Mentored Undergraduate Summer Experience 2025
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Intent to apply ([via Qualtrics form](#)): January 31, 2025
Proposal Deadline: February 7, 2025
Anticipated Announcement of Funding: Week of March 18, 2025
Program Dates: June 2 - July 25, 2025

PROGRAM MISSION

The mission of the Mentored Undergraduate Summer Experience (MUSE) is to foster a vibrant campus culture of faculty student collaboration on scholarly and creative projects. Faculty members advance their scholarship and creative activities as mentors to a select number of students who train as junior collaborators. Students benefit from a powerful learning experience, while gaining necessary preparation for graduate education and professional endeavors as apprentice practitioners. Together they enhance the scholarly community at The College of New Jersey.

The MUSE program encourages proposals from full-time, tenure-track faculty members from **all academic programs and Schools.** The program recognizes that research methods and practices differ across the disciplines. Any proposal that meaningfully includes undergraduate students in some aspect of the faculty member's scholarly/creative program is welcome.

Faculty members and students collaborating on externally funded projects are also invited and encouraged to participate in the MUSE program. No application is required; details on how to be included are at the end of this RFP.

PROGRAM GOALS

The Mentored Undergraduate Summer Experience involves student-faculty collaborative partnerships from a broad range of academic disciplines in an intensive 8-week, residential summer program. Ideally, a diverse population of faculty and students from **all seven academic Schools** will participate. The program aims to:

- Provide a cohesive set of coordinated activities and experiences designed to foster the intellectual independence, professional growth, and personal growth of the student participants.
- Support faculty scholarly and creative activity.
- Facilitate an inclusive cross-disciplinary MUSE community (e.g., discussions, workshops, research forums, professional development programming, community building events).
- Attract external funding (grants, gifts, sponsorships) to augment the ongoing funding provided by the Office of Academic Affairs, in order to grow the program.
- Foster outcomes from faculty-student projects (e.g., performances, exhibitions, conference presentations, manuscripts, grant proposals).
- Foster early engagement of students in original projects.
- Help students develop skills to increase their ability to think critically and/or increase their sense of curiosity.
- Help students develop skills that will benefit their academic work and future careers.
- Support student entry into competitive graduate programs and employment.

TYPES OF PROJECTS

Successful MUSE projects in past years have engaged students in the scholarly/creative program of faculty members from a wide variety of disciplines across The College of New Jersey. The manner in which these collaborations have taken place has reflected the diversity of scholarly/creative practices in the disciplines. For examples, refer to the MUSE section of the faculty-student collaboration web site, which includes summaries of past projects (http://fscollab.pages.tcnj.edu/muse). Applications can propose any project that will support the faculty member's scholarly/creative program while also fostering student learning and intellectual independence.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Timeline: The 2025 MUSE program will begin on June 2 and run through July 25, 2025. Faculty and students should be available to train collaboratively during the majority of this 8-week time period and generally should not plan extended absences from campus during the program. However, some projects may require extensive off-campus training; this should be explained in the proposal and, when possible, an effort should be made by the faculty member and students to be on campus regularly for community activities.

Faculty: Proposals are limited to one current TCNJ student per proposal, and a second student may be requested from the Transfer MUSE Program. If any remaining budget is available, a second TCNJ student may be allocated according based on proposal panel review score. Faculty mentors will receive a stipend of $1,250 to train their student collaborator(s) and may also apply for up to $500 in project-related expenses. Mentors should plan to attend and participate in MUSE community activities as their schedules allow, and attend mentor meetings. Faculty mentors may teach summer classes; however, their schedule should provide ample time to advance the proposed project, deeply engage their student mentee(s), and participate in MUSE community activities. By February 1, 2026 funded faculty members are required to submit a brief report of their accomplishments during the MUSE program to the Co-Directors (submission via google form). Faculty are also required to provide a pdf of their final MUSE poster or oral presentation for archiving at the R. Barbara Gitenstein Library's Institutional Repository. (*Note*: These materials will be made accessible online through the repository only if MUSE students sign a FERPA [Family Education Rights and Privacy Act] waiver form and consent to their release. By default, poster or oral presentations will be archived solely within the TCNJ network; mentors may elect to make these materials publicly available, at the mentor's request). Information about uploading the poster/oral presentation will be sent to mentors at the end of the 2025 MUSE program.

