2025 Fall Signature Work

Introduction and Update

Friday, August 22nd, 2025

Presenters: Prof. Richard Davis & Prof. Paul Stanley

Welcome Back to DKU!

Event Agenda

A brief introduction to Signature Work

Important Deadlines and Updates to Signature Work

2025 Fall SWRG Application with Associate Dean Paul Stanley

Resources:

https://signature-work.dukekunshan.edu.cn/

https://ugstudies.dukekunshan.edu.cn/ug-research-overview/duke-kunshan-university-signature-work-research-grants/

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What is Signature Work?

Large, individually-designed project that DKU students plan in Junior year and finish in Senior year – like a senior thesis.

- Graduation requirement for all undergraduates in China

- Students choose and work closely with one (or two) DKU faculty Mentors

- Students can do group projects

- Either Scholarly (academic paper) or Creative/Design (non-academic product

+ explanatory text)

- Completed over 8-credits of Capstone courses (mostly) taken in senior year

- Final products submitted before Session 4, inc. poster & video

- Students present during Signature Work Conference and Exhibition

What is Signature Work?
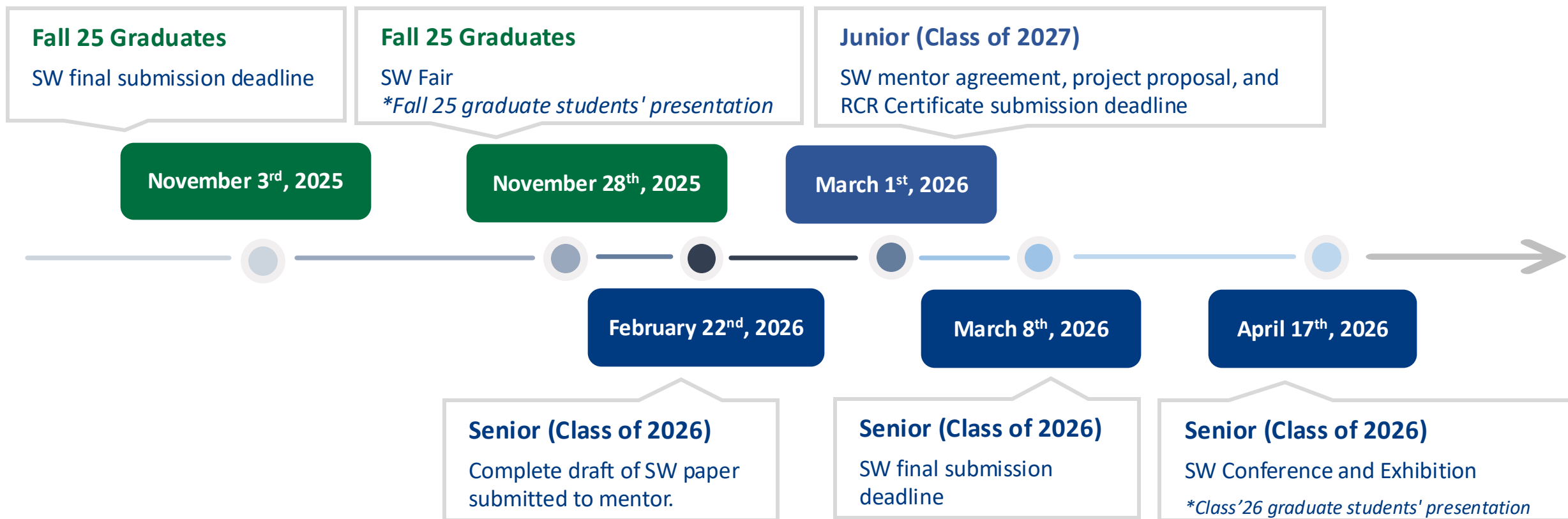
(P.2- P.3 SW Handbook)

Signature Work calls for all students to investigate one or more questions, problems, or issues that are of particular importance to themselves and to society. Students will engage with their SW project for much of their time at DKU. In their junior year, students begin to identify a topic connected to their major and a mentor in a related field. By the end of that year, they will write a formal proposal, supported by preliminary research and approved by their mentor, that lays out their aims and methodology. In their senior year, they conduct the bulk of their original research/work, write up their findings, and present them publicly to the university community. For many students, the SW process and product represent a major step toward their post-undergraduate careers.

