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**VALENTE CENTER UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAM**

**Call for Proposals**

The Valente Center for Arts & Science is accepting applications for **paid** undergraduate research positions for students to pursue an independent arts & sciences-focused or interdisciplinary research project for AY 2021-22. This research program is designed to pursue intellectual curiosity and develop creativity within the undergraduate research community at Bentley University.

Provide us with your original thinking on great challenges that we face in society and we provide you with a platform in which to provide solutions. The findings of your research will culminate in a written manuscript. Exciting benefits within this program include: working with exceptional faculty as they provide mentorship and share knowledge throughout this research journey, participating in the ‘Research Methods Workshop’, where students gain valuable skills required in a self-directed research project, and presenting research findings to the Bentley community at the 19th Annual Undergraduate Research Conference (hosted with the Honors Program and LSM) in the spring. A select group of researchers maybe be chosen to be highlighted in press articles by Bentley’s communications team to the community.

Hours are flexible and should average five hours per week (up to 120 hours over the academic year). This position is paid an hourly rate of $13.50 and will be paid every two weeks.

**Application Process:**

**Applications may be submitted until September 17, 2021*.*** There are a limited number of positions, so potential applicants are encouraged to work on the proposal and apply as early as possible. Selection and notification will take place by **September 24, 2021**, and researchers can begin to work on the project soon after the formal hiring process is complete on Workday. **Applications are open to all class codes.**

**Note**: Research projects cannotbe used simultaneously for **any** course or program-related credit, including the Honors capstone project, a directed study, or an LSM culminating experience.

Submit the following documents in a single e-mail **by September 17, 2021**to Valente Center Undergraduate Student Research Manager Samantha Lovering ( slovering@falcon.bentley.edu ):

* Resumé or CV;
* Research proposal (see description below);
* Letter of support from a full-time Bentley faculty member willing to serve as mentor – if identified (see description below).

**Health TLN-Sponsored Undergraduate Researcher Position**

Bentley University's **Health Thought Leadership Network** (www.bentley.edu/healthtln) is sponsoring a Valente UG Researcher whose research proposal will be related to health. We define health very broadly and would consider topics including, but not limited to, healthcare systems and administration, health-related technology and innovation, patient experience and healthcare information and how biological, psychological and social factors impact health. For a list of potential faculty mentors and their health-related research areas, please see the [Health TLN website.](https://www.bentley.edu/centers/health-thought-leadership-network) If you would like to be considered for the Health TLN fellowship, please indicate so in your application.

**Faculty Mentor Role Description - for Applicants**

Undergraduate Researchers are required to have a full-time faculty member as a mentor. The faculty member mentors provide guidance throughout the year as the student independently undertakes their project. Prior to submitting an application, candidates may seek out a faculty mentor, but if a student has not found a faculty mentor, the Valente Center will help to identify a faculty mentor for the project. The purpose of a faculty mentor is to provide guidance over the course of the year as the student independently undertakes her/his project. The faculty mentor will *not* assign projects for the researcher or keep track of progress. Rather, a mentor should act as an experienced resource for the researcher in the process of conducting original research, defining project scope, and finding novel areas to explore. The mentor should ideally conduct their own academic research in a field closely related to the fellow’s topic of interest to be able to meet these objectives. Although faculty mentors may suggest avenues of research in consultation with the applicant, they should not simply assign research tasks in an applicant’s project. Although the researcher should average five hours of work per week, the faculty mentor’s time commitment should seldom be more than one hour per week. Researchers should arrange meetings with mentors on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to discuss the project and receive feedback. It is expected researchers will complete work on their own; faculty mentors have only an advisory role. **A Valente Undergraduate Research Project is student-driven.**

**Research Proposal Description**

The goal of a research proposal is to present and justify the need to study a research problem and to present the practical ways in which this research should be conducted. There exists no standardized format for a research proposal, but most follow an essay format. Regardless of the format that you chose, be sure to address these **three themes** in your research proposal:

***1. What do you plan to accomplish?***

• Be clear and succinct in defining the research problem and what it is you are proposing to research.

***2. Why do you want to do it?***

• Provide convincing evidence that it is a topic worthy of study. Be sure to answer the "So What?" question. If possible, conduct a review of the relevant literature.

***3. How are you going to do it?***

• Outline generally the methodology you hope to employ with your research project and create a mock timeline for your project and deliverable. Be sure that what you propose is doable.

**The Valente Center understands that during the course of researcher’s topic may change and other avenues may be explored**. This is allowed, but prior to undertaking a project do your best to outline the scope of your project and what you hope to achieve.

**Before the Proposal**

These are tips for applicants before drafting a research proposal for submission.

***Identifying a Research Topic***

All projects must be related to the arts and sciences or the fusion of arts and sciences with business. It is important to remember that the arts and sciences, as well as their intersection with business, encompass a wide range of subjects. For example, a topic related to political science is within the realms of an arts and sciences related topic. If the applicant is unsure of whether their project falls within this space, contacting the Valente Center Director is advised. Beyond the topic, there are no set requirements as to the type of research project an applicant can undertake. Although research projects must be academically rigorous, applicants have considerable liberty to design specific projects.

***Meeting with a Potential Faculty Mentor***

Before beginning a research proposal, it is advised that candidates first speak with a potential faculty mentor to discuss their proposed project. A discussion with a faculty member about the research question in mind and the proposed research methodologies will be especially useful. This will allow the candidate to receive feedback on their ideas and also begin developing a relationship with a potential mentor. Since applications are accepted on a rolling basis until September, we encourage you to contact potential faculty mentors through email during the summer. This time is the best for both faculty members to be in contact with you, and for you to get all the materials ready for the application.

**Meetings with Valente Center Student Research Manager**: As a requirement of the program, the researchers meet with the Valente Center Student Research Manager for periodic updates. These meetings are an opportunity to ensure that project milestones are met and discuss any challenges that researchers may have encountered.

**Information for Potential Faculty Mentors**

The new Valente Undergraduate Researcher Program aims to provide motivated and competent students with an opportunity to conduct research with support from the Valente Center and faculty mentors. However, unlike paid Student Research Assistants, which directly support faculty research, these projects are student-driven.

As a result, the Valente Center will provide logistical, record keeping, and training support for UG research fellows. **Faculty mentors are NOT expected to check-in with students or monitor hours.** As projects are student-driven, the Student Research Manager in the Valente Center will coordinate check-ins and monitor progress with students. With respect to basic research skills, UG researchers will be expected to take part in an undergraduate “Research Methods Workshop” which will be jointly coordinated by the Honors Program and the Valente Center near the beginning of the academic year.

All full-time faculty members (A&S or Business) are eligible to serve as mentors.

*Faculty as mentors are expected to:*

1. Provide a letter of support for student’s application;
2. If the student is selected for the UG Researcher Program, support the student with subject matter expertise, research advice, help with IRB requirements if necessary, and general advocacy for the student’s work; and
3. Meet with student for mentoring and discussion as needed, averaging no more than one (1) hour or so per week.

Faculty mentors will receive a **$1000** stipend from the Valente Center in April 2022.

**Questions?**

Please contact:

Samantha Lovering, Undergraduate Research Manager, slovering@falcon.bentley.edu, or

Johannes (Hans) Eijmberts (jeijmberts@bentley.edu), Director of the Valente Center for Arts & Sciences.