



# Office of Graduate Fellowships and Awards

SPRING 2018 NEWSLETTER



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# OFFICE OF GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

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The Office of Graduate Fellowships and Awards advocates for graduate education by building relationships within the FSU community that foster a culture where the fellowship application process is an integral part of the FSU graduate school experience.

## SPRING 2018 NEWSLETTER

Happy New Year and welcome back!

We hope your break was restful and meaningful. We had a very busy and exciting fall and are excited about what is in store for the spring. We mentioned in the fall that the 2017-2018 year was shaping up to be another banner year for external funding. At the time, we were pretty sure that FSU graduate students would surpass last year's numbers in terms of awards won and funding received. Now we are confident that we will surpass last year's numbers and that is all because of the hard work you have been doing in your research and creative endeavors.

As we do every year, we want to celebrate you and your achievements at our annual Celebration of Graduate

Student Excellence in April. We will share more details about the Celebration as we get closer to the event. Until then, if you've won an external award during the 2017-2018 year, we want to know about it. [Please submit your award information here.](#)

If you have resolved to apply for fellowships and awards this year or are interested in getting started but don't quite know where to begin, we are here to help. Check out our monthly [Upcoming Fellowship Deadlines](#) announcement to see a curated list of opportunities that might be a good fit for you. You can also check out additional resources on our [website](#), [request a meeting](#) to learn about conducting a funding search and to get your fellowship questions answered, and register to attend our [workshops](#).

# FELLOWSHIP SPOTLIGHT

## FLORIDA GUBERNATORIAL FELLOWS PROGRAM DEVELOPS FUTURE LEADERS

The [Florida Gubernatorial Fellows Program](#) combines service, leadership development, and public policy to give students interested in public service hands-on experience in state government. The non-partisan program was established in 2004 by Governor Jeb Bush to develop future leaders. The program was created from the belief that the best way to ensure Florida's greatness is to actively educate and support its future leaders.

Fellows are placed in high-level positions in state agencies where they receive advanced on-the-job training as well as an invaluable front-line view of the inner workings of government by working alongside top administrators, attending weekly discussions with state officials, participating in policy trips around the state and to Washington, D.C., and making their own policy proposal.

Fellows receive a tuition waiver, small stipend, and are paid as employees of their respective agencies. But in addition to the financial benefits, the program represents opportunities to: learn about state government from the inside, meet and work alongside prominent officials at the state and national levels, and learn more about themselves and how to best realize their passion. The program is open to students from all disciplines as you can see from this year's winners.

Of the 138 alumni of the Florida Gubernatorial Fellows Program, 74 have been Florida State graduate students (53%). We are excited to have six fellows in the 2017-2018 cohort. They are shown below with their academic department and state agency placement.

## 2017-2018 FLORIDA GUBERNATORIAL FELLOWS



**Jamaal Harrison**  
Higher Education  
Department of Juvenile Justice



**Rose Luzader**  
Oceanography  
Division of Emergency Management



**Raymond Mazzie**  
Law/Business  
Florida Lottery



**Mallory Neumann**  
Law  
Department of Agriculture and  
Consumer Services



**Dylan Rettig**  
International Affairs  
Department of Elder Affairs



**Erica Wells**  
Psychology  
Department of Juvenile Justice

# APPLICATION TIP



## WRITING A STRONG PERSONAL STATEMENT

The personal statement is one of the most commonly requested elements of fellowship applications and it is one of the most important. This document is sometimes the only space you have to paint a picture of who you are for the review committee and to make a case for why you are a good fit for the award that you are applying for. Let's face it, the Personal Statement can be very difficult to write. Here are a few things to keep in mind as you prepare your personal statement.

Think of the personal statement as a sales pitch. You are selling yourself (including your knowledge, skills, and abilities) to the organization and making a case for how you can help them further their mission. Thus, every personal statement you write should be tailored to each organization. This takes time, so start early. You will have to write multiple drafts and you should get multiple people to review your statement for you.

If there is a prompt, make sure you address the prompt. Reviewers will likely have a rubric they use to score applications and they will be looking to see how you've addressed the prompt. Do not ignore the prompt because you have a story you really want to tell.

