Preparing your report for the VWRRC Student Research Grants

Below are guidelines for preparing your report. The report (either final or interim report) consists of a short narrative and responses to a series of short questions about your student status and project. PLEASE READ THESE GUIDELINES BEFORE FILLING OUT THE REPORT FORMS.

The report is submitted using a web form interface (**tinyurl.com/VWRRCreport**). It is advised that you write your narrative first and then save it as a separate Word or PDF file. If you have photographs or figures to include (maximum of 3), also provide a short description (including credit if necessary) in a separate Word or PDF file.

The reporting system allows "save and continue" by placing a cookie on your browser. Please make sure your browser is set to allow cookies if you want to use this feature. Responses are saved in the system for 30 days.

The questions you will be asked include: contact information for you and the faculty Co-PI, student status (e.g., degree and expected graduation date), demographic information, project information (i.e., title, keywords, and listing of any presentations or publications associated with project), fiscal information (e.g., how much is remaining in fund and plans for unobligated funds), and about data archiving (see below).

When the report is submitted, a copy is sent to you, your advisor, and the VWRRC.

Please remember that the VWRRC shall be credited in all publications (journal articles, conference papers, graduate thesis, websites, etc.) that result from this project. *It is the responsibility of the faculty Co-PI to communicate publications, proposals, and data resulting from this grant even after the reporting period.*

Report format
The goal of the report, especially if the report is a final report, is to document your major findings and allow readers from different backgrounds to understand why the work is important. If the report is an interim report, provide information on the progress toward project goals. The report should be no longer than 450 words and written at a level understandable to an undergraduate student, from a non-science/engineering background, but with basic science literacy. A good analog for the report style is ScienceDaily (http://www.sciencedaily.com), a science news web site that offers readers the depth and breadth of breaking news about the latest scientific discoveries.

The target audience of the report is stakeholders of the VWRRC, which include academics from many different fields, legislators, water interest groups, students, citizens, and state and federal agencies. Possible uses of the report include as a post on the VWRRC's webpage, as part of reports to VWRRC funding agencies, or in communications with Virginia General Assembly members or state agency staff.

The report should provide enough context for the project's implications to be clear to readers. The report should not contain references and should avoid numbers, measurements, and acronyms unless necessary. The report should be accompanied by a headline that could be used in a newsletter or press release, and that also conveys the overall findings of the project. You may also submit a relevant photograph (provide photo credits and permission to use in newsletters) or a simple graphical illustration of project findings. Include names, affiliations, and contact information for all project investigators.

Here are some general guidelines:
- Grab attention with a good headline that also tells the story of your work
- Distinguish between findings and interpretation or extrapolation
- Avoid over-claiming results and hype.
- Get right to the point in the first few sentences. Your title/headline and first paragraph should convey the story. This title is not necessarily the same as your proposal or project title. It should be understood by broad audiences and be provocative, informative, professional, and tell the story of your work. Again, ScienceDaily (http://www.sciencedaily.com) is a good reference for style.
- Consider providing access to more information (e.g., a URL).
- Try using 3 short paragraphs to construct the report. The first paragraph should be strong and attract readers. It should also tell the entire story in brief. The second paragraph should provide some level of detail and the last paragraph is a summary sentence or two.
- Use plain language. Avoid excessive use of adjectives, fancy words, and jargon.
- Use active, not passive, voice.

Data Archiving and Open Access
Federal funds are used to support this grant program, which require that data are made fully accessible, discoverable, and usable (open access) as soon as possible, but no later than one (1) year after project completion. However, if the data are critical for completion of a student thesis or dissertation, they can be released one year after the submission of the thesis or dissertation. Data products will be archived by the Virginia Tech Data Repository (data.lib.vt.edu), the institutional repository in the University Libraries at Virginia Tech, or at the institutional data repository of the recipient of the seed grant home institution if not from Virginia Tech, for purposes of preservation, discoverability, and access. PIs must provide a URL (or doi) to their data repository entry no later than one year after submission of their final report or completion of a student thesis or dissertation. Manuscripts resulting from this grant program should also be open access if possible. For Virginia Tech researchers, an open access deposit of accepted manuscripts is available through the university's institutional repository (see Virginia Tech Policy 13000 2.3.A. #8).