Introductions

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Fellowships Office

**Mission Statement:** Help students find, compete for, and win national and international fellowships / scholarships.

**Website:** www.coe.utah.edu/fellowships

**Contact:** Jamesina Simpson, Associate Professor Electrical and Computer Engineering Dept. MEB 2278, jamesina.simpson@utah.edu
Website Resources

• Fellowship opportunities – including postdoc positions
• Application guide
• Upcoming events
• Previous winners
• Information page for faculty
• Contact information
Benefits of Winning Fellowships

• Guaranteed funding for tuition and stipend, etc.
• Ability to choose a lab / university
• Improves your resume / CV
• Increases likelihood of additional awards
• Employment upon graduation
• Summer internships
NSF GRFP Reviews (1)

- NSF receives ~14,000 applications per year, award ~2000
- Applications are assigned levels
  - Level 1: Undergraduate seniors
  - Level 2: First year of first graduate program
  - Level 3: Second year of first graduate program
  - Level 4: Have completed more than one year of graduate program (maybe already have degree), but has been out of academics for 2 years
- Applications are reviewed according to the levels, with slightly lower criteria for Level 1
NSF GRFP Reviews (2)

- 3 reviewers assigned to each application.
- Each reviewer receives ~40 - 60 total applications to review.
- Reviewers likely spend ~5-10 min. per review (this includes everything you submit, not just your essays)
- Reviewers are divided up into panels (~30 reviewers per panel)
- Discussion of each application within each panel is probably < 5 min.
NSF GRFP: Know Your Audience

• Most of the reviewers are University Faculty
• These faculty will likely not be in your immediate discipline (although should be engineering faculty)
  – Avoid scientific jargon (a few exceptions may be OK)

• They are interested in your career goals and what you plan to do with your Ph.D. (work at a university, at a national lab, etc.)

• They will be looking to see that you have fulfilled the NSF review criteria (include as separate sections in your essay(s)):
  – Intellectual merit
  – Broader impacts
**Intellectual Merit Review Criteria**

- “Encompasses the potential to advance knowledge based on a holistic analysis of the complete application”
  - How does your research advance the state-of-the-art in your research field?
  - They are looking for research advances that will make an impact, rather than provide incremental improvements.
  - Conference participation, publications, and previous awards will particularly strengthen your application (list them in the bio form as well as at the end of your personal statement)

http://www.nsfgrfp.org/how_to_apply/merit_review_criteria
Broader Impacts Review Criteria

• “Encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes”

• Examples:
  – Look at full list of possibilities on the NSF website
  – Most common:
    • Volunteer work and outreach activities, especially relating to the applicants research or degree field
    • Improved well-being of individuals in society (research application)
  – If you don’t yet have significant broader impacts, provide a detailed plan for what your broader impacts will be during the years of the award

http://www.nsfgrfp.org/how_to_apply/merit_review_criteria
Personal Statement Questions to Consider

• Look at full list of possibilities on the NSF website
  
  – Why are you fascinated by your research area? (demonstrate passion)
  
  – What examples of leadership skills and unique characteristics do you bring to your chosen field? (discuss only the relevant / significant ones)
  
  – What personal and individual strengths do you have that make you a well qualified applicant? (communicate clearly)
  
  – What are all of your applicable experiences? (do not provide them in chronological order; select only relevant / significant experiences that support your primary points)
  
  – Did you work in a team and/or independently? (what was YOUR contribution)

http://www.nsfgrfp.org/how_to_apply/application_materials
Most Importantly:

- NSF wants foremost to fund *you* as an individual with high potential, not the actual you research project with high potential.
Other Notes:

• Submit your documents at least a day or two early to avoid submission issues
• Follow formatting requirements exactly
• Include details on both intellectual merit and broader impacts!
• No typos!!
• See example winning essays at:
  – coe.utah.edu/fellowships
  – Alex Lang’s NSF website