Students: Students will train full-time (35 hours per week) with their faculty mentors for the 8-week period from June 2 - July 25, 2025. Students should work with their faculty mentor to determine the appropriate work schedule. Students will receive a research stipend of $4,200 plus eight weeks of on-campus housing if requested ($1493.04 per student for the eight weeks). MUSE students will be housed together and will have the opportunity to participate in community-building social activities and trips in the evenings and on weekends, coordinated by a student committee. Meals are not included (students may purchase meals in the Student Center and use kitchen facilities available in the residence hall and approved appliances in their rooms). The coordinated activities associated with housing are an important aspect of the MUSE community and program, so students are strongly encouraged to live on campus. However, some students may have reasons to opt out of the on-campus housing, in which case the student receives only the $4,200 stipend. Because housing is a significant expense for the MUSE program, students who request the on-campus housing must fully intend to live on campus all week for the duration of the program. Students participating in MUSE will be required to 1) train full-time on their MUSE project during the 8-week period as agreed with their faculty mentor prior to the end of the spring semester, 2) participate in MUSE community activities when possible, 3) prepare a final abstract and deliver a presentation at TCNJ's annual MUSE Poster Session in the Fall of 2025, 4) deliver other department-based, school-based, and off-campus conference presentations as determined in consultation with their mentors, and 5) complete evaluations of their summer experience.

Community Activities: Students and mentors who receive funding are encouraged to participate in cross-disciplinary MUSE community activities as their project schedules allow. The Co-Directors of Faculty-Student Scholarly and Creative

Collaborative Activity will be responsible for organizing these activities, with input from mentors and students. These activities will consist of:

- **Community Lunches and Professional Development Sessions:** The community will meet for presentations and discussions over lunch (provided) on general topics such as networking, resume preparation, publicity, awards, and presentations to a lay audience. Participation at the opening and closing lunches are strongly encouraged (Monday, June 2, 2025, and Monday, July 21, 2025).

- **Informal Meetings:** Funding will be provided to purchase group breakfast or lunch so that related fields can meet on a weekly basis to discuss their needs and issues. The discussions, developed by the participants, can include topics such as reading the primary literature, writing, ethics, graduate schools, poster preparation, and careers.

- **Community Building and Networking Activities:** Opportunities to network with no particular learning agenda, such as pizza dinners, ice cream socials, sports, and weekend/evening activities. Some activities will be for the entire MUSE community, whereas others will be just for students or just for faculty.

- **End-of-program celebration:** Students will present their scholarly achievements at a campus-wide poster session at some point during the first three weeks of Fall Semester (tentatively, Tuesday September 9, 2025 from 12:30 to 1:50 pm in The Recreation Center).

- **Post-program event:** An opportunity during the following academic year to reunite and publicize MUSE projects in the greater TCNJ community.

TRANSFER MUSE PROGRAM

This year, we have expanded our Transfer MUSE Program to include both Mercer Community College and Brookdale Community College.

Faculty who would like to mentor a 2nd MUSE student may elect to participate in the Transfer MUSE Program by indicating so on the MUSE cover page in Faculty Process. In addition, faculty should also include a justification for the additional student within the written narrative of their MUSE proposal.

After the MUSE Panel Review has been completed, MUSE projects selected for funding that have also elected for a transfer student will be matched with interested students. Faculty will be notified that they have been matched with a transfer student. Transfer students will have already completed an application that has questions similar to those on the MUSE student application, which will be provided to the faculty along with their notification. Once notified about the transfer student, faculty will have one week decide whether to accept/decline the transfers student. This time can be used to review the transfer student application and if desired, set up an interview with the potential student prior to rendering a formal acceptance/decline of the transfer student.

Participation in the Transfer MUSE program is completely voluntary and has no impact on the scoring by the MUSE Panel Merit Review Process. Faculty are under no obligation to accept the transfer student if they decide it would not be a good fit after interviewing the transfer student. MUSE funding is not conditional on accepting the transfer student.

