

Santa Fe College: Library Research Award

In 2010, Professor Bobby Hom, the co-chair of the [Research in Undergraduate Education \(RUE\) Workgroup](#), learned about the University of Washington's [Library Research Award](#). Professor Hom asked the L.W. Tyree Library to consider implementing a similar award at Santa Fe implementation. Library research awards are more common in universities than in community colleges, but the SF library director and staff agreed that this initiative would encourage undergraduate research and reward information literacy skills. Two librarians worked to create procedures, evaluation criteria, supporting documentation, and a website for the award.

All Santa Fe College students who have completed a research paper for a Santa Fe class in the previous three semesters are eligible for the award. Each student application packet consists of an [application form](#), the completed research paper, a bibliography for the paper (even if one was not assigned for the original paper), a [reflective questionnaire](#), and a [statement of support](#) from the faculty member who assigned the paper. Applications are accepted until the final deadline.

Each application packet is judged in two areas: content and information literacy. Three faculty members from within the content area evaluate the packet on five categories: presentation, quality, and support of thesis; originality of ideas presented; professionalism of paper; fulfillment of original assignment; and quality of the paper overall. Three librarians evaluate the packet on five information literacy categories: quality of search strategies; quality, variety, and depth of resources; relevance of sources to thesis; growth in the research process; and proper documentation and citation of sources. All of these categories are judged using a standardized [evaluation rubric](#), which allows for more consistent scoring and clear expectations for each category. These scores are then combined to determine overall winners.

While this award is jointly sponsored by RUE and the library, the coordination of the award is done by the library. One librarian is a member of the RUE Workgroup and serves as the coordinator of the award. She collects the applications, designates the faculty and librarian reviewers, tallies the scores, and serves as the contact person.

Currently there are three awards. First place is awarded \$125, second place is awarded \$75, and third place is awarded \$50. This money is funded by donations. The first three years were funded by personal donations by former SF president Dr. Larry W. Tyree and current SF president Dr. Jackson Sasser. In future years, the funding for the awards will be included in the operating budget for RUE. In the first year, only two prizes were given. In the second year, there was a tie for third place, and four prizes were given. Awards are presented at the end of the spring semester, during the college-wide Student Awards Ceremony. Students are presented with a framed certificate and a check. The winning papers are posted to the [Library Research Award website](#).

Due to increased publicity, the number of applications is steadily rising. In the first year, the library received seven applications; by the second year, that number had risen to seventeen. These applications come from a variety of disciplines, including English, philosophy, health sciences administration, sociology, and radiologic imaging.

Librarians have made a concerted effort to publicize the award. All faculty members who teach writing-intensive courses or courses that have information literacy as a learning outcome of are emailed information about the award, and encouraged to identify exemplary papers. Information is disseminated via the faculty daily email newsletter, the student weekly newsletter, and the library's Facebook page. Librarians also pass out bookmarks for the award to students in classes that come to the library for information literacy instruction sessions. The library anticipates that in the third year, as publicity increases, there will be more applications. Applications for the third year are currently open on a continuing basis.

Each year, following the presentation of the awards, the award coordinator solicits feedback from all reviewers regarding the process. As a result of past reviews, the rubric was revised for consistency and applicability, and the original "reflective essay" was changed to a more structured "reflective questionnaire." In addition, the award coordinator will now run each paper through the TurnItIn system, to ensure that submissions do not contain plagiarism.

Award feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Students appreciate being honored for their work, while faculty members enjoy celebrating their students' achievements. One faculty member offered to donate funds to ensure that the award continues. The award has been successfully encouraged information literacy skills, rewarded student work, and fostered connections between the library and the college as a whole.