a 3-credit Undergraduate Research or Senior Honors Thesis course for the following semester. Typically, students begin work on the project in the junior year or at least during the junior-senior summer.
2. Interested students must obtain departmental approval to become a SOC candidate by submitting to the department Chair or the Chair's designee a written proposal for a project 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) accompanied by a supporting letter from the faculty advisor *prior to the beginning of the senior year classes*.
3. The Chair will review the proposal considering 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. If the Chair decides to admit the student to the department's Advanced Independent Research course, a letter of nomination along with copies of the proposal and advisor's letter should be sent to Associate Dean Michael Martin in Stokes 132 South, no later than Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The dean's review will include confirmation that the students' cumulative GPA is at least 3.700 with no outstanding incompletes, missing grades, etc.

4. If approval is granted, the student should be enrolled in the department's Advanced Independent Research course both senior semesters.

**N.B. for Off-campus Projects with an External Advisor:** In cases where the Scholar's project is being conducted off-campus under the primary guidance of an external advisor, *the student must also have a co-advisor who is a regular, full time member of the department under whose course number the student will register.* The BC co-advisor assumes the responsibility to consult with the external advisor as to progress of the student's project, to review the final project before submission, to request any changers or edits deemed necessary, and to submit the final grade.

**N.B. for 9 credit Scholar's project:** If during the first semester, a 3-credit honors thesis or advanced undergraduate research project develops into a significantly more advanced project, the advisor and chairperson may, in consultation with the dean, propose a change to a 6-credit Advanced Independent Research project for the second semester. Such "9 credit" projects would qualify for consideration for Scholar of the College and could be nominated for a McCarthy Prize. Complete application materials as described above must be delivered to Dean Martin, Stokes 132 South, by January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021. *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 permission for 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 Martin at least one year in advance of graduation for alternative deadline dates and special instructions.

### **Procedures – spring semester senior year**

1. 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 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, must be submitted to both the research advisor **and** a second, independent reviewer appointed by the Chair for evaluation.
2. Formal nominations for a Scholar of the College award must be submitted by the advisor to the Dean's Office, Stokes 132 South, no later than **Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup>**

of senior year for students graduating in May. This must include an advisor's report indicating the likelihood of successful completion of the project, and the name of a second, independent, reviewer appointed by the Chair, who has *who are reasonably independent of the project and who have appropriate expertise to judge the student's work* AND has agreed to evaluate and grade the completed project in the required timeframe. The second readers report should be confidential and submitted directly to Associate Dean Michael Martin in Stokes 132 South.

3. In cases where student's progress 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 the advanced course can be reduced to a 3-credit Under Graduate Research course in consultation with the dean.
4. To receive the Scholar of the College award at Commencement, **two bound copies** of the completed thesis or project should be submitted to the Associate Dean's Office, Stokes 132 South, by **Thursday, April 15<sup>th</sup>**, 2021. The advisor's evaluation and the second reader's review must be submitted by Thursday April 22<sup>nd</sup>. (Submissions after Monday April 26<sup>th</sup> cannot be considered for the Scholar of the College Award.)

## **THE McCARTHY PRIZES**

### **Nomination for McCarthy Prizes**

The McCarthy Prizes are awarded at the Scholars Banquet for what are judged by the Dean of Morrissey College and the Dean's McCarthy Prize Selection Committee as the best scholars' project in the areas of the Natural Sciences, the Social Sciences and the Humanities. Scholar of the College projects submitted by the April 15<sup>th</sup> deadline may be nominated by the advisor and the department chair for consideration as McCarthy Prize winners. Projects submitted after April 15<sup>th</sup> cannot be considered for the McCarthy Prize, but may still be submitted for consideration in Scholar of the College recognition until Monday April 26<sup>th</sup>.

Final determination of the McCarthy Prizes 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.

## **GUIDELINES for Submission & Evaluation**

To be considered for Scholar of the College recognition and for the McCarthy Prize, two bound copies of the final and completed version of projects.

- The text must be must be bound, double-spaced, have a title/cover page, acknowledgements are optional.
- It must contain an abstract or introduction, a table of contents is optional.
- It must be submitted to the Dean in Stokes 132 South no later than **April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021**.
- It must receive a final grade recommendation of A- or better from both the advisor and second reader as indicated in their evaluation letters.

