

Scholar of the College

Program Description & Guidelines for 2018-19

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 Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office.

Qualifications

To qualify for Scholar of the College consideration, students in the class of 2019 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 basic steps for the Scholars Program are:

1. Discuss the possibility of a Scholars project with a research advisor in the spring preceding the senior year. Typically students have already been doing work on a potential project in the junior year or at least during the junior-senior summer.
2. In April of junior year, register for a regular 3-credit Undergraduate Research or Senior Honors Thesis course for the ensuing fall.
3. Obtain department approval to become a SOC candidate before the end of drop/add for first semester of the senior year. This involves the steps described in the next section which the candidate should monitor to insure completion.
4. If approval is granted, 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 12, 2019**.
6. Submit two bound copies of the project by the deadlines specified below.

Detailed information on each of these steps follows.

Obtaining 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 Martin in Stokes 132 South, prior to the end of drop/add in early September. The dean's review will include confirmation that the students' 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. **

Important Note 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 and to request any changes or edits deemed necessary, and to submit the final grade.

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, Stokes 132 South, no later than **March 12th** of senior year for students graduating in May.***

Nominations consist 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 Martin 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 part form—Progress Reports.)

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 bound copies of the final and complete version of nominated projects:

- (1) Guidelines for project: must be double-spaced, have a title/cover page, acknowledgements are optional, contain an abstract or introduction, a table of contents is optional
- (1) must be submitted to the Dean in Stokes 132 South no later than **April 16th, 2019**;
- (2) must be accompanied by confidential written evaluations from both the advisor and second reader (see evaluation guidelines attached);
- (3) 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.

Projects submitted after **April 16th** will not be considered for the McCarthy Prize, but may still be submitted for consideration in Scholar of the College recognition until the last study day of the relevant semester - for spring graduates **May 6th, 2019**.

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 Martin, Stokes 132 South, by **December 12th**** 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 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.

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

Scholar of the College 2018-2019

Important Dates & Deadlines for 2018-2019 Scholar of the College Applicants (Class of 2019)

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 2019 grads

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Submission of application for enrollment In 6-credit Advanced Independent Research courses <u>to department Chair</u> . | August 21 st , 2018 |
| Forwarding of packet with chair's comments & decision, advisor's letter, and proposal to Dean Martin in Stokes 132 South | 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 Martin Approval of Second Reviewer | March 12 th , 2019 |
| Submission of <u>2 copies</u> of final version of Scholar's projects and 2 evaluation letters To the Dean for review for McCarthy Prize. | April 16 th , 2019 |
| Final deadline for submission <u>without</u> McCarthy consideration | May 6 th , 2019 |

***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 **December 12th**.

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 12th, 2019

Student Name _____

Graduation Semester _____

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 16th, 2019**.

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 study day (May 6th, 2019)**.

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 (michael.martin.2@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

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 12th, 2019

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 16th, 2019** for projects to be considered for the McCarthy Prize. The deadline for other SOC project letters is **May 6th, 2019**.*

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 Evaluation Letter Guide for Advisor and Second Reader

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 to 12 credit project and 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, usually 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 and what level of scholarship in the field is 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, if it does, regular 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. But 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.

Both advisor and second reader letters of evaluation must be submitted along with the project 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.