Applicants: Please read over the following information. The insights provided below will help you put together a strong, competitive application. Feel free to share this information with your faculty mentors and recommenders.

Evaluation Criteria:

- **Academic:** Grades; level/difficulty of courses; awards, scholarships, publications and/or presentations
- **Progress Toward Research Goals:** Research activities; career goals; coursework
- **Research Essay:** Technical content, bibliography, organization/grammar; balanced detail (background, study, results, next step & implications of research)
- **Letters of Recommendation:** Comment on applicant’s commitment to research, intellectual curiosity, potential for research contributions (see “letters of reference” below)

Scholar Characteristics:

- **Coursework consistent to meet graduate school goals** (Make sure to have PhD level goals!)
- **Research experience OR well developed research plan** (Include research publications and/or presentations, including those in-progress/to be presented)
- **Application Responses where EVERY response suggests a research career; provide detailed account of professional aspirations**
- **STRONG letters of recommendation** (Research activities on application must match up with letters of recommendation; obtain appropriate letters!)

Research Activities:

- **Outline EACH activity, on- & off-campus, summer programs, research component(s) of internships, etc.**
- **Identify research that leads/led to presentations, publications, etc.**

Professional Aspirations:

- **Detail current & future academic programs that will lead to career goal**
- **Outline plans for graduate school at PhD level** (identify possible graduate schools and, if appropriate, postdoc experiences)
- **Indicate sources of research experience** (e.g., independent study, internships, proposed honors thesis, REU/SURF/EXCEL, etc.)

Personal Information: (Although optional, it should be completed)

Research Essay:

- **Essay must demonstrate knowledge base and reinforce research career**
- **Write to the expertise of the reviewer; detailed, technical language is expected; bibliography/references are essential**
- **Diagrams & figures can be helpful**
- **Background should not exceed 50% of essay; interpretation of obtained/expected results is an important part of the essay**
- **Faculty/research mentor input/review of your application essay is essential: Work with your faculty prior to completion of this essay!**