Projects accepted for Scholar of the College designation are expected to be well written, well referenced, and “publication ready” as one copy will be submitted to the Boston College library and may be accessible to others. In addition, the student will be expected to have maintained their cumulative average of 3.700 throughout the senior year.

For more information contact The Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences Associate Deans’ Office, Stokes 132 South, and (617) 552-2800.

# Timeline for 2020-21 Scholar of the College & McCarthy Prizes.

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

## For May 2021 grads

Submission of application for enrollment In 6-credit Advanced Independent Research courses to department Chair.	September 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2020
Forwarding of packet with chair's comments & decision, advisor's letter, and proposal to Dean Martin in Stokes 132 South	October 1 <sup>st</sup> , ***
Expected Enrollment in Advanced Independent Research courses	Fall and Spring of Senior Year.
Nomination for Scholar's status & Progress Report from advisor to Dean Martin Approval of Second Reviewer	March 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2021
Submission of <u>2 copies</u> of final version of Scholar's projects.	April 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2021
Submission of 2 evaluation letters To the Dean for review for McCarthy Prize.	April 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2021
Final deadline for submission of Scholars Projects <i>without</i> McCarthy consideration Faculty evaluations due	April 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2021 May 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2021

\*\*\*Exceptional and dean approved applications to enter SOC Program during the last semester of senior year must be received in the Associate Dean's Office, Stokes 132 South, by **January 8th, 2021**.

# Scholar of the College

Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences, Boston College

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

Due to Dean Martin in Stokes 132 South by March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Graduation Semester \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Project: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Part 1 - Progress Report & Nomination from faculty advisor

The student is enrolled in an

- Advanced Independent Research course numbered \_\_\_\_\_
- 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 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021**.

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 **April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021**.

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 Martin for a discussion ([martinuv@bc.edu](mailto:martinuv@bc.edu)). Part 2 need not be completed for students in this category.

Other:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of faculty advisor)

# Scholar of the College

Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences, Boston College

## Part 2 - Appointment of Second, Independent Reviewer

**Please complete and send to Dean Martin in Stokes 132 South by March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

*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. In cases involving an external co-advisor, letters from both co-advisors and the department Chair are required.*

*Both Evaluation letters are due to Dean Martin in Stokes 132 South by **April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020** for projects to be considered for the McCarthy Prize. The deadline for other SOC project letters is **April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021**.*

Name of second reviewer:

\_\_\_\_\_

(please print)

Reviewer Department/Institute affiliation:

\_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of 2nd Reviewer)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Approval of Chairperson)

## Scholar of the College Advisor and Second Reader Evaluation Letters

Projects awarded Scholar of the College status are meant to represent the very highest level of undergraduate research and thesis work in the Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences. Roughly 10-20% of those who enroll in Advanced Independent Research and who are thereby candidates for Scholars convert their work to more regular undergraduate research or thesis designation.

The letters of evaluation by the research advisor and the second reader are very important documents. Both must contain

- a recommendation for a grade of A or A- for the 9 or 12 credit project
- both are carefully reviewed by the deans and the judges for the McCarthy Prize.

If the project is deemed to fall short of Scholar's level, either by receiving lower grades or by recommendation, the student will still earn course credits for the work so that their graduation will not be jeopardized.

Since the faculty advisor and the second reader will likely have more expertise in the particular area covered by the project, **it is important that in their letters they comment on how the student's work fits in and contributes to the field as well as the level of scholarship represented by the project (publishable, equivalent to master's level, etc.).**

Also important are comments regarding the level of effort put forth by the student; how the work exceeds the norm for undergraduate research or thesis projects; and relative comparisons with other similar projects (acceptable but below par, good and typical, or one of the best). It is generally assumed that all of the work in the project is that of the student alone except for guidance by the advisor. However, if the project is a portion of a team effort or if some of the data presented in the project was collected or produced by others it is very important for this to be explained and attributed.

The advisor and second reader letters must be submitted by the relevant deadline. They can arrive in sealed envelopes cross-flap signed by the author or by other acceptable means.

Please contact me at (617) 552-2800 if you have any questions.