Speaking of stories: be strategic. Chances are you have a lot of interesting stories you can tell, but this is not the time to tell an interesting story simply because it is interesting. Rather, choose stories that can help you make your case. For instance, choose a story that highlights your leadership skills

or that shows you have the experience and skills necessary to do what you're proposing to do. For instance, if you are applying for an intensive overseas language program, choose stories that speak to your previous international experiences, or if you don't have any, choose stories that demonstrate how you approach new environments.

Make sure to consider how the statement flows and how you frame your stories and examples. You can do this with a bit of intentional framing. For instance, instead of just telling a story about your role in an organization, consider adding a bit of framing like, "I further developed my leadership skills during my time as..." This framing should also take into account the full picture that you paint of who you are, your skills, and how this award fits into your future academic and career goals.

Don't forget to take the time to proofread. The personal statement is a chance for you to make your case, but it also serves as a writing sample. As such, it should be an example of some of your best work. Make sure there are no typos or grammatical errors. Reading your statement out loud can often help you catch minor mistakes you might otherwise miss.

Finally, remember that we are here to support you, so don't be afraid to ask for help.

# FELLOW'S PERSPECTIVE

The half of knowledge is to  
know where to find knowledge



## HOW TO WIN A FELLOWSHIP (AND WHY IT MATTERS)

1. **Know that you can:** It sounds silly, but believing you can do something is often the first step to actually doing it. Don't fall prey to imposter syndrome! The fact that you are here means you deserve to be here.

2. **Know why you should want to:** Sure the money is great, but the real prize here is the prestige. This will continue to help you down the road when your 1-5 years of financial support are done. Once you win one fellowship, it's much easier to get the next fellowship/grant/job.

3. **Know what it takes:** Professors, cover your eyes! Yes, grades do matter. Publications matter. Don't have any publications? Ask your PI if you can write a review or "Journal Club" article. Be obsessive over the application details (requirements, deadlines, etc.).

4. **Know where to go for help:** Your best resource is a fellow student who has won the award you are applying for. Additionally, any university worth its salt will have an Office of Graduate Fellowships and Awards. FSU happens to have a great one! When in doubt, I always turned to Google or GradCafe for answers. There are treasure troves of information out there, so start digging!

5. **Know your audience:** Is it the NIH, NSF, AHA, or the DOD? OMG! Know

your audience, people! Are the reviewers experts or non-experts in your field? Basic research or applied/translational? And remember, it doesn't matter how good you think it is, it matters how good they think it is.

6. **Start early:** "A grad student in procrastination tends to stay in procrastination unless an external force is applied to it" (PhD Comics). Start small by filling in the easy info within the application (personal, education, work history, etc.). Once that's out of the way, get a draft on paper. Give yourself permission for it to be crappy, but get it done. Asking for recommendation letters early may even force you to turn that crap draft into a half-way-decent-who-am-I-kidding-this-is-still-pretty-awful draft.

7. **Develop your spike:** Have you ever heard the saying "Jack of all trades, master of none"? Don't be Jack. Jack never wins anything. Reviewers don't want you to be good at everything, or even great at everything. They want you to be exceptional at something. Find something you're good at, something that you're passionate about, and become exceptional at it.

8. **Tell a good story:** How you say it is as important as what you say. Everyone's story is different, but everyone's story should point to the same conclusion.

That conclusion is that you are exceptionally qualified and undoubtedly deserving of the XYZ fellowship. If that's not clear by the end of your essay, you're wasting your time and the reader's time.

9. **Revise, revise, revise:** The more eyes looking at your application, the better. Have a rotation of reviewers so the same person isn't reading your essays over and over. Give it to your labmate; give it to your friend; give it to your mom; give it to anyone who will read it and provide constructive feedback. I went through at least eight rounds of revision before I submitted my winning NSF GRFP proposal. That number might even be too low.

10. **Persevere!** Most applications are rejected (often >80%) and you're unlikely to win on your first or even second try. Luckily, it gets easier each time. If you're honest with yourself, you'll be able to learn from your mistakes and make your application that much better.

Good luck, and keep pushing!

*Zachary Jones is PhD student in Biomedical Sciences and a 2017 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program Awardee. This work was adapted with permission from [exploresciworld.com](http://exploresciworld.com).*

# HIGHLIGHTING SUCCESS



The past few years have been the most successful ever for FSU graduate students. They continue to win prestigious national awards to support their research and creative endeavors. Here are just a few of our recent winners.



