MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans
    Graduate Operations Committee
    Department Heads
    Graduate Advisors
    Interdisciplinary Degree Program Chairs

FROM: Karen Butler-Purry, Ph.D., P.E.
      Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies

SUBJECT: Call for Nominations
          Texas A&M University Graduate Diversity Excellence Fellowship
          Deadline – Friday, February 7, 2020

I am pleased to announce a call for nominations of prospective graduate students for the 2020-2021 TAMU Graduate Diversity Excellence Fellowship. This fellowship provides an excellent opportunity for departments to recruit diverse, outstanding students to their graduate programs. The fellowship selection committee understands that each department would like to secure as many awards as possible, but due to the limited amount of funds, we ask that each department nominate only their best prospective students for consideration. The early deadline is required in order to provide timely competitive offers to outstanding prospective students who are also being recruited by our peer institutions.

The fellowship will use the Internet Grant Proposal System (IGPS) for nomination submission and review. Nominations can originate from the faculty member who will serve as the incoming student’s academic advisor (if identified) or from others such as Department Graduate Program Directors, Department Heads or Program Chairs.

Only U.S. citizens or permanent residents seeking entry to master’s or doctoral programs at TAMU will be eligible for this award. To be eligible, the prospective student must be graduating with a bachelor’s or master’s degree no later than August 2020, so that he/she can begin graduate work at TAMU in Summer or Fall 2020. Nominees must have submitted an application for graduate admission to Texas A&M by the date of their nomination in order to be considered for the fellowship. We believe this demonstrates the student’s genuine interest in attending Texas A&M and will decrease the number of declined awards. Students do not have to be admitted at the time of nomination. However, should a student be awarded the fellowship, the nominating department will be expected to admit the student. This understanding will prevent the offering of a fellowship to a student that is later denied admission by the nominating department. Attached to this memo are fellowship nomination guidelines as well as the evaluation criteria that will be used by reviewers in evaluating nominees for these fellowships.
Immediate contact following notification of award with high-quality students is crucial for success. OGAPS will coordinate with the department and college to follow up each offer with a personal email, phone calls, and additional contacts in an effort to improve our acceptance rates.

In addition to meeting the stated criteria of eligibility, nominees for the 2020-2021 Diversity Excellence Fellowship must be applying for enrollment in the following colleges/schools or interdisciplinary programs.

1. Colleges/Schools of: Agriculture and Life Sciences, Architecture, Bush School, Education and Human Development, College of Engineering, Mays Business School, Geosciences, Liberal Arts, Medicine, Science, or Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

2. Interdisciplinary programs of: Agribusiness and Managerial Economics, Biotechnology, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Marine Biology at TAMU – College Station, Molecular and Environmental Plant Sciences, Genetics, Neuroscience, Toxicology, or Water Management and Hydrological Science.

Fellowship details may be found at [http://ogaps.tamu.edu/Buttons/Funding-Opportunities/Graduate-Diversity-Fellowships](http://ogaps.tamu.edu/Buttons/Funding-Opportunities/Graduate-Diversity-Fellowships). If you have any problems with or questions regarding the submission process, contact OGAPS-fellowship-admin@tamu.edu or call 845-3631. For general questions about fellowship requirements, contact Dr. Shannon D. Walton, Director for Graduate and Professional Studies, at 845-3631.

I look forward to working closely with you, as we continue on our journey to increase the quality and diversity of our graduate student population at Texas A&M University.

Attachments

Pc: Dr. Carol Fierke
   College Business Administrators
Texas A&M University Graduate Diversity Excellence Fellowship  
2020-2021 Nomination Guidelines

*Deadline for submission: 5 p.m., Friday, February 7, 2020*

Diversity at Texas A&M University is an indispensable component of academic excellence. The TAMU Graduate Diversity Excellence Fellowship seeks to increase the diversity of the graduate student population at Texas A&M University and to support the development of high achieving scholars who show promise of distinguished careers and whose life and research experiences and/or employment background will contribute significantly to academic excellence at TAMU and maximize educational benefits of diversity for all students.

**Nominees must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents.** In addition, nominees must be graduating with a bachelor’s or master’s degree no later than August 2020, so that he/she can begin graduate work at TAMU in Summer or Fall 2020. Master’s students currently enrolled at TAMU are eligible for nomination for a doctoral Diversity Excellence Fellowship. Nominees must have submitted an application for graduate admission to Texas A&M by the date of their nomination for this fellowship and meet standards for admission to the nominating program.

