Roger S Smith Undergraduate Student Researcher Award Application Form

Application, with resume, are due by March 3 to the
Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Student Services Office, 6-5 Humanities Centre.
Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.
Please confine your input to the spaces provided, using 12 font.

PART III – Proposed Research Project (to be completed by the student)

The aim of my proposed research project is to investigate the sense of self, self-esteem and
body image of men who excel in attaining their physical fitness goals through weight training. Second
wave feminism focused on media representations of women's bodies and the effects of these
representations on women's sense of self and self-esteem. My research project will contribute to a
growing emphasis in sociology on men's bodies, their sense of self and their body image.

Research participants will be men that exercise for personal reasons (not sports or
competition) and consider themselves of above average fitness level. Recent studies have shown that
the ideal body for men now has more to do with physical appearance than physical ability, that men
are increasingly dissatisfied with their bodies, and that working out for its appearance-enhancing
potential may actually contribute to reduced body esteem. Through my research I hope to gain a
better understanding of the interactions of men's physical fitness and their mental health issues of
body image and self esteem.

My research is generated at the intersection of theories of the self and objectification theory.
First, as Heyes argues, Western understandings of the self have resulted in the view of a self with an
inner essence that one's body must represent. Second, as Hargreaves and Strelan illustrate,
objectification theory enables us to account for entertainment and advertising media as likely sources
of men's body dissatisfaction and mental health issues. I aim to acquire not only a better
understanding of the theoretical concepts above, but to learn how to better apply them practically to
society.

I have a two-fold research methodology. Through discussions with professors from the
Faculty of Physical Education and focus group discussions with men that exercise in public facilities I
will develop questions used for interviews with the latter. The second aspect of my approach entails
media analysis of Men's Health and Men's Fitness published in 1987 (the year both were founded) and
again in 2010.

This project is a strong fit with my program of study as Sociology seeks to understand human
activity investigating individual agency and social structure. The project will enable me to use the
theoretical frameworks and tools acquired through my studies to research concrete examples of the
interaction between the experience of individual men and the increased objectification of their
bodies.

Having the opportunity to conduct research over the summer will be a valuable experience,
contributing to my undergraduate education as well as preparing me for graduate studies. Along with
enhancing time management skills developed through my undergraduate it will provide opportunity
for developing project management skills and gaining experience conducting research that will
contribute to being a successful graduate student. Lastly, the award will allow me the opportunity to
work on a meaningful project while being supervised and mentored by a professor that will challenge
me to improve as a young scholar.

SIGNATURE

I hereby acknowledge that the information above is accurate and I agree to abide by the regulations governing
this award.

[Signature]

Name of Student (please print)

Date

March 2, 2011