

**Provost's Initiative for Undergraduate Research Collaboration Award  
Application for Summer 2018**

**Name of Faculty Applicant:** [REDACTED]

**Rank and Discipline:** [REDACTED]

*Have you conducted collaborative research with students in the past? If so, please list your past experiences.*

Yes, I have conducted collaborative research with students three times in the past:  
with [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Name of Student Applicant:** [REDACTED]

*Have you worked with this student applicant before on research? If so, please describe your past experiences. If you have not worked with this student, please explain why this student is appropriate for this project and whether this student has prior experience collaborating on faculty research with someone else.*

[REDACTED] and I are currently at work on a project that we would like to continue over the summer.

**Title of Proposal:** Childlessness in Contemporary German-Language Literature by Women  
**Are other funds available for this project with this student?** No.

*If so, what are they?* N/A

**Does your academic unit provide funding, beyond supply budget, in the summer for either faculty members or students engaged in collaborative research?** No.

**Project Details**

I. Please provide a brief summary of the proposed research project. Please include the goals for the project and the goals for the student.

My research project is to write an article (intended for the feminist cultural studies journal *Signs*) on childlessness in contemporary German culture. The article will begin with social contextualization, which will include an overview of Germany's birth rate (as compared with other European and North American countries); government efforts to support white, educated German women to have children; and a brief analysis of why supporting the propagation of white German children is problematic in the context of Germany's National Socialist history. Despite the great amount of media attention devoted to convincing German women to have children, childless women are mysteriously absent from the media. The second part of my article will be a close reading of two of the very few literary texts published in the last

ten years that feature childless women as protagonists. My argument is that Germany needs to shift its attention away from the nuclear family and begin to think about alternative family networks, which are (perhaps unintentionally) proposed in one of the books I analyze in this paper.

In addition to the research and writing skills that [REDACTED] will be practicing (see section IV for more detail), I also hope that [REDACTED] gains from this project a familiarity with the research process in German Studies (or, more broadly, literary or cultural studies). Based on [REDACTED] work for my 400-level course last semester, I feel that [REDACTED] has a good instinct for how an argument needs to be set up, organized, and supported. I would like to help [REDACTED] see how the approach [REDACTED] important differences. One major difference in this case will be that the article is intended for a feminist studies journal—not a German studies journal. This means that we need to keep in mind the perspective of the reader: someone who is knowledgeable about women's issues and feminist theory, but who probably does not have a background in German literature and culture.

II. Describe why this is an impactful project for the student at this time in their education and why a 6-week summer experience would be valuable (versus an independent research experience (493) during the academic year).

This spring semester, [REDACTED] and I are hard at work on this project, and we are keenly aware of the time limitations of the semester. For a one-credit research experience (which is an overload for both of us), I can only ask [REDACTED] to work 2-3 hours per week on this project (including time spent in meetings with me), and we are both frustrated that our research is moving forward so slowly. Our first task was to gather statistical information on childlessness in Germany, and, although [REDACTED] is working diligently and finding terrific resources, we will not be done with this step until after spring break. This statistical analysis will likely form only about one page of our 30-page article. In other words, there is lots to do! As we continue to work together, [REDACTED] investment in the project increases, and [REDACTED] approached me for the opportunity to continue work on this project together over the summer. If we are given the grant to work intensively on this article over the summer, I believe we could complete a draft by the end of the 6-week research period, especially taking into account the work we will be able to complete by the end of this semester.

III. Please explain why you believe this student is the right student to conduct intensive research? To what extent can she/he work independently?

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] has experience collaborating on faculty research in Math. This past [REDACTED] and before [REDACTED] makes that choice, s/he is curious about research in the humanities. This semester has been a great opportunity for [REDACTED] to get [REDACTED] feet wet in humanities research, [REDACTED] enthusiasm motivates me to continue to involve [REDACTED] in this project.

██████████ is a German major who took an intensive summer language class in Germany this past summer (on a grant with the DAAD). In the fall ██████ took my 400-level class on German Women's Writing. In this class, we read literary texts from the 1800s to the present, usually about 20 pages at a time, and wrote papers of about 4-5 pages (in addition to weekly 1-page writing assignments). Certainly ██████ German is up to the task of reading in German and gathering data. Also, during the class we read the first two chapters of one of the books I will discuss in my article. Because ██████ is familiar with the text and with its context, I believe ██████ can write some contextualizing paragraphs about the novel. ██████ writing skills are strong enough that I expect I will incorporate some of ██████ writing into the final article.

So far this semester ██████ has worked largely independently, gathering relevant sources in both English and German, and tracking down demography data from the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, census records, and scholarly articles in sociology. ██████ completed all of this without guidance or tips, and ██████ simply needed me to read the more linguistically complex materials (in German) and weigh in on the relevance of the data. The quality of the sources was excellent, and I find that ██████ regularly asks terrific questions about our project as we go. I have no doubt that ██████ will continue to work effectively and independently throughout this process.

IV. What are the specific roles and duties of the student with regard to this project? Stating the student will read/write/conduct research is insufficient. Please be specific with regard to the particular skills and tasks the student will be conducting.