Nominees should have a superior academic record and meet one or more of the following criteria.

- come from educational, cultural or geographic backgrounds that historically have been under-represented in graduate study in their discipline in the United States or at TAMU;
- a first generation college graduate (neither parent earned a bachelor’s degree);
- an individual with a disability; or
- a veteran.

**Nominations must include a diversity statement and relevant supporting data and narrative about the basis of the nominee's eligibility regarding these markers of diversity.** For example, if females are underrepresented in electrical engineering, data provided should show the percentage of women in electrical engineering, in their department/program and/or profession.

In addition to meeting the stated criteria of eligibility, nominees for the 2020-2021 Diversity Excellence Fellowship must be applying for enrollment in the following colleges/schools or interdisciplinary programs.

1. Colleges/Schools of: Agriculture and Life Sciences, Architecture, Bush School, Education and Human Development, College of Engineering, Mays Business School, Geosciences, Liberal Arts, Medicine, Science, or Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

2. Interdisciplinary programs of: Agribusiness and Managerial Economics, Biotechnology, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Marine Biology at TAMU – College Station, Molecular and Environmental Plant Sciences, Genetics, Neuroscience, Toxicology, or Water Management and Hydrological Science.
The Doctoral Diversity Excellence Fellowship provides four years of funding for domestic doctoral students enrolling for the first time in a doctoral program in Summer or Fall 2020.

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<tr>
<th>Doctoral Diversity Excellence Fellowship Collaborative Funding Details</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Years 1-3: $20,000 stipend with 25% or 50% assistantship</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>$20,000 stipend paid by OGAPS</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>25% FTE college, department, or program funded assistantship</strong></td>
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<td>- OGAPS and College, collaboratively, pays tuition as well as required university and college fees at full-time enrollment.</td>
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<td>- OGAPS provides reimbursement for the cost of personal health insurance coverage equivalent to the cost of the student health insurance plan premium.</td>
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<td><strong>50% FTE college, department, or program funded assistantship</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- OGAPS and College, collaboratively, pays tuition as well as required university and college fees at full-time enrollment.</td>
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<td>- Assistantship payee pays insurance premium for graduate student employee health plan.</td>
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<td><strong>Year 4: 50% assistantship (mandatory)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>50% FTE college, department, or program funded assistantship</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Assistantship payee and College, collaboratively, pays tuition as well as required university and college fees.</td>
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<td>- Assistantship payee pays insurance premium for graduate student employee health plan.</td>
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The Master’s Diversity Excellence Fellowship provides two years of funding for domestic master’s students enrolling for the first time in a master’s program in Summer or Fall 2020.

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<th>Master’s Diversity Excellence Fellowship Collaborative Funding Details</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Years 1 and 2: $15,000 stipend with 25% or 50% assistantship</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>$15,000 stipend paid by OGAPS</td>
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[*Some exceptions may be approved by OGAPS for a department/program to offer a scholarship instead of an assistantship. The scholarship, at a minimum, must be equivalent to a 25% FTE at the department’s standard assistantship rate. In those cases, the department/program must also provide payment for the student health insurance plan. The request to offer a scholarship instead of an assistantship must be submitted to and approved by OGAPS before the nomination is submitted.*]

For both the master’s and doctoral level awards, work effort for the assistantship should be consistent with FTE (e.g. standard work effort for 25% FTE equals 10 hours/week). Funding begins Fall 2020.
It is essential that Graduate Diversity Excellence Fellowship recipients be given ample opportunities for success and integration into the culture of their respective department early in their campus residence. Individual Development Plans (IDPs) will be required of all awarded fellows and submitted annually, following year one, throughout their funding tenure. Individual development planning promotes the assessment of current skills, interests and strengths; creation of plans for developing skills to meet academic and professional goals; and communication with supervisors, advisors, and mentors about evolving goals and related skills. The IDP is most valuable when working with an advisor/mentor, therefore, faculty advisors of Fellows will be required to participate in at least one IDP development session.

