

Western Oregon University
Maurice Undergraduate Initiative Prize Competition
Call for Proposals
2026 – 2027 Academic Year

Purpose

The Maurice Undergraduate Initiative Prize Competition is designed to challenge students to use their own creativity and innovation in solving a problem of importance to them, therefore deepening their breadth of knowledge about themselves and their abilities. We are looking for an innovative project, not just a research paper.

This annual competition—open for Western Oregon University undergraduate students—will be judged by a committee comprised of faculty, staff, and students, and resulting in a prize of \$5,000 to the individual winner or team who has demonstrated the deepest learning and problem solving. Participants do not have to be US citizens.

In selecting a project of their own desire, it is the belief that the students will experience an additional educational benefit outside of their standard coursework. Additionally, student participants will plan and execute a strategy to address their issue while applying their own knowledge, creative use of resources, and the ability to work with others to find solutions.

Eligibility

Competitors can be either individuals or teams of students. All participants must be current WOU students with more than 35 quarter credits completed by the end of Fall 2026 term. A student, as an individual or part of a team, may only enter the competition once.

Faculty and staff may serve only as resources and not participate, actively, in the competition.

Projects are of the student's choosing. However, while the project may be related to a student's area of study, it shall be extra-curricular and must not be used as evaluation for course credit or be a repackaging of work done for course credit in the past. This structure applies to independent studies as well as to formal classes. No class projects or papers are eligible to win this prize.

Award winner(s) will be required to complete a W-9 tax form as required by the IRS guidelines and are solely responsible for any tax implications of this award and should consult their tax advisors for additional information. If you do not have a social security number, other arrangements can be made.

Finalists will be asked to present their work at the spring Academic Excellence Showcase.

Deliverable: Application to Participate is due -- December 11, 2026

You only need to have good ideas and a plan to win, but you also need to make the deadlines.

1. Your Intent to Participate shall include a typewritten description of the project proposal and shall be no more than 500 words. The complete application -- with both your Intent to Participate form filled out completely and your project description -- is due by midnight (Pacific time), Friday, December 11, 2026. The "Intent to Participate form" can be found at the end of this document. Please submit to schecks@wou.edu
2. At the conclusion of the project, a formal analysis of the project by each individual or team must be submitted to the Maurice Challenge Committee by midnight (Pacific time) on April 19, 2026. The analysis should be submitted electronically to schecks@wou.edu

Formal Analysis: Summary of your undertaking is due -- April 16, 2027

The formal analysis shall be descriptive in nature of the project addressed by the individual or team. This analysis, in the competitor's chosen form and most appropriate to the nature of the project, shall be a summary of what was learned and demonstrates "one's art of living."

A minimum of a written narrative must be provided that includes the following:

- Purpose and goals of the project as stated in the intent to participate
- If a student team, for each participant--why they were selected to participate, each individual role, contribution each made, and what each learned from the project
- If a complete solution has not been achieved, the degree in which the purposes and goals of the project were met
- The successes and disappointments and the factors that led to each
- Recommendations for future endeavors in the area of the project and in similar areas

In addition, participants are encouraged to consider providing supplemental information to accompany the written narrative such as graphics, PowerPoint slide decks, representations of studio and performing arts, posters, audio, video or other presentation forms.

In submitting your analysis electronically (email), video/audio must be provided in a digital format (a link to the file is acceptable) that is easily accessible to the review committee. Past participants have used video sites such as YouTube, Google Docs and Vimeo from which to present video/audio.

Evaluation

When evaluating the final formal analysis and selecting the finalists and winning participants(s), the committee will use the following criteria:

- Originality of the project
- Innovativeness of the design and execution of the project
- Depth of the learning experience the project gave to the participants
- Potential impact of the project on the WOU community and/or on external communities

- Demonstration of “one’s art of living”
- Quality, clarity, and appropriateness of the formal analysis

The recipient of this award will be determined not on the success of the extracurricular project, but on the project’s ingenuity and the student’s demonstration of the deepest learning.

Timeline

Milestone Due Dates:

- > Intent to Participate is due via email, December 11, 2026 by midnight (Pacific Time)
- > Confirmation of eligibility to participate will be issued via email by December 18, 2026
- > Final Analysis due via email submission, April 16, 2027 by midnight (Pacific time)
- > Committee Review of Analysis early May 2027
- > Finalists interviews with the Committee (if needed), mid-May 2027
- > Winner to give presentation about the project at the 2027 Academic Excellence Showcase Maurice Creativity Prize session, late-May 2027

For questions, contact:

Dr. Stephen Scheck, Committee Chair
(503) 838-8277 | or e-mail: schecks@wou.edu

Please print off this page, complete appropriate section(s), scan and email to Dr. Scheck by midnight (PST), December 11, 2026.

Intent to Participate Form

By completion and submission of this application, I (we) agree to the guidelines as described in the "Call for Proposals." By signing below, I (we) give permission to the Maurice Challenge Committee at Western Oregon University to use photographs, audio and video recordings of me(us), without compensation, for promotional activities.

Student 1

First Name MI Last Name

V# _____ Email _____

Cell Phone _____ Major/College _____ Credits earned _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Student 2

First Name MI Last Name

V# _____ Email _____

Cell Phone _____ Major/College _____ Credits earned _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Student 3

First Name MI Last Name

V# _____ Email _____

Cell Phone _____ Major/College _____ Credits earned _____

Signature _____ Date _____

How did you hear about this competition?

Email this completed form along with your project description to: schecks@wou.edu

Complete the form by hand, sign, photograph/scan and include with your project description. Please restrict image of this form to one of these digital formats: pdf, gif, jpeg, tiff, MSWord.

Dr. Stephen Scheck, Chair
Maurice Creativity Prize Committee