Graduate Student Fellowships

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Office of Sponsored Programs
Types of Graduate Funding

• Research Assistantships
  – Funded by faculty’s research funding
  – Typically funded through proposal process

• Teaching Assistantships
  – Funded by department
  – Teaching-related responsibilities, separate from research

• Graduate Fellowships
What is a Fellowship?

- Per IRS definition, it is an amount paid or allowed to, or for the benefit of, an individual to aid him/her in the pursuit of study or research
- No services in return for the funding
- To be used for study or research
- No need to pay back
- Often portable
- Typically based on merit, not need
Why apply for a Fellowship?

• It’s a guaranteed source of funding—for a period of time

• Allows you to focus on your own studies/research

• Stipends are often higher than those of Research or Teaching Assistants

• Fellowships are often portable
  – more autonomy in selecting advisor, research project

• Fellowship can be path to a job (e.g., National Lab)
Two Types of Fellowships

• Awards directly to Students
  – Students compete directly for award
  – Award typically moves with the student if the student moves to a different university
  – May still have to be submitted by the institution on behalf of the student—OSP helps

• Awards to the Institution
  – Institution (faculty department, school) pick fellows/trainees
  – Can be need-based
  – Application needs to go through OSP
Institutional Awards/Training Programs

- Awarded to departments, programs, etc.
- Students selected by department, program or faculty
- Funding may be tied to financial need of the student
- Examples:
  - Graduate Assistantships in Areas of National Need (GAANN)
  - NSF Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship (IGERT)
  - NSF Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate
  - NIH NRSA Institutional Pre-doctoral Training Grant (T32)
Graduate Fellowship—Purpose/Timing

- General graduate work
- Early graduate career fellowships
- Dissertation grants
- Travel/field work grants
Graduate Fellowships—Examples

• Dissertation Grants
  – Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowships (humanities and social sciences; no citizenship requirement—up to $38k)
  – Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship
    ▪ Support for final year of dissertation at $25,000
    ▪ Citizens and permanent residents only
    ▪ Diversity component; minority status is one of the criteria for selection

• After coursework completed
  – Example: American Heart Association Fellowship (no citizenship requirement)

• General graduate work
  – Example: NSF GRFP (citizenship requirement)

Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Finding Potential Fellowships

• Fellowship programs often targeted based on
  – discipline
  – demographic group
    ▪ Women,
    ▪ minorities,
    ▪ international students

• Excellent web resources available
  – Cornell: http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/?p=132
  – Agency/foundation websites
  – Pivot— http://pivot.cos.com/funding_main

• Talk to faculty and students in your department
Federal Fellowships

• Many federal agencies have fellowship programs
• Most (if not all) have citizenship or residency requirements
• Some of them submitted individually by the student
• Some of them are submitted by the institution
• They usually pay stipend, tuition and health insurance
• Most of them have to be submitted through some electronic, often agency-specific, system
• OSP can help!
Federal Fellowships to Individuals

• National Science Foundation
  — Three years at $32,000/year
  — Student applies directly

• EPA Science to Achieve Results (STAR) Fellowships for Graduate Environmental Study

• Department of Energy Computational Science Graduate Fellowship
  — Up to 4 years with a stipend of $36,000/year
  — Payment of full tuition and fees

• National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate Fellowship
  — About 200 new 3-year graduate fellowships awarded annually
  — Pursuing doctoral degree in, or closely related to a science or engineering discipline
Federal Fellowships to Individuals through the Institution

- National Institutes of Health Fellowship Program (F31)
  - Mentored research training
  - Apply through the institution

- NASA EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCE FELLOWSHIP (NESSF) PROGRAM
  - Up to three years; $24,000 stipend/year
  - Institution applies on behalf of the student
  - More clearly defined subject area focus

- NSF Dissertation Grants

- Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowships administered by the Dept. of Education

- NIJ Graduate Fellowships (Dept. of Justice)
Fellowships through the Institution

• Need to go through OSP
  – Contact OSP early
  – Budget enough time for OSP review and approval process
  – We may have to register with an electronic system

• Institutional Advancement helps with applications to foundations
  – Example: American Heart Foundation
  – OSP and IA coordinate with each other
Foundation Fellowships-Examples

- **American Heart Association (Founders Affiliate)**
  - Must have completed coursework
  - Students on a student visa are eligible to apply
  - Awards are for one or two years (total max. amount $51,900)
  - Have to be submitted by the institution—OSP!