Though SW projects vary considerably across fields and disciplines, all fall under one of two categories: scholarly and creative/design. Scholarly projects are broadly concerned with generating original academic research (in the natural or social sciences, humanities, etc.); their chief product is a 25-30 page research paper. Creative/Design projects are primarily centered around a substantial non-academic product – a work of art, a business model, a policy paper, etc. – which will also be accompanied by a formal written statement of 15-20 pages. These products, along with a poster and video presentation, will be submitted in the student's final session at DKU as their SW Portfolio. Grades will be assigned by SW mentors and will encompass both the portfolio components and the consistency, quality, and timeliness of the student's work with the mentor up to that point. A Second Reader Review ensures quality; students whose work does not meet MOE/JED standards will be required to submit revisions. Exceptional work may be nominated for SW Distinction, an academic honor bestowed at graduation.

In curricular terms, SW has two major components. First, students will identify three thematically-linked courses at DKU or Duke, drawing from their interdisciplinary courses, disciplinary courses, or electives. Second, students will take 8 credits of Capstone courses one-on-one with their mentor, during which they will complete much of the actual work of their SW projects.

Important Deadlines in AY 2025 – 2026

Fall 25 Graduates

SW final submission deadline

Fall 25 Graduates

SW Fair
Fall 25 graduate students' presentation

Junior (Class of 2027)

SW mentor agreement, project proposal, and RCR Certificate submission deadline

November 3rd, 2025

November 28th, 2025

March 1st, 2026

February 22nd, 2026

March 8th, 2026

April 17th, 2026

Senior (Class of 2026)

Complete draft of SW paper submitted to mentor.

Senior (Class of 2026)

SW final submission deadline

Senior (Class of 2026)

SW Conference and Exhibition

Class'26 graduate students' presentation

Note: Please be aware of the late submission policy for Signature Work products, which can be found in the SW Handbook on page 21.

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Current sophomore students

==Figure out your **major** first!==

Once you've decided, begin asking yourself:

1) What kind of **project** related to my major that I want to work on?

2) What **3 (thematic) courses** at DKU or Duke might help me learn the background/methodologies/etc. I will need?

3) What DKU faculty member (**mentor**) works in my field? How can we get to know each other?

Current junior students

Consider the following points:

1. What is the focus of my SW project? What is my research direction, methodology, and bibliography?

2. Does my research require approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)?

3. When should I enroll in my Capstone Courses? What objectives should I accomplish during these two Capstone courses?

4. Develop a plan for expected progress, including deadlines, regular check-ins with my future mentors, and so on…

Current senior students

- Following your plan, execute (most) of your research

  during Capstone 495 and write (or finish) your paper etc.

  during Capstone 496

- Submit your final products by **March 8th, 2026**

Capstone Courses Enrollment Options

Junior Year S4	Senior Year S1	Senior Year S2	Senior Year S3	Senior Year S4
	2-credit 495A	2-credit 495B	4-credit 496	No Capstone courses can be taken in the last session.
	4-credit 495	4-credit 496		
	4-credit 495		4-credit 496	
		4-credit 495	4-credit 496	
2-credit 495A	2-credit 495B	4-credit 496		
2-credit 495A		2-credit 495B	4-credit 496	
2-credit 495A	2-credit 495B		4-credit 496	

Update on Signature Work

<mark>No more E-portfolio component</mark>

You ONLY need to complete the Formstack final submission survey to fulfill the submission requirements.

Update on Signature Work

Draft Deadline

It is now an official requirement to submit a **full draft** of your SW products to your mentor **two weeks** before the final deadline.

Update on Signature Work

Spacing Correction

The line spacing in your SW should be **2.0**, not 1.5 as was suggested in some places in the Handbook

IRB (Institutional Review Boards) /IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee)

If your research:

- Involves generalizable data collected from human subjects (i.e. via surveys)

- Involves physically interacting with vertebrate animals

You **must** apply for and receive IRB/IACUC approval **before** you begin collecting

data

FAQ

Q: **Does my SW have to be connected to my major?**

A: We encourage students to think interdisciplinarity, but SW has to have *some* connection to major. You should be using some of the skills – the disciplinary methodology – you have learned as part of your coursework.

FAQ

Q: **Does my mentor have to be in my major?**

A: DKU faculty aren't actually "in" majors, so no. Any faculty member who you think would be an appropriate fit is fair game.

FAQ

Q: Can I use material that I wrote for another class / already published as my SW project?

A: All students are required to take 8 credits of Capstones – two full classes worth of time. (UG studies says each 4-credit class should involve an average of 20 hours of work per week in and out of the classroom.) Students are expected to *use* that time to work on the SW.

So preexisting materials can be *incorporated* into the SW project but should be significantly altered or expanded.