If you are interested in participating in this program, please indicate this on the MUSE Coverpage in FacultyProcess. If you would like more information about this program, please contact the MUSE Co-Directors (fscollab@tcnj.edu).

APPLICATION PROCESS

Each Faculty applicant seeking MUSE funding must indicate via this linked form that they intend to apply for the MUSE 2025 program. Applicants must do so no later than January 31, 2025 so that Academic Affairs can create a MUSE application case for the applicant in Faculty Process. Late requests for creation of a MUSE application will not be accepted.

- When your application case is created, the Faculty Process system will email you a notice (allow 3 business days from the day you complete the above form) that you have a "case available," which means that you can access and upload your materials to Faculty Process before the February 7, 2025 deadline (by 11:59 pm).

- [Help for using Faculty Process, including video tutorials, is posted on the Academic Affairs website linked here](#).

- You are required to upload all materials (Project and Learning Plan, Faculty Vita, Budget, Student Application(s) and if applicable, Past MUSE award reports and budget/budget justification – all in pdf format), and complete the Cover Page form (details listed on page 5) in Faculty Process **no later than 11:59 pm on February 7, 2025.**

- **Application materials that have not been submitted via Faculty Process by the February 7, 2025 deadline will not be reviewed.**

Prior to the submission, the faculty will select the participating student, and append the selected student application materials to the faculty proposal. Therefore, the process has two steps: 1) selection of student by the faculty, and 2) submission of the complete proposal.

A variety of funded proposals are available for viewing at http://fscollab.pages.tcnj.edu/muse. Announcements regarding MUSE information sessions for faculty and students will be forthcoming.

In addition, the MUSE Co-Directors, Joanna Herres ([herresj@tcnj.edu)](mailto:herresj@tcnj.edu) and Anthony Lau (Anthony.Lau@tcnj.edu), will be available for faculty proposal consultation by appointment.

Step 1. Selection of students by faculty

Each Department with faculty members who are interested in participating in MUSE should determine a method for recruiting and selecting students. It should be fair, equitable, and mindful of student diversity (e.g., in terms of number of years at TCNJ, gender, race/ethnicity, and/or underrepresented in the field or discipline) while also providing excellent matches between faculty and student interests. Faculty seeking students for MUSE are encouraged to participate in the MUSE Exploration and Networking Event to share your project ideas and meet potential students (details about this event will be shared via email). In either case, the students must complete the *Student Application*. The faculty mentors can use this application either to confirm the pre-selected students' readiness for the summer project or as the basis for selection. Selection criteria must include qualifications and interests of the student(s) and readiness for a full-immersion experience. Mentor(s) and student(s) should discuss their expectations and how they will interact during the summer. MUSE is appropriate as a first collaborative experience for students, so participation by rising sophomores is encouraged. Grade information should be used only to confirm that a student has a 2.0 or higher GPA, not as a primary criterion for selection. [**Note:** students should be committed to participation if they are selected. However, in the event that a student's plans change and a different student must be chosen by the faculty mentor as a replacement, the new student's application must be forwarded to the MUSE Co-Directors (fscollab@tcnj.edu) immediately].

Student Application

- Separate 1 Page Cover Sheet with Student information: Name, email address, PAWS ID, major, year in school, number of completed course credits, expected graduation date, and overall GPA and in-major GPA (minimum 2.0 required for both), and whether or not on-campus housing is requested.
- Student statement: On a separate page from the cover sheet, prepare a personal statement (One single-spaced page maximum, 1-inch margins, Times New Roman 12-pt. font). Each student should prepare and submit a brief description that addresses: 1) how participation in MUSE will contribute to the student's academic and career goals; 2) the student's qualifications to train on the project as a junior collaborator; 3) the student's related experience in the classroom, lab, or studio, and/or in past research, internships, practicums, competitions, or performances, 4) what (if any) relevant discussions the student has had with the faculty mentor about the project and mentoring plan; and 5) an explanation of the student's interest in the specific project (for applications in which the student is pre-selected by a particular faculty applicant).

