



April 2, 2025

**TO:** Department Chairs, Program Directors, and Directors of Undergraduate Studies  
Department and Program Managers

**FROM:** Rebekah Peeples, Associate Dean for Curriculum and Assessment

**RE:** Undergraduate Prize Policies

As we look ahead to the annual prize submission process for AY 2024-2025, I write to remind you about the policies governing undergraduate prizes administered in cooperation with the Office of the Dean of the College.

These policies were updated in 2022 and apply to prizes for which there is discretion to set the amount and number of prizes.

Per University policy, prizes administered centrally through the Office of the Dean of the College are listed in the annual Commencement program and recorded on the student's official transcript. Those administered locally by your department or program may be awarded to students on Class Day, but will not be listed in the Commencement program and will not be listed on a student's official transcript.

### **I. Amount of Cash Awards**

For **University-wide prizes** recognizing distinction across the University (e.g., those prizes given out at the Class Day ceremony or for which eligibility is not limited to students majoring in a particular department), the College recommends that the value of the prize range from between \$4000 to \$8000. The prize amount should be linked to the competitiveness of the award, such that prizes with narrow eligibility should be at the lower end of the range and those open to a large population (e.g., all seniors) should be at the higher end of the range.

For **disciplinary prizes** that recognize merit within a department or discipline (for instance, distinction in a senior thesis or junior paper), the College recommends that departments and programs set the value of the prize at \$2500 per award, although a range between \$2000 and \$3000 is acceptable. Departments and programs are free to use general funds to "top up" prize amounts in cases where there is insufficient income to make awards in the suggested ranges.

For **prizes designed to support research while honoring academic distinction**, the College recommends a value between \$5000 and \$8000, and that the prize be awarded when possible to rising juniors and seniors so that funds can be used to support research for independent work.



Note that the University's guideline for summer stipends is \$730 per week, which represents a student's likely summer living expenses.

## **II. Number of Awards**

In keeping with donors' intention to recognize superior achievement, we recommend that selection committees choose a single winner for each prize. If more than one winner is selected, the full amount should be awarded to each of the two co-winners.

## **III. Future Planning**

Whenever possible, prize balances available to departments and programs have been adjusted to facilitate awards in these ranges for the current prize cycle. Prize funds may also carry over small deficits to the following fiscal year, with the expectation that future earnings will grow to cover the recommended amounts.

As always, departments and programs that seek to establish new prizes should first discuss their goals with the Office of Advancement.

More information about the annual prize process will follow later this month with specific instructions about recognizing students in the current academic year.

In the meantime, please feel free to contact me with your policy questions and Marianne King for assistance with procedural questions.

cc: Robert Berness, University Counsel, Office of the General Counsel  
Michael Gordin, Dean of the College  
Marianne King, Finance and Special Projects Coordinator, Office of the Dean of the College  
Catherine Kossou, Senior Associate Dean for Finance and Administration, Office of the Dean of the College  
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