Upcoming Event

Event Topic: Research Planning & Writing: GenAI use, Citation, and Source Management

Event Date/Time: Friday, September 26th 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Event Location: AB 1087

Speaker: Prof. Yachao Sun (Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics and Writing Studies)

2025 Fall SW Office Hour

Office Hour Location: WHU – Duke Research Institute (WDR) 3014

Office Hour Timeslots (30 mins per slot):

Monday: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM (BJT)

Tuesday: 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM (BJT)

Wednesday: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM (BJT)

Thursday: 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM (BJT)

Reservation page: https://signature-work.dukekunshan.edu.cn/office-hour/

Funding Opportunities with Paul Stanley

Student Centered Research at DKU

**Opportunities Funded by
Office of Academic Services**
Paul Stanley, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies

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Several Funding Opportunities

Programs supported by Office of Academic Services

SRS	SWRG
SF	Conference

Chinese translations courtesy of ChatGPT 3.5

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SRS: Summer Research Scholars

Research stipends for students to engage in a collaborative summer research project with a faculty mentor.

为学生提供研究奖学金，与教职人员导师一起参与夏季合作研究项目。

Faculty member writes a proposal and applies to SRS
教职人员编写提案并提交SRS项目申请

Students express interest directly to the faculty
学生直接向教职人员表达兴趣

Funds a summer stipend, not equipment
资助夏季奖学金，而不是设备

Summer on campus housing is budget free
夏季校园住房费用免费

Requires Report AND Poster Session in Fall
秋季需要提交报告和海报展示

Standard Award: 5,600 RMB + 6,200 RMB

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SWRG: Signature Work Research Grant

Support for approved supplies and non-durable equipment goods (limited exceptions). Can fund travel and accommodations.   Can pay research participants for IRB-approved studies.

支持已批准的用品和非耐用设备物品（有限的例外情况）。可以支付经IRB批准的研究参与者。

Student prepares proposal and applies directly to the program
学生准备提案并直接申请该项目。

Needs Letter of Recommendation
需要推荐信

Supplies, expendables, travel, and pay research participants
可以资助研究用品和消耗品,并支付经IRB批准的研究参与者

Equipment is only funded in exceptional cases; no books!
设备仅在特殊情况下获得资助；不包括书籍!

Requires Report
秋季需要提交报告和海报展示

Max Award: RMB 3,250 (+ 6,750 SF)

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SF: Signature Fund Supplemental Grants

Generous donations from parents of DKU students to further support student research, can supplement SWRG, with same restrictions. SF is reserved for unique, truly exceptional projects and proposals.

来自DKU学生家长的慷慨捐赠，用于进一步支持学生研究，可以补充SELF和SWRG。

Student prepares proposal and applies directly to the program
学生准备提案并直接申请该项目。

Needs Letter of Recommendation
需要推荐信

Follows rules of the program it supplements
遵循所补充的项目规则。

Must acknowledge source!
必须承认信息来源！

Requires thank you; possible video for Development Office.
需要提交感谢信；开发办公室可能需要视频。

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Approximate Statistics for 2023-24

Program	Amount Reserved (RMB)	Students Awards	Faculty Participants
SELF	640,000	23	N/A
SRS	1,500,000	151	54
SWRG	150,000	48	N/A
SF	100,000	23	N/A
Housing	750,000	175	N/A

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Other Funding Sources for Students

- Limited funds for students to attend conferences*
学生参加会议的有限经费

- Limited funds for students to attend competitions*
学生参加竞赛的有限经费

- Innovation funds for students to be entrepreneurial
学生培养企业家精神的有限经费

- Some faculty have funding for research support
一些教职人员有研究支持资金

- Some faculty have discretionary funds
一些教职人员有自主决定的经费

- Internal Sources (research centers?)
内部来源（研究中心？）

- Experiential learning hosts
实践学习主办机构

- External Sources
外部来源

* Managed by Academic Services

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More Details on the SWRG

- Competitive Program!

- Student Applies

- Funding to help defray research expenses associated with SW project

- Project might be student independent idea or related to faculty research.

- Academic year or summer.

- Expenses up to 3250 RMB (+6750 RMB)

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Eligibility for SWRG

- Approved SWPP (+IRB)

- Recommendation from SW Mentor

- Enrolled in Capstone (during year)

- A well prepared budget is required!

- Yes: disposable items, reagents, consumables, subscription software or services, fieldwork expenses, survey participant compensation.

- Equipment is rarely funded, and becomes property of DKU.

- No: books or permanent software or generic computer hardware.

- No: food or stipend or salaries.

- No: conference or publication fees.

Funding Categories (New Possibilities!)

