# WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
# OFFICE OF RESEARCH & CREATIVE ACTIVITY

# Newsletter

Issue #3　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Fall 2025



Greetings! This Summer, we relocated to Suite 319 in the Wetherby Administration Building. We also bid a fond farewell to Regina Allen, who retired in July after 27 years of dedicated service, and we warmly welcomed Ramona Sudbeck and Jarrod Smith.

ORCA offers ongoing trainings, resources, and hands-on support throughout the external grant lifecycle—including both pre- and post-award processes within the Office of Sponsored Programs.

Research compliance is handled by the Office of Research Integrity.  Grants & Contracts Accounting oversees the financial management of external grants and contracts.

For assistance after you are awarded a grant or contract, email post.award@wku.edu. Learn more about our Proposal Development Services in the Pre-Award Spotlight section on page 2.

We invite you to register for our upcoming seminar, All Things Research Compliance, to be held on September 9th. Visit our Training and Events page for this and past seminar presentations.

The Spring 2026 FUSE application portal for students is OPEN with a submission deadline of October 31, 2025.

The RCAP application for faculty will launch in late November with a submission deadline of February 28, 2026. For RCAP questions, email internal.grants@wku.edu.

If you have any questions or need support, please feel free to contact us using the service emails provided. We look forward to supporting both new and returning faculty and remain committed to championing our students as they progress on their journey of learning, discovery, and understanding.

# WKU® ORCA
## Office of Research & Creative Activity

# Pre-Award Spotlight:
# Proposal Development Services

The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) supports WKU faculty and staff in the acquisition of extramural funding. The Pre-Award unit within the OSP is dedicated to assisting Principal Investigators with Proposal Development and Submission. These services include review of the application **guidelines**, creation of a proposal **checklist**, **budget** development, proposal **review** for compliance with guidelines, and proposal **submission**. It is important to note that all externally funded projects must be submitted by OSP per WKU policy 2.0103.

## Expertise on Your Side

➢ Experienced team of research administrators
➢ Knowledge of federal, state, university, and sponsor regulations, policies, and guidelines
➢ Proficient with proposal submission systems and sponsor requirements
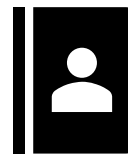
## One Click Resources

### Timeline for Submitting an External Proposal

### Principal Investigator Handbook

### Proposal Intent Form

### Find External Funding

## Connect with Us

**Email:** proposal.development@wku.edu

**\*NEW\* Virtual Open Office Hours**:
Join us via zoom to chat and ask questions: https://wku.zoom.us/j/91918346751
Dates: October 3rd and November 7th
Time: 2:00-4:00pm CST

# Current Seminars

## UPCOMING:

### All Things Research Compliance

*Tuesday, September 9, 2025*
*8:00 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.  DSU 2081*

*register here*



## LOOKING FOR PAST SEMINARS?    *Just click the links below*

### Navigating your Approver Role & Responsibilities
*(May 2, 2025)*

### I've Identified a Grant to Apply to, Now What?
*(October 18, 2024)*

### ORCA Internal Grant Seminar: RCAP & FUSE
*(September 10, 2024)*

### After Your Department is Awarded a Grant
*(July 17, 2024)*

# WKU Office of Research and Creative Activity

# Faculty: Encourage Your Student To Apply Today for The Spring 2026 FUSE Grant, The Portal Is Open!

**The Office of Research and Creative Activity** at Western Kentucky University is thrilled to announce that the Faculty-Undergraduate Student Engagement (FUSE) portal for the Spring 2026 Grant is now open! This initiative offers undergraduate students a unique opportunity to collaborate on research and creative projects with faculty mentors, providing essential financial support and access to valuable resources.



**Benefits of the FUSE Grant for Undergraduate Students:** Awardees will receive up to **$3,000** towards a research project, which can be used for travel, materials, and equipment. In addition, students will travel with a faculty mentor to a conference to present their work. Students will also earn a **$500 student stipend** upon successful project completion. With these opportunities, students will bridge the gap between school and real-world experience.

**Requirements to Participate in FUSE for Undergraduates:** WKU undergraduate students in good academic standing who have reached sophomore status or will by the Award Date of August 15, 2025, are eligible to apply for the grant. The FUSE Grant is designed to foster meaningful faculty-student partnerships on projects that align with their academic interests and career aspirations. *Due to the length of the grant cycle, students who will graduate in less than two semesters after the award date of January 15, 2026, are not advised to apply.*

**Students Should Follow these Steps:**

1. **Submit your application**: Head to the [FUSE application portal](#) to complete your application and have your faculty mentor review it by **Friday, October 31, 2025**.
2. **Finalize and submit**: After collaborating with your mentor to finalize the application, your mentor will submit their completed portion of the application by **November 6, 2025**.

This is a great chance for students to not only engage in hands-on research or creative projects but also to receive guidance from experienced faculty members who can mentor them through the process.

For more information, visit [here](#) or email [fuse@wku.edu](mailto:fuse@wku.edu).

