Introduction to WSSS

The Tufts University graduate education and research program in *Water: Systems, Science, and Society* (WSSS) responds to the need for integrated approaches to the management of water problems by encouraging interdisciplinary research. Each participating student learns to consider challenges from the viewpoints of several relevant disciplines. Doctoral and master's 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 2014 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 2014. Following the requirements outlined below, all submissions should be made electronically to Theresa.Silver@tufts.edu by noon on Monday, February 17, 2014. Selected WSSS Research Fellowship recipients will be notified no later than Tuesday, March 25, 2014.

**WSSS Research Fellowship Objectives:**

- To encourage and foster interdisciplinary research as a core area of focus in the Water: Systems, Science & Society (WSSS) program;
- To provide financial support to WSSS students for research that will produce scholarship; and
- To increase participation of faculty on research projects related to WSSS objectives.

*Proposals will be evaluated in part by demonstrating that they address these three objectives.*

**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 equal preference given to each 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. Note that this fellowship is not intended to provide any support to the faculty member; rather, the goal is 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, students are encouraged to seek as much advice, guidance, and participation as possible from 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 following requirement of the research track: that the student undertake a significant interdisciplinary water resources research project that culminates 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, or (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; and
- 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: Conflict, Security, and Diplomacy, Hydromorphology and Climate Change, Water: Agriculture, Food, and Livelihoods, Low-impact Watershed Management and Watershed Pollution and Remediation Science;
- Meet guidelines on expenditures (see Funding Restrictions below); and
- 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 an unofficial Tufts graduate transcript.
- The proposal must include a letter of support from a WSSS participating faculty member, expressing both their recommendation of the student and their commitment to the proposed research project.
- An additional letter of commitment from another faculty member, preferably in another discipline, or from another organization is recommended, but not required.
- If the proposed research involves the participation of an organization outside of Tufts, then a letter of support from that organization is required.

Funding Restrictions

WSSS Research Fellowship funds will be available starting May 1, 2014. 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

Water: Systems, Science and Society (WSSS) at Tufts Institute of the Environment (TIE)
210 Packard Avenue
Miller Hall – Garden Level
Medford, MA 02155

For more information:
Theresa Silver
Tel: +1-617-627-3645
Email: Theresa.Silver@tufts.edu
Web: http://www.tufts.edu/water
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 and faculty advisors’ departmental and school affiliations.
- Contact information (postal address, email address, telephone number).
- 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, internal or external to Tufts.
- 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, methods, 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.
- Letters of recommendation, commitment, and/or support.