

Marine Science Program Distinction

Revised August 2015

GENERAL STATEMENT

- While all students can do research projects with members of the MARS faculty, or other Stockton faculty members, research projects for Program Distinction candidates have special requirements. These projects cannot be work completed in conjunction with other course requirements or credit unless significant additions are made to methodology/results.
- Program Distinction is only available to students with a GPA of 3.5 or greater; therefore, these requirements (below) only pertain to MARS students with a GPA approaching 3.5 after reaching junior status.
- MARS students with a GPA of 3.5 are not required to apply for Program Distinction. It is completely voluntary. Research is very time consuming, and students can reasonably decide that their time is better spent studying or doing internships.

DISTINCTION PROCEDURE AND TIMELINE

- *Approximately 18 months prior to graduation (e.g., by the beginning of Spring semester in Junior year),* project advisor should be selected, project outlined and writing of proposal started; if preliminary data collection or experimentation is required, it should be started now.
- *Approximately 14 months prior to graduation and no later than 9 months from graduation (e.g., by second precepting day of Spring semester in Junior year),* proposal must be submitted to MARS faculty by project advisor.
- *One year prior to graduation (e.g. end of Spring semester in Junior year),* MARS faculty returns proposal to project advisor with decision: 1) project cannot go forward, 2) project can go forward. Comments from the MARS faculty will be sent to the student via the project advisor.
- *Approximately 3 months prior to graduation (e.g. Spring semester of Senior/graduating year),* student will present work at a conference or seminar (e.g, Stockton Day of Scholarship, NAMS Undergraduate Research Symposium, MARS Seminar Series). The project advisor will work with the student to find the most appropriate venue based on project topic and completeness for the research to be presented.
- *Approximately 2 months prior to graduation (e.g., by first precepting day of Spring semester of Senior/graduating year),* completed project report is submitted to MARS faculty by the project advisor.
- *Within one month of graduation,* MARS faculty will vote on awarding distinctions, and make any needed suggestions should the student and adviser wish to continue with, or publish, the research.

FORMAT OF PROPOSAL:

- Font size of 11 or greater
- Margins no smaller than 1 inch
- 1.5 paragraph spacing at minimum
- Cover page with title of proposal, student name, expected graduation date and project advisor name.
- Description of project (4 pages maximum). Include a brief introduction of your project which places it into a broad context and provides references to the current scholarly trends, when appropriate.
 - Statement of the aims and objectives of the project. This statement should identify a concise goal(s) of the project.
 - Background. This section is used to demonstrate how familiar the student is with previous research in the field, and how the proposed research fits within the context of previous research.
 - Statement of the Procedures/Methodology. This section should include a plan of the proposed activities, how they will be accomplished and a rationale for using this procedure. Statistical procedures should be included.
 - Expected Results. Based on preliminary observations which guide further work, what are the expected outcomes?
- Literature Cited (2 pages maximum). The format for the literature cited section will be chosen by the adviser and may be that used by any peer-reviewed journal in that particular field. The same format should be used for every reference.

FORMAT OF FINAL PAPER:

- Font size of 11 or greater
- Margins no smaller than 1 inch
- 1.5 paragraph spacing at minimum
- 10-15 pages
- General sections include:
 - Abstract – 250 words maximum
 - Introduction – Should utilize information included in your project proposal
 - Methodology - Should utilize information included in your project proposal, be sure to update your methodology to reflect the actual processes used
 - Results
 - Discussion
 - Literature Cited
- Work with your project advisor to determine the specific format you will be following for your paper. Some helpful websites:
 - <http://abacus.bates.edu/~ganderso/biology/resources/writing/HTWtoc.html>
 - <http://www.nature.com/scitable/ebooks/english-communication-for-scientists-14053993/writing-scientific-papers-14239285>