Revised SURF 2020
April 9, 2020

Background
The fast-changing situation surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak has resulted in significant changes for the 2020 SURF program. Many external SURF Programs have closed entirely. There are major financial, human, and building access issues that must be considered as we think about summer programs at the college. We also must consider the purpose of the SURF program as we look to possible options this summer.

- There is much less money available to support student research with faculty. Only endowment and external grant funds are available. CFCD and Science Center operating budget will no longer support SURF students. Housing stipends are no longer available. It is currently unclear if we can fund students residing outside the US doing remote work.
- Faculty have worked tirelessly under very challenging conditions to mount remote learning opportunities in the spring semester. They may be asked to do similar remote teaching in the fall, requiring significant preparation time in the summer. (Note: Remote learning in the fall is currently a possibility not a certainty.)
- The current restrictions on access to campus buildings for faculty and students are in effect indefinitely. Consequently, we cannot assume we will have access to our offices and labs when planning SURF projects this summer.
- SURF is a mechanism to promote in-depth scholarly research between a faculty mentor and an undergraduate student. It is not a work study type opportunity meant to address financial need.

Principles
SURF is a research fellowship and students must be engaged in high-quality faculty mentored research activities. For many of us, this is simply impossible to do remotely. For a minority of us, this might be possible. However, even when possible, it still might not make sense for some faculty at this time based on a variety of factors.

- Faculty participate in SURF voluntarily. They are under no obligation to offer SURF positions, nor should they feel pressure from the college to do so.
- Some students might not adapt well to performing research remotely.
- Project ideas may be different now in our remote-only environment than when we were on campus.
- For projects that can happen, flexibility in timing and hours worked per week is possible.

SURF 2020 Program
In this new environment, the Science Center will play a much more limited role. We will help getting students paid and help departments without endowments who choose to pursue SURF projects. (We have a limited amount of Schultz Fund support available.) For all departments (with and without endowed funds), we will need the department chair (or the chair’s designee) to discuss projects with faculty members to determine if the project is feasible and appropriate. Faculty with external funding should work with their funding agency and the Smith Grants Office to determine the best path forward for their research with students this summer.