October 31, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Department Chairpersons and Graduate Program Directors

FROM: David A. Francko, Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

SUBJECT: Graduate Council Fellowship Nominations Round 1: Student Recruitment (Nominations Due January 14, 2016)

We are pleased to announce Graduate Council Fellowship (GCF) Round 1 nominations for the 2015/16 academic year. This round is aimed at new graduate students who show excellence in their field and who might not commit to UA without this award. Students can be nominated in three ways.

1) Departments can choose to take part in the Fellowship Enhancement Partnership (FEP) program. For a maximum of five students for GCF rounds 1, 3, and 4, departments can commit up to $4000/student. This will be matched by Graduate School for a maximum total stipend of $23,000. The following applies to this category:
   a. Departments must commit to a 0.5 FTE assistantship in the second year.
   b. Doctoral students will receive the additional departmental contribution and Graduate School match for two years. Master’s students will receive the additional departmental contribution and Graduate School match in year 1 only.
   c. Chairs wishing to take part in the FEP program must send a memo to the Dean of the Graduate School by January 8, 2016 indicating how many FEP students they are willing to support and the dollar value of the enhancement per student that they are willing to commit.

2) Departments have the option to award a .50 assistantship in addition to the GCF. However, we request that you do not cannibalize assistantships that could support an additional student.

3) Departments can choose to nominate applicants for the minimum $15,000 stipend.

Nomination Process

Nominees must have been officially admitted to the Graduate School prior to the nomination deadline. Nominate only two applicants or no more than 5% of your department/program fall 2015 enrollment, whichever is greater. Submit your nominations electronically at http://graduate.ua.edu/gs.html (select box 5D) no later than 4:30 pm on January 14, 2016. Please note the following:

• Submit at least one letter of nomination. See included guidelines on writing nomination letters.
• Nominees should have GPAs above 3.5 on all coursework. Nominees typically should also have admission test scores above the national average, when required. **Quantitative qualifications** (GPA or admission test scores) alone are insufficient to determine eligibility for this fellowship.

• If your nominee did not digitally submit 1) letters of recommendation; 2) statement of purpose; and 3) CV/résumé, these documents must either be uploaded to AppDocs PRIOR to submission or uploaded as part of the nomination package.

For the purpose of a GCF, a new student is defined as a student who has earned not more than 6 hours of UA graduate credit in their intended degree program at the start of the Fall 2016 semester (or the Summer 2016 semester if starting early). Students selected for a GCF will be expected to register as full-time students with 12 credits each term of the fellowship. If departments elect to award a .50 assistantship to fellowship recipients, students will be allowed to take a minimum of 9 graduate hours. Please note that, unlike an assistantship, a fellowship may reduce the base level of total allowable federal financial aid. If your nominee is selected for a GCF and plans to receive federal loans or aid, he or she should contact the UA Student Financial Aid Office before accepting the fellowship.

**Nomination Letter Guidelines**

The nomination letters are **VERY** important. The following suggestions were developed by the Graduate Council Fellowship & Scholarship Committee to assist you in writing your nomination letter.

• If the student has published, presented, or received awards, emphasize these accomplishments. If a student has published an article in a journal, additional information such as acceptance rate is useful.

• Clearly explain how the nominee’s credentials are superior in their particular field using language and terminology that can be easily understood.

• Give comparative information that helps committee members assess the nominee’s status and performance relative to other nominees. For example, if the nominee has presented a paper as an undergraduate student, explain if this is typical or not for your field.

• Personalize the letter and highlight the specific strengths of the student and how each of these strengths will contribute to the department.

• If the student has been accepted by other institutions, include information about these institutions.

• Explains weaknesses that are readily apparent in the applicant’s materials. If a student has a low admission test score, offer some insight.

• Be concise and well organized. It is OK to use bullets and bold print to emphasize the main points that you want the committee member to remember about your nominee.

**Other Upcoming Graduate Council Fellowship Deadlines**

Round 2 (current students)  February 4, 2016
Round 3 (student recruitment)  
February 25, 2016

Round 4 (student recruitment)  
March 24, 2015

c: Dr. Kevin Whitaker  
Deans