As part of the nomination process, nominators must submit the student’s ApplyTexas, EngineeringCAS or Apply Yourself application materials and a two-page letter of nomination that provides an evaluation of the applicant’s 1) past superior academic performance, 2) relevant experiences outside the classroom, and 3) other indicators of future success; and, finally, 4) how this applicant will contribute to diversity in the nominating department/program, the university, and to future profession. Attached is a checklist of items that MUST be included when you submit the nomination packet is submitted. The deadline for submitting Diversity Excellence Fellowship nominations is 5 p.m., February 7, 2020.

Reviewers will consider the Master’s and Doctoral nominations separately. Nominations will be automatically forwarded to appropriate department and college personnel for approval. The award selection committee will complete their review by February 27th, and the official award letters will be distributed shortly thereafter. Nominators, graduate advisors, department heads and graduate deans will be notified of which applicants have been selected for the Diversity Excellence Fellowship. In our effort to distribute comprehensive financial packages, we will include funding details provided in the Financial Commitment Template of the faculty/department/program’s financial obligation within the OGAPS fellowship award letter.
2020-2021 TAMU Graduate Diversity Excellence Fellowship Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will consider all aspects of the applicant’s experiences in the evaluation process with a focus on academic achievement and, in addition, how the applicant will contribute to the overall diversity of the University. Specifically, reviewers will consider the following elements:

- **How this applicant will contribute to diversity in the nominating department/program, university, and future profession.** Nominee may be from educational, cultural or geographic backgrounds that historically have been under-represented in graduate study in their discipline in the United States or at TAMU; may be first generation college graduates (neither parent earned a bachelor’s degree); may be an individual with a disability; or a veteran. This list is not meant to be exhaustive.

- **Evidence of superior academic achievement** such as class rank; GPA; quality of undergraduate institution; honors or other awards; etc.

- **Relevant experiences outside of the classroom** such as extracurricular experiences related to course of study; leadership experiences; work experiences; military experiences; internships; personal history; international experiences (i.e., study abroad, semester at sea, etc.); research experiences (either at their own university or in summer undergraduate research opportunities at other universities); oral or poster presentations; publications; etc.

- **Letters of recommendation**
DIVERSITY EXCELLENCE FELLOWSHIP NOMINATOR CHECKLIST

DIVERSITY EXCELLENCE FELLOW nominators MUST submit the following items online to IGPS and MUST submit in the correct database….one is for prospective MASTER’S students and the other for prospective DOCTORAL students:

For Master’s and Doctoral nominations of students NOT currently enrolled at TAMU

1. Entry fields regarding nominee
2. Completed nomination letter clearly describing how this student’s application meets all of the criteria regarding selection for the Diversity Excellence Fellowship (no more than two (2) pages).
3. Diversity statement written by the nominator about how the applicant will contribute to diversity in the nominating department/program, university, and future profession. The diversity statement must include relevant supporting data and narrative about the basis of the nominee’s eligibility regarding noted markers of diversity (no more than one (1) page).
4. Three (3) letters of recommendation for the student.*
5. Completed Financial Commitment Template noting the department/program’s financial offer to complement the collaborative funding package.
6. Student’s resume or curriculum vitae.
7. ApplyTexas, EngineeringCAS or Apply Yourself application materials (e.g. application, personal statement, transcripts, etc.).

*References included in ApplyTexas, EngineeringCAS, or Apply Yourself application materials are sufficient.

Items 2-7 should be saved in one (1) pdf file, in the order noted, and uploaded into the IGPS submission system.
For Doctoral Fellowship nomination of a student currently enrolled in a TAMU Master’s Program

1. Entry fields regarding nominee

2. Completed nomination letter clearly describing how this student’s application meets all of the criteria regarding selection for the Diversity Excellence Fellowship (no more than two (2) pages).

3. Diversity statement written by the nominator about how the applicant will contribute to diversity in the nominating department/program, university, and future profession. The diversity statement must include relevant supporting data and narrative about the basis of the nominee’s eligibility regarding noted markers of diversity (no more than one (1) page).

4. Two (2) new letters of recommendation for the student (no more than four (4) total pages).

5. Completed Financial Commitment Template noting the department/program’s financial offer to complement the collaborative funding package.

6. Student’s resume or curriculum vitae.

7. Copy of undergraduate degree transcript.

8. Copy of TAMU master’s degree transcript.

Items 2-8 should be saved in one (1) pdf file, in the order noted, and uploaded into the IGPS submission system.