Step 2. Faculty Proposal and Submission. Be sure to fill in the [application request form for the MUSE 2025 program](#) by January 31, 2025. You will receive notification via email when a Faculty Process "case" has been created for you in Faculty Process. You must submit your proposal to Faculty Process by February 7, 2025. The proposal must follow this format: *Incomplete submissions will not be reviewed.*

A. **Project and Learning Plan**: Up to two single-spaced pages maximum per proposal (proposals that include more than one specific project are still limited to two pages total), 1-inch margins, Times New Roman 12-pt. font (Figure Captions must be at least 10-pt font), with three titled sections:

1. **Intellectual Merit and Role of Student/Mentor** – Describe the ideas, goals, and methods of the scholarly/creative project(s) you and your student(s) will be conducting, its importance to your discipline, and an indication of the eventual scholarly/creative outcomes of the project. Explain the feasibility of doing this training within the eight-week program (a timeline may be helpful), new skills and potential learning outcomes for the student, and a mentoring plan. If the project is related to an externally funded project, explain how additional MUSE funding is necessary and will enhance the project. If the project is separate but related to that of another faculty member who is applying to MUSE, highlight the connection between the related projects. The proposal will be read by colleagues who are not specialists in your discipline, so be certain to use non-technical language that is accessible to any educated lay person; this will benefit your review.

2. **Broader Impacts** – To the best of their ability, faculty should *clearly explain* how participation in the summer program will be a pivotal experience for the faculty mentor and/or student(s), and/or will diversify faculty-student collaboration at TCNJ by broadening participation. Examples of impacts to be considered for discussion include whether:
   - the faculty applicant is newly engaging or re-engaging in mentorship of students at TCNJ OR is re-engaging in scholarship/creative activity after a period of relative inactivity
   - the faculty member is pre-tenure
   - the student is from a group underrepresented in the discipline
   - the student is from a group underrepresented at the College
   - the student is from a group underrepresented in MUSE
   - the student is a first-generation college student
   - the faculty-student collaboration in this discipline is underrepresented in past MUSE programs

3. **If applicable, Special Instructions for Collaborative, Inter- or Multi-disciplinary Projects:** Multiple faculty members who are proposing to engage collaboratively on a single interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary project should submit one joint proposal that follows the format described above, with these alterations:
   - The Cover Page must include the information for each collaborating faculty member,
   - The Project and Learning Plan may be up to three pages, and must include an additional section 3 (within the 3-page limit) describing the collaborative nature of the project, including the specific, necessary roles of each faculty member and their students, and how the faculty members will jointly mentor the student. As with single-faculty projects, joint projects/collaborative proposals are limited one student per proposal with the opportunity for a transfer MUSE student as the 2nd student.

Additional Required Items:

B. **Faculty Vita:** Provide a professional CV of scholarly and creative work, and *specifically highlight* information about experience and outcomes in mentoring students in scholarly/creative activity.

C. **Budget:** Provide a brief itemized budget, as follows:
   - Student stipend: $4200.
   - Student housing, if requested: $1,493.04.
   - Faculty stipends: $1,250 (If more than one faculty member is mentoring a single student/project, then the stipend will be split amongst the faculty members)
   - Project-related expenses (supplies, equipment, books, travel etc.): An itemized list with brief justification must be provided. The amount is not to exceed $500 total. Poster printing costs are NOT included in this budget; the MUSE program will cover the cost of poster printing.

D. **Past MUSE award reports:** (one single-spaced page maximum per project, 1-inch margins, Times New Roman 12 pt. font). Include your last two MUSE reports. Provide a brief report of the accomplishments related to the award(s),

in non-technical language. These may include details about presentations, performances, reports, manuscripts submitted/accepted for publication that are co-authored with MUSE students, as well as information on student application/acceptance to other internships, graduate school, continued research involvement (e.g., senior thesis), competitions, fellowships and awards.

E. **Student Application** (one per project)

F. **Cover page form in Faculty Process**: you are required to complete an electronic form which includes the following information: EMPL ID #, faculty email, professional title, number of years at TCNJ, tenure status, department, school, title(s) of project(s), consideration for second current TCNJ student collaborator if funding allows, whether the student or project is underrepresented, PAWS ID #(s), name and email address of student, requested dollar amount, willingness to participate in the Transfer Student MUSE program, whether approval by IACUC (certain animal studies) or IRB (human subjects) is needed [NOTE: notice of IACUC or IRB approval should be forwarded to the MUSE Co-Directors (fscollab@tcnj.edu), by May 18, 2025], date of most recent MUSE award funded by Academic Affairs, and affirmation that your proposal followed the required formatting.