Probably Allowed!

- Nondurable research supplies, special reagents not found in DKU labs, and single-use (or limited-use) testing kits.

- Participant payments (with IRB), subject to DKU institutional limits. IRB approval must happen before the expense, or it will not be reimbursable.

- Research animal expenses, which could include animal purchase, care.

- Special software/cloud/GPU (with clear justification).

- Travel expenses to conduct necessary on-site research, subject to DKU institutional limits.

- Accommodation expenses to conduct necessary on-site research, subject to DKU institutional limits.

- Special materials for creative projects, which could include fabric, photographic film, 3-D printing material. Semipermanent creative projects funded by SWRG would become property of DKU after the exhibit.

- Funding equipment would require showing that you have exhausted all alternatives!

Excluded!

- Most small equipment items are excluded, such as personal items, laptops, cameras, books, or other electronics.

- Training or classes are excluded. This exclusion also applies ot online courses.

- Support for participation in an internship is excluded.

- Salaries, or payments of any kind, are excluded.

- Travel to attend conferences is excluded. **Academic Services has a separate fund for travel to present at a conference.**

- **Publication costs are excluded**, for research papers or for other materials.

- Off-campus space rental for exhibitions are excluded!

- On-campus housing or Kunshan area housing is excluded.

- Travel or housing to any location that the student would be going to anyway is excluded; this also excludes travel to the student's home.

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The SWRG Budget

Proposal Worksheet		Name:	Paul Stanley	
SWRG: Signature Work Research Grant		NetID:	pes23	
		Date:	Monday, August 26, 2024	
Material & Supplies Item List	Request Cost (RMB)	Approved Cost (RMB)	Notes	
Steel string set	¥ 50.00		from taobao, necessary to play the bipa	
Wax polish	¥ 150.00		not available in dku chem labs, we are testing different finishes on bipa sound	
Finger nails and tape	¥ 215.00		from taobao, necessary to play the bipa	
Materials & Supplies Subtotal	¥ 415.00	¥ -	Approved Subtotal	
Equipment Item List	Request Cost (RMB)	Approved Cost (RMB)	Notes	
Student model Bipa	¥ 1,500.00		Purchase from Guiyang (6,500 RMB total: 1,500 SWRG + 5,000 SF; will only get 1,500 RMB model if no SF is awarded)	
Protective case	¥ 500.00		Purchase from Guiyang	
Equipment Subtotal	¥ 2,000.00	¥ -	Approved Subtotal	
Research Participant Item List	Request Cost (RMB)	Approved Cost (RMB)	Notes	
Pollfish Survey Service	¥ 800.00		My part of team submission: 2000 RMB allows 200 participants, balance will be covered in team member budget, survey to assess sound perception	
Research Participant Subtotal	¥ 800.00	¥ -	Approved Subtotal	
Other Item List	Request Cost (RMB)	Approved Cost (RMB)	Notes	
Purple Bamboo Music	¥ 35.00		Sheet music	
Other Subtotal	¥ 35.00	¥ -	Approved Subtotal	
Total Requested Amount	¥ 3,250.00	¥ -	Total Approved Amount	

- Only complete the shaded areas.
- Items without explanation will likely be rejected
- Explain how expenses will be shared with SF, and what will happen without SF.
- Explain how expenses will be shared with team.
- Asking for excluded items seriously weakens your proposal!

SWRG timeline and funding cycle

- **Mid-September:** Fall Application Deadline

- **Mid-October:** Fall awards announced

- December 15: 6-month receipt cycle!

- **Mid-January:** Spring application deadline

- **Mid-February:** Spring awards announced

- April 15: Graduating senior receipts due!

- **Mid-May:** Summer application deadline

- **Mid-June:** Summer awards announced

- June 15: 6-month receipt cycle!

Funding Timelines

SRS & SF

- **Mid-December:** CFP to FACULTY

- **Mid-January:** Faculty application deadline

- **Mid-February:** Faculty awards announced, students apply directly to FACULTY, who nominate students

- **Mid-March:** Student award letters on rolling basis

- **Late March:** Faculty nominations for students due

- **Late April:** Student commitment for summer housing

- Residence Life decides when dorms can be occupied: expect it to be from Graduation to Mid-July.

Conferences

- **First of Month:** Complete proposals evaluated

- **End of Cycle:** when money runs out

- **Need to Process Reimbursements Rapidly:** read the agreement carefully, and turn your fapiao in, or the funds will be reallocated!

- **We Do Check** for the legitimacy of conference, as well as clear evidence that you are presenting a paper!

- **Summer Schools are not conferences!**

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