Research Fellowship

Request for Proposals 2012

Introduction to WSSS

The Tufts University graduate education and research program in Water: Systems, Science, and Society (WSSS) answers the need for an integrated approach to the solution of water problems by encouraging interdisciplinary research. Each participating student learns to consider problems from the viewpoints of several relevant disciplines. Doctoral and masters degree students from the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, and the Schools of Arts & Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine at Tufts have completed the WSSS program.

This request for proposals (RFP) summarizes the 2012 WSSS Research Fellowship application process. All fellowship proposals must show that the requested funding will lead to research that actively engages at least one WSSS participating faculty member.

Submission Deadline and Award Announcements

The WSSS program is sponsoring Research Fellowships in 2012. Following the requirements outlined below, all submissions should be made electronically to Emily.Geosling@tufts.edu by noon on Thursday, March 15, 2012. Selected WSSS Research Fellowship recipients will be notified no later than Friday, March 30, 2012.

WSSS Research Fellowship Objectives:

- To encourage and foster interdisciplinary research in Water: Systems, Science and Society
- To provide financial support to WSSS students for research that will produce scholarship
- To increase participation of WSSS faculty on research projects related to WSSS objectives. For most up-to-date list of faculty, see our webpage at http://www.tufts.edu/water/faculty.html

Proposals will be evaluated in part by demonstrating that they address these three objectives.
Tufts University – Graduate Certificate Program in Water: Systems, Science and Society

General Requirements

Matriculated graduate students who are enrolled in the WSSS program are eligible to apply for a WSSS Research Fellowship. Fellowships are available to students in both the research and practicum tracks, with no preference given to either track. The work completed as a WSSS Research Fellow must be part of an independent research project and the proposal must document why WSSS funding is required.

Applicants must identify at least one WSSS participating faculty member to serve as their mentor. This faculty member must provide a letter of support for the student’s project. However, this fellowship is not intended to provide any support to the faculty member; it is only intended to provide support to the WSSS student fellow. The proposed research should be initiated, conducted, and completed by the student, although it may link to either existing or future faculty research. Since one of the objectives of this fellowship is to encourage collaborations among WSSS students and faculty, sharing of ideas is encouraged and students are encouraged to seek as much advice, guidance and participation as possible from WSSS faculty. The proposal should not be contingent on receipt of other funds by a faculty member or the student. Applications for research projects involving more than one student will be considered.

All students who receive a WSSS Research Fellowship, regardless of whether they are enrolled in the research or practicum track, must meet the requirements of the research track. As stated in the WSSS handbook, those requirements are as follows: students must undertake a significant interdisciplinary water resources research project, culminating in (1) by the end of year 1, an MS/MA thesis or capstone proposal or a preliminary dissertation proposal, (2) a thesis, directed study project or dissertation, (3) a refereed journal article 90% ready for submission by the time of graduation from the WSSS program, and (4) an oral or poster presentation at the annual WSSS symposium, or at a major national or international conference.

Evaluation Criteria

Highest priority will be given to those proposals that:

- Clearly outline the objective(s) of the proposed research
- Include a brief literature review relevant to the proposed research as well as a very clear outline of the approach to be taken
- Differentiate the proposed research from previous research

Preference will be given to proposals that:

- Are most likely to result in a refereed journal publication in one of the highest quality journals in your field
- Enhance signature areas of our WSSS program, including: Water and Health, Water Diplomacy, Hydromorphology, Water and Livelihoods, Watershed Management and WSSS Research Fellowship – Request for Proposals - 2012
Water and Sanitation, or Resilience of Social-ecological Systems with respect to Water Resources

- Meet guidelines on expenditures (see Funding Restrictions below)
- Provide evidence documenting the potential for an effective collaboration between the student and the WSSS participating faculty who provide letters of recommendation and commitment (see below)

Proposal Submission Requirements

- The student must include a resume and a Tufts graduate transcript
- The proposal must include a letter of support from a WSSS participating faculty member, expressing both their recommendation for the student and their commitment to the proposed research project (emailed to Emily Geosling by that faculty member)
- An additional letter of commitment from another WSSS faculty member preferably in another discipline or from another organization is recommended, but not required. That reference should also be emailed to Emily Geosling
- If the proposed research involves the participation of an organization outside of Tufts, then a letter of support from that organization is required.
- All completed proposals must be emailed to Emily Geosling (emily.geosling@tufts.edu) by noon on Thursday, March 15, 2012. Incomplete and/or late submissions will not be considered.

Funding Restrictions

WSSS Research Fellowship funds will be available starting June 1, 2012 and ending May 31, 2013. WSSS will provide up to $4000 per student based upon the submitted budget for each proposal. Funds may be used for student stipends, travel to conduct research, data acquisition and analysis, and equipment and supplies needed to complete research.

The expectation of the WSSS fellowship program is that the work completed for this fellowship will be part of the student’s course of study (e.g., an internship, applied learning experience, directed study, thesis or dissertation research).

The WSSS Steering Committee will select the most qualified proposals, with attention to equitable distribution of funds across schools. In addition, the committee will consider the extent to which the proposal is receiving funding from other sources.

Contact Information

Emily Geosling, Program Coordinator

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Web: http://www.tufts.edu/water

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Content and Form of WSSS Research Fellowship Proposal Submission

1) Cover Page

The Cover Page contains basic information on the project and the member(s) of the research team. Items to be included are:

- Project title
- Student ID #
- Student’s and faculty advisor’s departmental and school affiliations
- Contact information (postal mail and email addresses, telephone numbers)
- Amount of funding requested from WSSS (up to $4,000)
- List of all grants, research assistantships, teaching assistantships or fellowships previously received from any sources (do not limit yourself to Tufts grants, such as those from TIE and WSSS)
- Executive summary (200-400 words) on the proposed research, expected accomplishments, and how the project contributes to your current program of study

2) Proposal Narrative and Methodology (not to exceed three pages, single spaced, 12 pt font)

The Proposal Narrative must include and accurately describe in detail:

- Brief summary of previous research on this topic (including citations)
- The objectives and the rationale
- The problem or hypothesis to be studied and its significance
- Specific approaches, methodology, and data analysis to be used to meet the stated objectives
- Explanation of how this research differs from previous work
- Clear, concise statement of expected outcomes

3) Proposal Appendices

These appendices must be included in the grant proposal. Additional appendices are not permitted.

- Cited references from the Proposal Narrative
- A Resume or CV for the student (not to exceed three pages)
- A current Tufts transcript (an unofficial copy is acceptable); if the student has been at Tufts less than one year, an unofficial transcript from their undergraduate study must accompany the proposal along with current Tufts transcript.
- A detailed budget itemizing all expenses for the proposed project

In addition, letters of commitment and support must be emailed or mailed via address above directly to Emily Geosling by the letter-writers.

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