██████████ is currently completing the first task for our article, which is to track down updated statistics on childlessness in Germany, as well as the most recent government measures in place that incentivize having children. ██████ has made terrific progress in this area already. Our goal for the end of the semester is to synthesize this information in a narrative form that we can use in the article.

The bulk of the research that will be conducted this summer is to read and analyze the two literary texts for the article, as well as to write contextualizing information for both works and their authors. Therefore, ██████ first task this summer would be to research and gather background information on the first of the novels. ██████ read excerpt from this novel during my upper-division German seminar in the fall, GRM 405 German Women's Writing. She has already read two scholarly articles (in English) on this novel, and I will ask ██████ to find and read more. We will discuss this information at length and work together to decide what information must be included in the article and what can be referenced or left out. Again, the goal is for ██████ to write several paragraphs that contextualize the novel in contemporary German literature, which will preface my analysis of the novel.

The next step will be very similar: to locate sources (scholarly articles in English and book reviews in German) about the second book we will analyzing in the article. If time permits, I would love for ██████ to read both of the primary texts and work with me on the analysis. This would only be possible during an intensive summer research experience, because of the length of time ██████ will need to read the two primary texts in German. Perhaps we will focus ██████ time on

one of the texts, so that she can have the complete experience of researching, contextualizing, and analyzing a work of literature for publication.

In sum, [REDACTED] will be practicing the following: locating relevant information in trusted sources, learning about the relative value and trustworthiness of different sources, navigating various online media, reading in German, reading scholarly articles in English and gathering salient points from those articles, and summarizing [REDACTED] findings in written form.

V. Please outline a tentative work plan (more detail is better) for research that demonstrates the appropriate time commitment for both faculty and student researcher. (Note. It is expected that regular face-to-face meetings and collaborative work time will take place with students.)

#### Tentative Plan

Week	Plan
0	<i>By end of spring semester, I will have written the introductory pages of the article that contextualize low birth rates in Germany against the current demography debate and concerns that Germans are “dying out.” E [REDACTED] will have gathered the demography statistics and written them up in narrative form for inclusion in this section. We will also have gathered secondary materials on the primary texts and will have begun to read them and discuss them together.</i>
1	We will meet every morning to check in on our progress and our plan. [REDACTED] will focus [REDACTED] time this week between reading the entire first novel to be analyzed in our article and taking notes from it.
2	We will meet every morning to check in on our progress and our plan. This week we will focus intensively on reading secondary literature and connecting it to our own analysis of the first novel. We will necessarily begin writing our analysis of the novel together. We may divide up the writing, or we may write collaboratively.
3	We will meet every morning to check in on our progress and our plan. If we are moving along at a good pace, I will set [REDACTED] the task of reading the second literary work and taking notes on it, while I focus on cleaning up the draft we have written so far. It will likely be necessary at this point for me to fill in some gaps in the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] what is missing and what we need to include. I will have [REDACTED] locate or read additional secondary material needed for our revisions.
4	We will meet every morning to check in on our progress and our plan. This week will focus on locating and reading secondary sources on the second literary text. Together we will weave the analysis of other scholars into our own and will begin drafting the analysis of this text for our article.
5	We will meet every morning to check in on our progress and our plan. This is a week for us to be reading the article draft, completing it, revising it, and thinking carefully about our audience (i.e., feminist scholars who do not have a background in German studies).
6	We will meet every morning to check in on our progress and our plan. This week would ideally be a time for us to complete the article and work on preparing the manuscript for submission to the journal. [REDACTED] and I will speak extensively about the publication process and what to expect after the article manuscript is submitted.

VI. Please briefly describe your mentoring plan for the student. (Note: Students new to full-time research are rarely ready from the start of a project to work intensively on research for 35 hours per week. They often lack the planning and anticipation skills to acquire materials (reading/supplies) and/or the inquiry skills to make effective use of time on the project. Please describe the mentoring/development activities that will support your student's development and entre into the world of research. What will you do to help them be successful researchers/scholars? (Please see the following attachment that outlines the challenges of research and some mentoring examples <http://www.cur.org/assets/1/7/333Spring13Pital1-15.pdf>).

My mentoring plan balances regular contact with independence. In other words, I plan to check in with [REDACTED] daily and am available to discuss the project with [REDACTED] as much as needed. At the same time, I expect a high degree of independent functioning on [REDACTED] part, and I have high expectations of [REDACTED]: [REDACTED] will need to locate sources, read extensively, take notes, and write portions of the article on her own—or at least try, before [REDACTED] to me for assistance. This ability to function independently as a researcher is something I find critical to future success in scholarship and also something that I expect [REDACTED] to do very well, based on my observation of her research experiences so far.

Having the opportunity to work with [REDACTED] in this intensive way over the summer would also mean that I could mentor [REDACTED] the entire article writing process: from locating resources to gathering information to writing and rewriting the article drafts, we will have many meta-conversations about what humanities research is. We will discuss questions of audience/readership, voice, original analysis, incorporating other scholarly interpretations, and so on. In the course of my semester working with [REDACTED] so far, I see that [REDACTED] is developing some of these skills already, and I look forward to helping [REDACTED] hone them in continued and intensive collaboration over the summer.