**REGINALD HARRIS**  
Business Administration

McKnight Dissertation Fellowship



**KAREN CORBETT**  
Molecular Biophysics

American Heart Association  
Predoctoral Fellowship



**CAROLIN FINE**  
Classics

American School of Classical  
Studies at Athens Lucy Shoe  
Meritt Fellowship



**JIN HYUNG KIM**  
Educational Leadership &  
Policy Studies

Fulbright Foreign  
Student Program



**KENNETH  
SOCKWELL**  
Scientific Computing

Department of Energy Office  
of Science Graduate Student  
Research Program



**ALLYSON GATES**  
History

U.S. Army Center of Military  
History Dissertation Year  
Fellowship

# HIGHLIGHTING SUCCESS



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**BEHNAM KESHAVARZ**  
Nutrition & Food Science

Florida Association for Food  
Protection Scholarship



**ANSHIKA KAPUR**  
Biochemistry

NSF Improving Graduate Student  
Preparedness for the Chemistry  
Workforce Supplement



**MARITZA CABALLERO**  
Business Administration

Florida Mexico Institute Out-of-  
State Tuition Waiver



**DUSTIN PEARSON**  
Creative Writing

McKnight Doctoral Fellowship



**CARSON BAY**  
Religion

Josephine de Karman Fellowship



**JASMIN GRAHAM**  
Biological Science

National Science Foundation  
Graduate Research Fellowship  
Program

# SPRING 2018 WORKSHOPS



## **Funding Your Graduate Education/Funding Database Search**

January 16 | 2pm-3:30pm | HSF Great Hall

Identifying prospective external fellowships and awards is the first step in the fellowship application process. In this interactive session, learn how to navigate the comprehensive funding database, Pivot. The goal is to conduct a funding search and create a fellowship action plan with your research, interest, needs, and a reasonable timeline in mind. Please bring your laptop or tablet.

## **Crafting a Competitive Personal Statement**

January 30 | 2pm-3:30pm | HSF 3009

Writing about yourself can be difficult; however, the Personal Statement is a very critical component in a fellowship application. In this session, Leah Sibbitt (the Career Center) will give tips and suggestions on how to craft and draft a competitive personal statement.

## **Personal Statement Lab for Non-Native English Speakers**

February 2 | 2pm-3:30pm | HSF 3009

March 7 | 2pm-3:30pm | Hecht House

In this session for non-native speakers of English, staff from the Center for Intensive English Studies (CIES) will cover the vocabulary, phrases, and organizational patterns needed to draft a strong personal statement suited for various kinds of fellowship applications. CIES and OGFA staff will be on hand to provide individual consultations. Bring a draft of your personal statement. Space will be limited.

## **The Basics of Proposal Writing**

February 6 | 2pm-3:30pm | HSF Great Hall

Mike Mitchell (Office of Proposal Development) will facilitate a workshop focused on persuasive writing techniques for proposals. Topics include: introduction to proposal writing, essential points to address in the application, look fors in a winning proposal, and tips and strategies to support clear, concise, interesting and persuasive writing.

## **Writing the Curriculum Vitae (CV)/Resume**

February 15 | 11:30am-1pm | HSF 3009

Learn what to include and what not to include on your fellowship application resume or CV. Think of your audience and consider the mission and vision of the sponsoring agency. Leah Sibbitt (the Career Center) will offer valuable advice, tips, and strategies for writing an effective resume or CV. This workshop will be accompanied by two labs where discipline specific Career Center Liaisons will be on site to review your CV and provide feedback (see scheduled dates below).

## **Workshop Your CV Labs**

February 26 | 11:30am-1pm | HSF 3009

March 5 | 2pm-3:30pm | HSF 3009

## **Language Study Opportunities**

February 20 | 2pm-3pm | HSF 3009

This workshop will cover various opportunities to work on your language skills, including opportunities to study a language abroad. Opportunities such as the Critical Language Scholarship, DAAD, and the Boren Fellowship, among others, will be covered. We will provide an overview of the awards and their application processes and provide space for questions.

## **Letters of Recommendation and Cover Letters**

March 22 | 2pm-3pm | HSF 3009

Two key components of any fellowship or award are the letters of recommendation and the cover letter. Your cover letter is often your first impression. Letters of recommendation help paint a fuller picture of who you are as an applicant. Learn how to craft your cover letter and how to request letters of recommendation, what should go into these critical documents, and tips to help facilitate the request and follow-up for submission of strong letters.

\*All workshops qualify for PFF and PFP credit