



## **Student Research Awards**

### ***2024 Call for Proposals***

The American Fern Society supports student research on ferns and lycophytes through the Nathalie S. Nagalingum Graduate Student Research Award (\$1500) and the James D. Caponetti Undergraduate Student Research Award (\$500). Given annually, these awards are intended to support laboratory, field, or herbarium studies, as well as travel associated with these activities. Requests for funding to support conference attendance will not be considered.

#### **Nathalie S. Nagalingum Graduate Student Research Award**

This award was established to honor the memory of Dr. Nathalie S. Nagalingum, former Associate Curator & McAllister Chair of Botany at the California Academy of Sciences. Nathalie was lost tragically to ovarian cancer in 2022, at the prime of her life and career. She studied the evolution and diversification of plants, with a focus on cycads and ferns, and made exceptional contributions spanning fossil and living taxa. Dr. Nagalingum was not only an accomplished paleobotanist but also skilled in dealing with “big data” and comparative genomics. She was a gifted science communicator and cared deeply about increasing diversity in science. Nathalie was an active and beloved member of the American Fern Society and the larger botanical community for over 20 years.

#### **James D. Caponetti Undergraduate Student Research Award**

This award honors the many contributions of Dr. James D. Caponetti, former Professor at the University of Tennessee. Dr. Caponetti taught a wide range of undergraduate and graduate courses and was a mentor to numerous M.S. and Ph.D. students. He was especially committed to advising undergraduates, which he continued even in retirement, and was the recipient of university awards for this service. Jim made many contributions to our understanding of fern biology and was a dedicated member of the American Fern Society, serving as Treasurer for 42 years.

## Eligibility

Applicants must be enrolled as a graduate (Nagalingum Graduate Student Research Award) or undergraduate (Caponetti Undergraduate Student Research Award) student at an accredited institution.

## Timeline

The application deadline is 15 March 2024. Award recipients will be notified by 1 May 2024.

## Applications

Complete applications must include: (1) an application form; (2) a research proposal; and (3) a letter of support. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

Application form. The application form must be completed online ([LINK TO FORM](#)).

Research proposal. Your proposal should be emailed to the AFS Awards Coordinator, Dr. Keir Wefferling ([wefferlk@uwgb.edu](mailto:wefferlk@uwgb.edu)) as a single combined PDF. Please use the subject line "AFS Award Proposal" and name your file "ApplicantSurname\_AFS\_Proposal.PDF". Use Times New Roman, 12-point font with 1-inch margins throughout.

*Graduate* research proposals should consist of:

1. Project description (maximum 2 pages) including: (1) project title; (2) applicant's name; (3) introduction providing background and describing the aims and significance of the proposed research; (4) materials and methods; (5) educational or outreach component(s); and (6) expected results where the applicant should briefly outline some of their anticipated findings
2. Budget with justification (maximum 1 page), indicating other sources of funding and the specific use for the award funds
3. Literature cited (maximum 1 page)
4. Curriculum vitae

*Undergraduate* research proposals should consist of:

1. Project description (suggested 1 page) including: (1) project title; (2) applicant's name; (3) introduction providing background and describing the aims and significance of the proposed research; (4) materials and methods; (5) educational or outreach component(s); and (6) expected results where the applicant should briefly outline some of their anticipated findings
2. Budget with justification (maximum 1 page), indicating other sources of funding and the specific use for the award funds

### 3. Literature cited (maximum 1 page)

Letter of support. A letter from the applicant's advisor (major professor), indicating the academic status of the applicant and their qualifications to complete the proposed work (maximum 1 page), should be emailed separately to the AFS Awards Coordinator, Dr. Keir Wefferling ([wefferk@uwgb.edu](mailto:wefferk@uwgb.edu)). Please use the subject line "AFS Award Letter" and name the letter file "ApplicantSurname\_AFS\_Letter.PDF".

*Guidelines for letter writers.* Please describe the candidate's ability/capacity to perform the proposed research, discuss any special considerations regarding the student's record and history, and clarify any infrastructure and support needs (e.g., noting whether or not you or the student would otherwise be able to cover the proposed research).

### **Evaluation**

Applications will be reviewed by a committee appointed by the American Fern Society Council and evaluated within two areas.

Scientific merit (60%). Evaluation criteria will include: (1) creative, innovative, and effective study design; (2) the significance of the questions being addressed; (3) adequacy of methods for testing hypotheses (data collection/analysis); and (4) feasibility of timeline.

Impact and need (40%). Evaluation criteria will include: (1) potential to yield durable benefits such as, but not limited to, making data available in public repositories (e.g., GenBank, iNaturalist, or herbarium databases), generating herbarium specimens, or producing online resources (e.g., treatments, keys, or iNaturalist projects); (2) potential to broaden participation in pteridology by underrepresented groups (e.g., the applicant is from an underserved community, the project or experience will be shared with an underserved community or local youth STEM program targeting underrepresented groups or high need schools); and (3) perceived need (i.e., the extent to which the project will benefit from AFS funding).

### **Reporting**

Funded students will be asked to submit a short report within one year of receiving the award, suitable for publication in the AFS bulletin ([Fiddlehead Forum](#)), summarizing their research activities.