- **Hertz Foundation Graduate Fellowship**
  - For applied physical, biological, and engineering sciences
  - Up to 5 years; $32,000/year
  - Citizens or residents
  - Portable, but school must be or become participating school

- **Microsoft Research Ph.D. Fellowships**
  - 2 years funding
  - Must be nominated by their university
  - computer science, electrical engineering, math
  - Payment to university; not portable
Dissertation Travel/Study Abroad Fellowships

• NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant
  – no citizenship requirement
  – partial support of doctoral dissertation research; participate in meeting; travel to field settings;
  – Up to $13,000 for up to 24 months; no salaries/stipends
  – Submitted by advisor through OSP

• Fulbright U.S. Student Program
  – All over the world
  – E.g., support for 10 months to study at Max Planck in Germany
  – U.S. Citizens only

• DAAD Research Grants
  – For study in Germany
  – For doctoral candidates
  – Don’t necessarily need to know German
  – 7 to 10 months
Funding for International Students

• American Association of University Women - International Fellowships.
  – $18,000-$30,000 awards to women graduate students studying in the United States who are not U.S. citizens.

• American Heart Association Predoctoral Fellowship

• HHMI International Student Research Fellowship
  – Supports years 3 to 5 of a Ph.D. program
  – Can only be nominated by institutions that have an HHMI investigator

• Fulbright International Science and Technology Award
  – Funding for 3 years; students must apply through their home countries

• Country of Origin-Specific Fellowships
  – Vietnam Education Foundation Fellowship Program
  – China Scholarship Council Graduate Fellowship Program
  – Iraqi Scholarship Initiative
Fellowships for Minorities

- Ford Foundation/National Academies
  - Three years at $21,000/year

- American Sociological Association - Minority Fellowship Program.
  - An annual stipend of $14,688 for up to three years
  - Early stages of sociology graduate programs with emphasis on mental health

- United Negro College Fund & Merck Foundation Science Initiative
  - Graduate Science Research Dissertation Fellowships.
  - Up to $43,500 stipend for up to 24 months plus $10,000 in research support
  - To assist African-American graduate students in biological, chemical engineering fields
Fellowships for Women

- **American Association of University Women**
  - International Fellowships.
  - $18,000-$30,000 awards to women graduate students studying in the United States who are not U.S. citizens.

- **American Association of University Women**
  - Selected Professions Fellowships.
  - Approximately $5,000-12,000 awards for the final year of graduate study
  - in historically under-represented professions, including Computer Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering.

- **Society of Women Engineers**
  - Small amounts; specific purpose, e.g., travel to conference
Typical Application Components

- Biographical information/Resume
- GRE scores
- Transcript
- Letters of Reference
- Essay/Proposal
  - Discussion of proposed research
  - May include discussion of one or more research experiences
- Follow guidelines to the letter!!!
Example: NSF Fellowship

- $32,000 per year plus $12,000 education allowance or 3 years
- Must be US Citizen or permanent resident
- May apply:
  - during undergrad senior year
  - prior to or during 1st year of grad school,
  - or at beginning of 2nd year of grad school
- Application by individual student
- Awarded to the institutions for the student
How to Apply for NSF Fellowship

• Read the guidelines and solicitation carefully
• Apply on-line using NSF’s FastLane system
• Parts of application
  – Graduate Research Plan Statement (2 pages)
  – Personal Relevant Background and Future Goals Statement (3 pages)
  – 3 Reference letters by reference deadline
  – Academic transcripts
• Pay attention to formatting guidelines—they are very important!!
  – “Failure to comply fully with these requirements will result in the application being returned without review.”
When applying, keep in mind!

- Read the solicitation/guidelines
- Analyze what the funder is looking for
  - Required components
  - Priority research areas
  - Broader impacts
- Follow the guidelines carefully
- Make a case for yourself and your project
- Have a peer or mentor read it
- Be aware of the deadline
- Get OSP involved early if the fellowship application needs to be submitted by the institution!
Helpful Information

- OSP website: http://www.wpi.edu/offices/osp.html
- OSP contact information: http://www.wpi.edu/offices/osp/staff.html
- Institutional Advancement: https://www.wpi.edu/offices/giving/institutional-advancement.html
- Pivot: http://pivot.cos.com/funding_main