PROPOSAL REVIEW

Review Process:
Submitted proposals from faculty members will be reviewed and evaluated by the interdisciplinary MUSE Proposal Review Committee, which is an all-faculty committee consisting of the faculty members of the Mentored Research and Internships Council (MRIC) and five additional MUSE faculty alumni chosen by the Faculty Senate Executive Board from a list provided by the Co-Directors of Faculty-Student Research and Creative Activity. It is chaired by the Co-Directors of Faculty-Student Scholarly and Creative Collaborative Activity and MUSE, Joanna Herres and Anthony Lau, and strives to include faculty representation from each School. The current MRIC faculty members include Joanna Herres (School of Humanities and Social Sciences), Anthony Lau (School of Engineering), Jinsil Kim (School of Business), Michael Bloodgood (School of Science), AJ Richards (School of Science), Cadence Willse (School of Humanities and Social Sciences).

Applications from MUSE Proposal Review Committee members will be reviewed by an ad-hoc committee to be assembled by the Provost, composed of past Faculty-Student Collaboration Committee members and previous MUSE awardees.

The Co-Directors will present the committee's evaluations to the Provost, who will award funding based on the MUSE Proposal Review Committee's evaluations and the available budget.

Review Criteria:
Each proposal will be reviewed based on intellectual merit and feasibility of the project, the degree of student engagement, broader impacts, and the qualifications of the faculty applicant and past accomplishments in mentoring students. The evaluation rubric that will be used by the committee can be found on the last page of this document; *all applicants are advised to consider the rubric as they prepare their proposals*. Prior to the review process, the MRIC and the ad-hoc committee will conduct a norming process to help standardize the members' approaches to scoring.

EXTERNALLY FUNDED PROJECTS

Faculty and students who will be training collaboratively on externally funded projects in the summer of 2025 are encouraged to participate fully in the MUSE community. While no proposal is necessary, faculty and students must complete the Externally Funded Project Enrollment form, as well as the Student Agreement Form, and provide them to the Co-Directors of Faculty-Student Scholarly and Creative Collaborative Activity by March 29, 2025 as or as soon as possible thereafter.

Evaluation Rubric for MUSE 2025 Applications

Proposer's Name_____

Proposal Compliance Questions

Are qualified students identified, with applications attached?	**Yes**	**No**
Proposal has correct format?	**Yes**	**No**

Date of most recent MUSE award: _____
1st Year faculty member? **Yes   No**

Score definitions: 0 absent / 1 insufficient / 2 adequate / 3 good / 4 very good / 5 excellent
Score the following categories based on how they are presented in the proposal, in both content and clarity.

Intellectual merit	Average score =	(max 5 pts.)				
Coherence, quality, and importance of the project idea	0	1	2	3	4	5
Specificity of goals during the MUSE period	0	1	2	3	4	5
Potential for high quality outcomes (publications, grants, performances, presentations, new scholarly/creative directions, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4	5

Role of student(s) and role/qualifications of mentor	Average score =	(max 5 pts.)				
Level of discipline-appropriate student engagement in the project and potential for new skills and learning outcomes	0	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of Planned Mentorship (discipline-appropriate faculty-student interaction, mentoring plan and philosophy, training and career development)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Evidence of past student outcomes from faculty-student collaboration (as outlined in past MUSE Reports and CV)	0	1	2	3	4	5

Broader impacts: Score 0.25 pt. if yes.

Consider the broader impacts of the proposed project for the faculty and student	Y	N

Broader impacts: Score 0.25 pt. if yes.

Determined by the committee, from cover page information

Faculty member is pre-tenured	Y	N

Reviewer Total:

Notes to Applicant and Reviewer Regarding Proposal Compliance:
Proposals that are non-compliant with the requirements outlined in the MUSE RFP will be rejected without review and not be considered for funding. Please pay attention to the required elements of the proposal as well as correct format (i.e., font size, page limits, etc.).