



**CAPSTONE Marketplace Announcement**  
**“2018-2019 Research Topics”**  
**25 June 2018**

**I. BACKGROUND**

The Systems Engineering Research Center (SERC) is a Department of Defense (DoD) University Affiliated Research Center (UARC) at Stevens Institute of Technology; the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for System Engineering (ODASD/SE) sponsors SERC’s activities. SERC is chartered to strengthen academic research in system engineering, addressing problems of interest to DOD. A component of SERC’s effort is the “Capstone Marketplace”, which connects DOD and other government organizations with undergraduate academic teams, to work on senior year, “capstone” design projects. The Capstone Marketplace is a resource which provides student design teams research topics, contact with government Subject Matter Experts, and research funding for projects. University Capstone teams are expected to operate like small industry teams, performing research and development for government “SME” “customers”. SERC staff will provide technical, business, and other management references and resources as needed.

**II. SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

SERC’s Capstone Marketplace has a new list of “2018-2019 Research Topics” on its website, [www.capstonemarketplace.org](http://www.capstonemarketplace.org). Technical problems, capability gaps, and research interests have been collected from DOD military operators and government research organizations. Government funds for student teams’ research projects are available. SERC has selected its Capstone Marketplace Research Topics so that senior students will pursue subjects and problems of interest, experience limited system engineering techniques, and find approaches and solutions of value to their government sponsors. These sponsors, operational units and government research staff, will work directly with students. The web document, “SERC Capstone Marketplace Objectives” lists additional details on SERC’s initiative.

Academic institutions intending to pursue SERC awards are encouraged to submit an initial “Expression of Interest” (EOI) to SERC. A template is on the Marketplace website. After SERC’s receipt of an EOI, SERC will send a Request For Proposal (RFP) to the university. Proposals should follow formats, instructions, and schedules provided in the “Project Proposal Instructions” detailed on the website. Proposals will be evaluated and awards announced as rapidly as possible, starting mid July 2018. SERC intends to assign its full set of 2018-2019 Research Topics to university teams by late September 2018. Additional details on SERC’s project award and contracting process are on the website.

### III. ELIGIBILITY

Proposals may now be accepted from non-SERC universities, as well as from SERC consortium members. SERC may now award Capstone Marketplace Contracts to any U.S. educational institution, with ABET accreditation, conducting undergraduate engineering design projects.

### IV. SUMMARY OF RECENT CHANGES IN CAPSTONE MARKETPLACE:

- a. SERC can now award Capstone Marketplace Research Topics and projects to any university. Membership in the SERC Consortium is not required.
- b. SERC will engage with universities in a two-step process, starting with Expressions of Interest (EOI) in the research topics posted on the website. Requests For Proposals will follow submission of the EOI to universities this Summer. Expect rolling awards through mid September.
- c. SERC Capstone awards will be Firm Fixed Price contracts. Period of performance will generally be two academic semesters, although single semester efforts will also be considered.
- d. Capstone project awards will nominally be up to \$5,000. Funds up to \$10,000 may be awarded with exceptional justification. Restrictions on the use of SERC funds are listed on the Capstone Marketplace website.
- e. For SERC Capstone activities, student teams will be expected to perform as a small “business”, conducting R&D activities, managing their technical performance, schedule, and costs. Teams will provide status to government officials as their “customers”, who will assist in evaluating team performance. SERC’s Capstone Marketplace Objectives, on the website, outlines SERC’s expectations for student team activities.

### V. QUESTIONS AND POINTS OF CONTACT

Questions may be directed to:

Mike Delorme                      [mdelorme@stevens.edu](mailto:mdelorme@stevens.edu)  
Bill Shepherd                      [wshephe1@stevens.edu](mailto:wshephe1@stevens.edu)