The NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (NSF-GRFP)

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Today:

• Brief overview of Funding Week
• Other opportunities to consider
• NSF-GRFP
  • Overview
  • Process / Timeline
• Fellowship Recipient Jacqueline Lechuga
• Q&A
Funding
www.utep.edu/graduate/funding

• Hub for opportunities, promotion & applications

• Graduate School Travel Grant, Dodson Research Grant & more

• Workshops about opportunities & successful applications
Graduate School

FUNDING WEEK

JAN. 28 - FEB. 1

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<tr>
<th>WORKSHOPS</th>
<th>DATES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Funding Webinar</td>
<td>Jan. 28</td>
<td>12:00 - 1:00 PM</td>
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<td>Peace Corps</td>
<td>Jan. 29</td>
<td>4:30 - 5:30 PM</td>
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<td>Fulbright</td>
<td>Jan. 30</td>
<td>5:00 - 6:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSF-GRFP</td>
<td>Jan. 31</td>
<td>5:00 - 6:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dodson</td>
<td>Feb. 1</td>
<td>10:00 - 11:30 AM</td>
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Are you looking for ways to fund your graduate education or experience abroad? Are you a grad student in need of a research or travel money? Funding Week has something for you!

Details and registration at:
www.utep.edu/graduate/funding
GradCommunity
GSA Meeting — Feb. 26 @ 2 p.m.

WeWrite
Librarians & Burritos— Feb. 8 @ 10 a.m.

CareerPrep
3MT Info. Webinar— Feb. 4 @ 10 a.m.
3MT Prelims— Feb. 27 & 28 @ 5 p.m.
GRADUATE RESEARCH FUNDING PROGRAMS
HELP FEATURES
• Helps ensure the vitality of the human resource base of science and engineering and reinforces its diversity
• Recognizes and supports outstanding graduate students in STEM disciplines
• Provides substantial financial support
• Many more fellowship opportunities are available, including some for international students, non-researchers, and other groups:

https://www.grad.illinois.edu/fellowship/

http://www.nsfgrfp.org/applicants/other_opportunities
GETTING STARTED

Eligibility
Registration
• Citizenship: US citizen, national, or permanent resident alien

• Degree Requirements
  □ Senior completing baccalaureate degree
  □ Post-baccalaureate
  □ Graduate students enrolled in a degree-granting graduate program are limited to only one application to the GRFP:
    □ Submitted in the first year or at the beginning of the second year of their degree program

Three-year annual stipend $34,000 and $12,000 cost of education stipend
• Register on NSF Fastlane website (www.fastlane.nsf.gov)
• Review all sections of the application process
  ➢ Personal information
  ➢ Education—transcripts; fellowships, scholarships, and experiences
  ➢ Proposed graduate program
  ➢ Letters of reference
  ➢ Statements

• Pay attention to deadlines....
DEADLINES

• **October 21, 2019** (Monday)
  • Life Sciences, Geosciences

• **October 22, 2019** (Tuesday)
  • Computer and Information Science and Engineering, Engineering, Materials Research

• **October 24, 2019** (Thursday)
  • Psychology, Social Sciences, STEM Education and Learning

• **October 25, 2019** (Friday)
  • Chemistry, Mathematical Sciences, Physics and Astronomy
ELEMENTS OF A COMPETITIVE APPLICATION
• GPA is critical, although can explain in personal statement
• Transcripts: Official or unofficial
  – Official electronic copy recommended
  – Other colleges or universities if part of undergraduate record
• On-time submission
  – Know your institution’s turnaround time
  – If it takes 4 weeks, then plan ahead
LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

References
- Faculty references and references from people who supervised your research/projects or involvement in academic programs
- Character references have less weight

Advice
- Ask if letter writer can provide a STRONG letter
- Describe the program and provide guidelines
- Share your goals and accomplishments – if they do not know them, they cannot support them in writing
- Discuss your plans
  - Bring a résumé
  - Allow 3-5 weeks for letters to be written and uploaded
Letters:
• Include important details that help reviewers understand how the applicant stands out from the crowd
• Present an opinion of applicants’ potential for significant achievements and academic and intellectual success
• Speak to the applicant’s potential for future achievement in graduate school and beyond.