# Turning ideas into action!
# Student Spotlight

## Innovating the future of architecture through sustainability

Abigail Abrams completed her research project on sustainable architecture. Her inspiration came from Germany and Italy where buildings were made of algae and communities were built on geothermal grids. This motivated her to explore how sustainable architecture can be used to help the environment. Abigail had big plans for this experience such as researching sustainable technology, studying architectural designers, and traveling to Europe. Luckily the Office of Research and Creative Activity has a Faculty-Undergraduate Student Engagement (FUSE) grant for students to meet and exceed their research goals. With the help of our FUSE grant, Abigail got the opportunity to travel to the ICSAUD (International Conference on Sustainable Architecture) in Berlin last summer. There she learned about sustainable building designs and got to meet sustainable architects. She later shared her findings at our annual Student Scholar Showcase held each Spring.

### ABIGAIL ABRAMS



## Influencing the next generation of architects

Abigail's work highlights the importance of sustainable architecture to protect communities. Click **here** to learn more about her research story and success at WKU!

*KY INBRE is a collaborative network of biomedical researchers in Kentucky, funded by the NIH.*

## AWARDEE



## Dr. Joseph Marquardt Secures NIH R16 Grant

We are thrilled to announce that Dr. Joseph Marquardt, Assistant Professor of Biology, has been awarded an R16 grant from the NIH's National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS). The grant, totaling $177,195, supports his proposal titled "Examination of Elm1, polarity, and endocytosis for regulation of cellular morphogenesis in budding yeast," that can be viewed in the NIH Reporter here.

Dr. Marquardt's research investigates the role of the kinase Elm1 in regulating cellular morphogenesis in budding yeast, focusing on its interactions with polarity establishment and endocytosis pathways to ensure proper cell shape and growth and "filling a critical knowledge gap that can give insights important to human health and development."

This funding builds directly on Dr. Marquardt's ongoing KY INBRE-funded research project award (RPA), highlighting his continued contributions to understanding cellular processes. As a KY INBRE 2024 RPA recipient and past EM Voucher and Start-Up Award winner, Dr. Marquardt's work exemplifies the impactful research supported by KY INBRE at WKU. Congratulations to Dr. Marquardt on this significant achievement!

# Federal Sponsor Updates and New Requirements

## New Research Security Training Requirements

Effective October 1, 2025, NIH policy ([NOT-OD-25-133: NIH Announces a New Policy Requirement to Train Senior/Key Personnel on Other Support Disclosure Requirements](#)) requires all faculty researchers and senior/key personnel **involved in NIH-funded research** to complete training on the requirement to disclose all research activities and affiliations (active and pending) in Other Support.

Effective October 10, 2025, NSF will now require Research Security Training per [Notice No. 149](#) for NSF proposers and individuals identified as senior/key personnel. This encompasses training that addresses cybersecurity, international collaboration, foreign interference, and rules for proper use of funds, disclosure, conflict of commitment, and conflict of interest.

To satisfy both NIH and NSF requirements WKU faculty and senior/key personnel must complete the training module called *Research Security Training (Combined Course)*. WKU employees will complete the module through [WKU CITI Training](#). **The certificate of completion will need to be provided to OSP for each individual listed as senior/key personnel on the proposal before the application will be submitted.**

## Other NIH Policy Changes

NIH is providing guidance ([NOT-OD-25-132: Supporting Fairness and Originality in NIH Research Applications](#)) to researchers on the appropriate usage of artificial intelligence (AI) and instituting a new policy limiting the number of applications that NIH will consider per Principal Investigator per calendar year.

In July 2025, [NIH announced](#) it will no longer develop new funding opportunities focused exclusively on animal models of human disease. Rather, going forward, new funding opportunities will be designed more broadly with language that also encourages various approaches to be considered. [See more details here](#).

## Gold Standard Science Implementation

In May, an [executive order](#) was issued directing federal agencies to adopt what it terms "gold standard science" across the research enterprise. Agencies including [NIH](#), [NSF](#), [DOE](#), [HHS](#), [USDA](#), [NASA](#) have released implementation plans detailing how these principles—centered on reproducibility, transparency, and rigorous peer review—will be embedded into funding, reporting, and oversight processes.

## Useful Tool: Grants.gov Simplified Search

Grants.gov has developed a new simpler way to search for federal funding opportunities to deliver closer matches to your keywords. The opportunity listings are also easier to navigate and read. [Try the new simpler search](#).

# For Your Graduate Student: *Research & Travel Grants*

WKU is now accepting applications for its Graduate Student Research and Travel Grants for the Fall semester—deadline: October 3rd. These grants offer funding to support innovative graduate research or essential travel.  Graduate students are encouraged to work with their research mentors during the application process. Learn more and encourage your grad student to apply here.

# Save the Date: A Celebration of Research – January 29, 2026

FY25 external funding proposal submitters and awardees: Watch for an invitation to the WKU Celebration of Research & Sponsored Activities, where we will honor faculty and staff for their FY25 grant accomplishments.

In case you missed it—check out the exciting new format of our FY24 Annual Report! It highlights funding achievements, award recipients, and key events. FY25 report coming soon!

*Thank you for reading!*