



## MEMORANDUM

FROM: Ashley Leeds, Director of Graduate Studies, Political Science  
TO: Political Science Faculty and Graduate Students  
DATE: December 1, 2014  
RE: Criteria for Department Summer Funding

Current students in good standing may request summer funding from the Department of Political Science. The final decision to award funding will be made by the Director of Graduate Studies, who will seek the advice of the Graduate Committee concerning the quality of the proposals. Total funding awarded in a given summer will depend on the funds available and the quality of the proposals received. All award requests must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies by no later than March 31<sup>st</sup> of the year in which funding is sought. Requests must include a completed “Summer Funding Request Cover Sheet” as well as a proposal described below.

Each award request must fall into one of the three categories discussed below. Students may make up to two requests, across categories or within one category, except where any request falls into Category 1. Each request must be made with a separate proposal. No student will receive more than a total of \$5,000 of support from the graduate budget in any given summer.

### *Funding Categories:*

#### **Category 1: Dissertation Research**

Students are eligible to request Category 1 funding if they have (a) successfully defended a dissertation prospectus on or prior to March 31<sup>st</sup> of the year in which funding is sought and (b) not received Category 1 funding in a prior year.

The purpose of Category 1 funds is to provide PhD. candidates with money for summer living expenses so that they can work *exclusively* on dissertation research. Thus, students receiving these funds may not receive any other funding from the department (e.g., for research assistantship work for a faculty member) for the summer in which the award is granted. Students may, however, receive dissertation-related funding from outside sources for the summer, which will have no effect on the amount of the department award unless the outside funding covers living expenses. The funding for Category 1 awards will be lower than the maximum summer funding permitted from the graduate budget.

To be considered for this award, the eligible student must submit a proposal of 500-1000 words explaining the goals to be accomplished in the dissertation research over the summer months. The faculty dissertation advisor must certify on the cover sheet that he/she has read this proposal and believes that the goals are likely to be accomplished over the summer. The Graduate Committee will evaluate feasibility and determine whether the goals are set sufficiently high to warrant department funding. In the proposal, the student should also explain what other forms of dissertation support from outside sources he/she has applied for (e.g., the NSF, the Rice University Social Sciences Research Institute, the Wagoner fellowship, etc.). If the student has not applied for any outside funding, the student should explain why he/she did not apply for outside funds.

At the beginning of the fall semester immediately following the summer of the award, the student must provide a report to the Graduate Committee reviewing the progress made toward accomplishing the goals set out in the proposal. The faculty dissertation advisor must approve this report. If the committee is unsure from the written report if adequate progress has been made, the committee may request more information from the student or the dissertation advisor, either orally or in writing. If the current Graduate Committee members decide that the student has not made satisfactory progress toward the summer goals, the student will be ineligible for *any* non-stipend department support for the next summer or the next academic year (including, for example, travel funding for conferences).

## **Category 2: Research Activity and Training**

The purpose of Category 2 funds is to provide resources for students who (a) need further training in areas important to the development of their research program (e.g., statistical methods, foreign languages, etc.) or (b) wish to engage in research-related activities that will result in progress towards the dissertation or dissertation prospectus. This award is not intended to cover local living expenses for students who are conducting their own research over the summer or engaging in self-training activities.

To be considered for this award, the student must submit a proposal of 500-1000 words explaining the goals to be accomplished in the training or research-related activities over the summer months. The student must make a compelling argument that the training or research-related activities are critical to the advancement of his/her research program. The student must also demonstrate that the funding sought is cost-effective. In particular, it must be demonstrated that the training or research needs of the student cannot be achieved without department funding in the amount being requested—e.g., if statistical training is being requested, that the same training cannot be acquired at Rice within the academic year, or if foreign language training abroad is being requested, that comparable training cannot be acquired by taking a summer class locally. The student must provide a detailed budget of projected expenses. The Graduate Committee will evaluate whether the request for training or research-related activities is critical to the advancement of the student's research program and whether the goals to be accomplished are commensurate with the level of funds being requested.

At the beginning of the fall semester immediately following the summer of the award, a student who received summer funding for research-related activities must submit a report discussing the

types of skills acquired/research completed over the summer. The Graduate Committee may also require this student to produce documentation indicating his/her success in accomplishing the goals set out in the funding request (e.g., a transcript, graded assignments, a program certificate, etc.). If the committee is unsure from the written report if the student completed the appropriate training/research successfully, the committee may request more information from the student or the dissertation advisor, either orally or in writing. If the current Graduate Committee members decide that the student has not fulfilled his/her summer commitment to training/research, the student will be ineligible for *any* non-stipend department support for the next summer or the next academic year (including, for example, travel funding for conferences).

### **Category 3: Research Assistantships**

The purpose of Category 3 funding is to provide supplemental resources to students who are being employed by Political Science faculty over the summer as research assistants. In allotting these funds, the Director of Graduate Studies will review all sources of department funding that a student expects to receive for work on faculty projects during a given summer, including support from individual faculty grants or research accounts. No student will receive funding from the graduate budget that results in that student receiving more than a total of \$5,000 of support for research assistance.

To be considered for this award, the student (after consulting the faculty member(s) employing him or her) must submit a proposal of 500-1000 words explaining the goals to be accomplished in the research assistantship. A student employed on different projects by different faculty members must submit a separate request for each project. The student is expected to discuss how accomplishing the goals set out in the request will contribute to his/her development as a scholar and how the projected tasks to be performed relate to these goals. Note that the key factor considered by the graduate committee is the benefit to the student, not the faculty member. Each faculty employer must certify on the cover sheet that he/she has read the request and believes that the tasks to be performed are important to the student's development. The Graduate Committee will evaluate whether the projected research tasks are sufficiently valuable for the training of the student that the request warrants supplemental department funding.

At the beginning of the fall semester immediately following the summer of the award, the employing faculty member will be asked to report whether the student fulfilled his or her commitment during the summer. If the faculty member reports that the student did not complete his/her work adequately, the graduate committee will collect information from the faculty member and the student and determine whether the student met the conditions of the summer funding. If the committee determines that the student did not perform the work associated with summer funding, the student will be ineligible for *any* non-stipend department support for the next summer or the next academic year (including, for example, travel funding for conferences).