REFERENCE WRITING TIPS:
http://www.nsfgrfp.org/reference_writers/tips
STATEMENT SECTIONS OF THE APPLICATION

• Personal, Relevant Background and Future Goals Statement
• Graduate Research Plan Statement

TIPS

– Integrate statements into a singular theme
– Address review criteria in each statement: Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts
– Write multiple drafts
– Allow time for review and re-writing
How do you envision graduate school preparing you for a career that allows you to contribute to expanding scientific understanding as well as broadly benefit society?
How do you envision graduate school preparing you for a career that allows you to contribute to *expanding scientific understanding* as well as *broadly benefit society*?
SELLING YOURSELF: CRAFTING A PERSONAL STATEMENT

**Your Statement should:**

- Describe why you are interested in this opportunity and in your professional interests (research area)
- Describe how receiving the fellowship will contribute to your career goals
- Differentiate yourself from other applicants
  - Describe leadership skills
  - Describe unique characteristics that you bring to your area
- Describe personal and individual strengths that make you a qualified applicant
Your Statement should:

• Describe all applicable experiences
  – For each experience, describe the key questions, methodology, findings, and conclusions
  – Include team experiences if applicable
  – Describe your contributions

• Describe your career plan and what has influenced your career path

• Address how your activities address the Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts criteria
SELLING YOURSELF: RESEARCH STATEMENT

• Consult with your mentors
• State the research problem
• Document previous work (identify 2-4 papers)
• Summarize preliminary work
• Present research questions or hypothesis
• Define approach
• Describe unique resources
• State intellectual merit and broader impact
**NSF REVIEW CRITERIA: INTELLECTUAL MERIT**

- Considers potential of the applicant to advance knowledge
- Based on a holistic analysis of the complete application
  - Personal, Relevant Background, and Future Goals Statement
  - Graduate Research Plan Statement
  - Strength of the academic record
  - Description of previous research experience, publications and presentations
  - References
NSF REVIEW CRITERIA: BROADER IMPACTS-1

- Encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.

- Based on:
  - Personal experiences
  - Professional experiences
  - Educational experiences
  - Future plans
• Outcomes include such things as
  – Full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and URMs in STEM
  – Improved STEM education and educator development at any level
  – Increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with STEM
  – Improved well-being of individuals in society
  – Development of a diverse, globally competitive STEM workforce
  – Increased partnerships between academia, industry, and others
  – Improved national security
  – Increased economic competitiveness of the US
  – Enhanced infrastructure for research and education
• What is the potential for the proposed activity to:
  a. Advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields (Intellectual Merit)?
  b. Benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes (Broader Impacts)?

• To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?
ELEMENTS CONSIDERED IN BOTH CRITERIA-2

- Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale?
- Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?
- How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities?
- Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home organization or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?
ACTIVITY: COMPLETE THE PERSONAL STATEMENT WORKSHEET

• Does your worksheet sell yourself?
• Does it show how you are unique?
• Is it complete?

The Personal Statement Worksheet guides the development of the Personal, Relevant Background, and Future Goals Statement.

Time to outline responses: 12 minutes
Share worksheet with partner. Ask questions and seek ways to enhance items on worksheet. (12 minutes and switch)
VOICES:
GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOW
JACQUELINE LECHUGA
NEXT STEPS: ASSEMBLING A COMPETITIVE APPLICATION
DEVELOP A TIMELINE

• Register for GRFP: Fastlane
• Create a checklist of all required elements of the application
• Define a timeline for completing sections
• Write essays
• Request reference letters
• Seek reviews
A COMPETITIVE PROPOSAL

• Is well written
• Is organized
• Follows the guidelines
• Has a unifying theme
• Presents a research plan that
  – Solves a significant problem
  – Has social impact
  – Includes sound research methods
REVIEWS

• Preliminary review
  – UTEP Writing Center

• Secondary review
  – Contact Graduate School fellowship advising staff

• Faculty Mentor’s Review
  – Schedule on your own

Reviews are critical for putting together a competitive application.
Contact Information

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