



MEMORANDUM

February 19, 2009

FROM: Lanny Martin, Director of Graduate Studies, Political Science
TO: Political Science Faculty and Graduate Students
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. All award requests must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies by no later than March 31st of the year in which funding is sought. Requests must be made using the Summer Funding Request and Exit Approval Form, which is available on the department web site.

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 separately. Regardless of the number of requests made by a student, any amount awarded from the graduate budget will be adjusted by the Director of Graduate Studies to ensure that no student receives more than \$5,000 of summer support from the department. All sources of department funding for the summer (including, for example, support from individual faculty grants or research accounts) will count towards this \$5,000 maximum.

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 31st of the year in which funding is sought and (b) not received Category 1 funding in a prior year. Students who have been in the program for six academic years or more are unlikely to receive this award.

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.

To receive this award, the eligible student must indicate on the Summer Funding Request and Exit Approval Form the goals to be accomplished in the dissertation research over the summer months. The faculty dissertation advisor will have to certify on the form that he/she has read these goals and believes that they are likely to be accomplished over the summer. The Graduate Committee will make an independent evaluation of feasibility as well as determine whether the goals are set sufficiently high to warrant department funding. The student must also provide written documentation that he/she has applied for other forms of dissertation support from outside sources (e.g., the NSF, the Rice University Social Sciences Research Institute, etc.). Finally, the student must present a detailed budget of projected (local) living expenses for the summer. The limit of this award is \$2,500.

At the beginning of the fall semester immediately following the summer of the award, the student will make a presentation to the Graduate Committee, which must also be attended by the faculty dissertation advisor (unless he/she is on leave), whereby the student must demonstrate to the Graduate Committee that he/she has accomplished the goals set out in the original funding request. If the current Graduate Committee members decide by consensus that the student has accomplished these goals, they will sign the “Exit Approval” portion of the Summer Funding Request and Exit Approval Form. If the committee decides that the student has not accomplished these 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 primarily 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 living expenses for students who are conducting their own research over the summer or engaging in self-training activities.

To receive this award, the student must indicate on the Summer Funding Request and Exit Approval Form 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. The limit of this award is \$5,000.

At the beginning of the fall semester immediately following the summer of the award, a student who received summer funding for research-related activities will make a presentation to the Graduate Committee, whereby the student must demonstrate to the Graduate Committee that he/she has accomplished the goals set out in the original funding request. A student who received summer funding for training will submit a 1-2 page report discussing the types of skills acquired 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.). In either case, if the current Graduate Committee members decide by consensus that the student has accomplished these goals, they will sign the "Exit Approval" portion of the Summer Funding Request and Exit Approval Form. If the committee decides that the student has not accomplished these 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).

In some cases, these funds may be awarded to students to train other students in the Political Science program in techniques or on themes that are not adequately covered in our regular courses. Requests of this kind must be accompanied by a description of the skills the students will be expected to acquire and why this training is important to the scholarly development of the students. The student requesting funding must also make a convincing case that he/she is qualified to train other students in the subject. If an award is granted, the Director of Graduate Studies will request, before the beginning of the fall semester following the summer of the award, that students who received the training evaluate the instructor in terms of his/her accomplishment of each goal set out in the funding request. The Graduate Committee will review these evaluations. If the committee decides that the requesting student has not accomplished his/her 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 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.

To receive this award, the student (after consulting the faculty member(s) employing them) must indicate on the Summer Funding Request and Exit Approval Form the goals to be accomplished in the research assistantship. A student employed by multiple faculty members on multiple projects 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 directly or indirectly to his/her development as a scholar and how the projected tasks to be performed relate to these goals. Each faculty employer will have to certify on the form 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 independently evaluate whether the projected research tasks are sufficiently valuable for the training of the student that the request warrants supplemental department funding. The award will match one-to-one the amount of funding provided by the faculty employer(s) up to an amount of \$2,500, subject to the constraint that the total amount provided to the student from all department sources will not exceed \$5,000. In the event the total amount of all department funding to the student is greater than \$5,000, the Director of Graduate Students will adjust the amount awarded from the graduate budget downward, which implies that the matching funds from the Category 3 award will therefore be less than one-to-one.

At the beginning of the fall semester immediately following the summer of the award, a student who received summer matching funds for a research assistantship will submit a 1-2 page report describing his/her activities in the assistantship and will affirm that he/she satisfied the goals as set out in the funding request. If the tasks changed from the original request because of changes in the needs of the employing faculty member(s), the student should address this point and discuss how these new tasks contributed to his/her development as a scholar. The employing faculty member will need to certify on the Summer Funding Request and Exit Approval Form that he/she agrees with the student's report. If the current Graduate Committee members decide by consensus that the student has accomplished his/her goals, they will sign the "Exit Approval" portion of the Summer Funding Request and Exit Approval Form. If the committee decides that the student has not accomplished his/her 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).