

Guidelines for Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences

Department of Communication

Summer Research Fellowships for Doctoral Students Summer 2018

Eligibility: A Department of Communication doctoral student (i.e., M.A. or equivalent degree already awarded by the beginning of the fellowship period) in good standing and within original terms of offer of departmental funding, who has not yet been admitted to candidacy (i.e., passed the dissertation prospectus defense) or previously received it. Students receiving summer teaching assignments at Pitt or elsewhere or otherwise employed during the summer for pay for more than twenty hours a week are not eligible, while students receiving summer research funding from some other sources are.

Priorities: Top consideration goes to fully funded doctoral students who will have completed their first year of full-time doctoral study in residence by the start of the fellowship and who will have passed their PED (meaning, in our department, submission of—and successful oral defense of—a plan of study before a three-member advisory committee that oversees diagnostically the full scope of the student’s first year of study), by the end of their second semester in residence. Secondary consideration goes to doctoral students completing their second year of full-time study in residence. Once applications from the primary and secondary pools have been exhausted, the remaining pool from eligible doctoral students will be considered.

Number of Fellowships: During every academic year, there will be at least three awards of \$3,000 each open for competition. The awards should be used primarily for stipendiary support during the summer in order to allow students to focus exclusively on their research, but other uses will be considered, if clearly stated in the application and detailed in a budget. The awards will be called “A&S Summer Research Fellowships.”

Application via Formal Proposal: Applications for fellowships will be made in the form of a formal proposal narrative of not more than 750 words, in which the applicant 1) frames the work to be completed as a research-oriented project with a specific and defined objective; 2) rationalizes the project in the context of the student’s particular plan of study and for its larger scholarly significance; 3) identifies the body of primary and secondary source materials to be consulted, or the scope of the fieldwork (with relevant IRB clearances, if necessary) to be undertaken for successful completion of the project; 4) specifies and justifies the theories to be applied or methodologies to be employed in conducting the project research; 5) provides a time line or “plan of work” for completion of portions of the project throughout the summer and beyond; 6) designates a faculty advisor who will oversee the student’s work on the project via COMMRC 3002*, Professional Development, which should be taken in the following fall semester; 7) sketches out the intended dissemination results of the project through indicating plans for articles or conference papers, dissertation chapters; 8) describes tentatively the form of the final product (e.g., a rough outline); 9) provides a budget, if the fellowship in whole or part will be used for non-stipendiary purposes and/or if summer research funding is being sought from other sources. Proposals will be due by 11:59 p.m. on March 8, 2018.

*See section 9 in the Department Guidelines 2015

Application Evaluation: Applications received will be circulated for prior review by the four-member Departmental Admissions and Financial Aid Committee, which will meet to make awards and to rank order a short list of alternate recipients not later than Apr. 2nd. Each application in the primary pool will be deemed by a majority of the committee either worthy of funding or not. If more than three applications in this pool are deemed worthy of funding, they will be ranked with the top three receiving award offers and the remaining ranked applications being designated as first alternates. Should fellowship funds remain beyond the scrutiny of the primary application pool, the same procedures will be used to evaluate the secondary pool and only then, if fellowship funding yet remains, the rest of the applications.

Criteria: The committee will decide the degree of worthiness of the proposal for funding in light of the following: 1) clarity and feasibility of the proposed research objective; 2) significance for the student's plan of study and project's contribution to scholarship; 3) suitability of source materials to the research objective; 4) applicability of the theoretical framework and research methods; 5) "do-ability" of the "plan of work"; 6) appropriateness of the designated faculty advisor, with requisite expertise; 7) viability of the proposed dissemination results; 8) integrity of the proposed form of the final product; 9) soundness of the budget, if one is necessary.

Award Notification: The Director of Graduate Studies will immediately inform the students offered summer fellowships of their award in writing, along with any contingencies upon it (such as the need to pass the PED) and a request for written acceptance or rejection of the award within two weeks of notification. Applicants not receiving awards will also be notified in writing, with an invitation to discuss ideas for improving future applications.

Follow-Through and Assessment: The awardees will be subject to several types of oversight to ensure that they will indeed follow through on their project plans:

- 1) The designated advisor will be constantly involved through the research period and will periodically solicit the awardees to report on progress made.
- 2) The designated advisor will not only be able to reward good performance or penalize inadequate performance through a 3 cr. Individual Study Opportunity course*, but she or he will also write a short performance evaluation that will become part of the student's permanent file. Such evaluations will be considered by the Admissions and Financial Aid Committee in making future awards to that student.
- 3) The student will present the finished product as well as a brief report on the summer's work, both of which must be signed as approved by the designated advisor, to the Director of Graduate Studies, who will make it, too, a part of the student's file for future evaluation.
- 4) The student will present results from the project within the next year at a departmental seminar, The Agora, attended by research faculty, graduate students, and interested Pitt community members. That the work will thus be judged by a broad audience of faculty and peers will provide a powerful incentive for a quality performance.
- 5) The accumulated documentation (designated advisor's evaluation, final product, and project report), as well as the Agora performance, will be reviewed by the full faculty, led

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by the student's doctoral advisor, as part of the annual overall performance evaluation of students at departmental roll call, held each year just before Spring Break.

6) The accumulated documentation as well as Agora presentations of the three fellowship holders together will be discussed by the Departmental Admissions and Financial Aid Committee at the beginning of its next summer fellowship award meeting, with an eye toward evaluating the success of the fellowship program and for developing ways of it improving it.

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