**Travel Information and Procedures**

**2016 Undergraduate Research Symposia**

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Physical Sciences, Math, and Computer Science

Washington University in St. Louis, November 4-5, 2016

Biological Sciences & Psychology

University of Chicago, November 11-12, 2016

This information is being sent to faculty involved with the 2016 URS events in Chicago and St. Louis. Please communicate travel information as needed to students from your home institution going on the trip.

Normally, one person coordinates travel planning for an institution for each URS, and normally, groups travel together. This is not a requirement, but can simplify things greatly. For example, if you are traveling by air, traveling together means shared rides to/from the airports, easing our budget. Traveling together means fewer people need reimbursement checks (which means you get reimbursed faster) and it makes it faster for us to find out when folks are arriving and leaving.

When deciding how and on what schedule to travel, please give consideration to the MCMS budget. You do not need to choose the least expensive option if it does not meet your needs, but please use your judgment and help us spend wisely so we can offer the highest quality programming possible. Please be sure to follow your home institution’s travel policies.

Please do talk to Mike if anything here is overly restrictive for your needs or is unclear.

**1. Reimbursement of travel expenses**

Please take steps to minimize the number of reimbursement checks we need to write, to speed up the process for all. Typically, one faculty member per school takes charge of expenses, whether with personal funds or an institutional purchase card. We do not reimburse students except in special circumstances.

If it is more convenient for you to have students incurring individual travel expenses, one solution might be for your department to reimburse the students and then submit the total sum to us for reimbursement. We will need all detailed receipts in any case.

For either personal funds (credit card or cash) or College credit card, we can only reimburse expenses for which an itemized receipt is provided. We will need a list of all travelers’ names associated with each receipt. For meal receipts, they need to list each item on the bill, not just the total. Alcohol expenses will not be reimbursed. Reimbursement instructions and form will be posted on the MCMS web page.

**2. Lodging**

**We have already reserved hotel rooms for all participants at the URS (except those from the host institution), and we pay for these directly**. We do not pay for incidental expenses (room service, movies, etc) – you can pay for these with your own credit card if you like, but they will not be reimbursed. Hotel parking is reimbursed by MCMS.

Students will be placed 4/room and faculty will be placed 2/room. All rooms are single-gender and participants from the same school are placed together when possible. If anyone wishes to have their own room, they can request one (space may be limited). In this case, we will ask them to pay the difference (50% the actual room cost for faculty, 75% the actual room cost for students.) If you have special requirements, let us know ASAP. Final rooming lists are expected by the hotels very shortly after our registration deadline, and we may not be able to accommodate late requests**. We will need to know as soon as possible whether you plan to stay at the hotel Saturday night.**

For your information, the hotels are as follows, but you do not need to contact them:

La Quinta Inn and Suites Chicago Lakeshore (4900 South Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60615, phone: 773-324-3000, web: www.laquintachicagolakeshore.com)

Sheraton Clayton Plaza Hotel St. Louis (7730 Bonhomme Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63105, phone: 314-863-0400, web: www.sheratonclaytonhotel.com)

If you need to stay in a hotel other than the meeting hotel (*e.g.*, if breaking up a long drive home), please discuss arrangements with Mike in advance.

**3. Arrival/departure times**

Both URS start with dinner at the hotel at 6:30 pm. You will want to arrive in time to check in to the hotel and make it to dinner by 6:30 pm. Symposium registration is scheduled from 5:30 – 6:30 pm, but it’s OK to show up right at 6:30 pm.

We will end both symposia promptly at 5 pm on Saturday to allow most folks to travel home the same day. There will be boxed dinners to go, and time to pick them up before 5 pm. If you need to spend the night Saturday night because of flight schedules and/or a long drive, just let us know as soon as possible and we’ll reserve your hotel rooms for two nights.

**4. Travel to the URS by car/van (student/faculty drivers)**

Please be sure to follow all relevant policies of your home institution regarding travel by car. We pay the Hope College rate ($0.450/mile) for travel with a personal vehicle, or gas and rental expenses for a vehicle rented from your institution or a rental car company. We do pay necessary parking expenses and tolls, with receipts. We generally expect car-pooling for all those from the same institution. Mileage reimbursement is limited to the typical cost of an airline ticket (times the number of travelers in the vehicle).

**5. Travel to the URS by bus (professional drivers)**

Talk to Mike if you are interested in using a professional driver, since we need to know if MCMS will be responsible for the driver lodging reservation and expenses.

**6. Travel to the URS by bus/train/plane**

As mentioned earlier, we want to balance cost with efficiency in terms of both the flight schedules and the time spent in planning/purchasing the flights. In some cases it may be fine for the flights to be arranged by a faculty member using a college credit card and in other cases it may be much easier to book the flights through a travel agent. An individual may be able to search out decent flights at a good price for a few travelers, but it quickly becomes more challenging and time consuming as the number of travelers becomes larger. Travel agents are good with larger groups, but the trade off is a $25/ticket cost, which adds up when you consider the number of people flying to both Chicago and St. Louis. If you plan to travel by bus, train or plane, talk to Mike soon so that we are aware of the arrangements that people will be making. If a travel agent will be best for you, we will put you in contact with a local travel agent in Holland who will be working with MCMS for all our travel plans. Our office will work closely with both the travel agent and you so that we can arrive at the best possible travel plans for everyone.

Since a one or two night trip should only require a carry-on bag, we do not reimburse for airline baggage fees. If you are flying an airline such as Spirit that charges for carry-on bags, we will pay for one carry-on or one checked bag, if purchased at the same time as your ticket.

It is often helpful if one person handles the ticket purchases for a whole group. You will need to have the following information about all travelers to book travel:

* Full legal name as it appears on the ID they will present at the airport
* Gender
* Date of birth
* (if they have a frequent flier number, these can be applied at the time of booking)

**7. Ground transportation to/from airport/train station, etc.**

We do reimburse for ground transportation to/from airports, etc. Please share rides where possible, and keep it to one or two people submitting reimbursement requests. After we learn travel plans for each of the schools, we may be able to arrange for a group airport shuttle on Saturday at the end of the meeting.

**8. Meals**

We provide dinner Friday night, and breakfast, lunch, and dinner on Saturday. If your travel schedule warrants it, we will reimburse you for lunch Friday, breakfast Sunday, and/or lunch Sunday. We need itemized receipts in order to reimburse you for meals; sometimes you need to request these. Alcohol expenses will not be reimbursed. If a meal includes multiple people, please make a list of the people present.

**9. Personal hygiene, forgotten office supplies, water & coffee**

We do not reimburse travelers for these expenses.