NSF GRFP WORKSHOP

Liz Hall – Dept. of Anthropology

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Logistics

References
- Contact references ahead of time - Sometime it takes a while for people to get back to you, and you want to make sure you give potential references enough time to respond and write a thoughtful letter of support (if they agree)
- Provide references with a draft of your research proposal and personal statement ahead of time - or at least give them an idea of the type of research you hope to do
- You can also provide a copy of the GRFP merit review criteria: https://www.nsfgrfp.org/applicants/application_components/merit_review_criteria
- Plan on having 5 references just in case - You never know who might not make the deadline for references; it's always good to have backup!

Fastlane
- Try to fill out your application on Fastlane ahead of time in case you encounter any technical difficulties such as:
  - Uploading transcript
  - Filling out application

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Additional tips for the application

- You'll need to prepare for these additional questions:
  - "Other experience: List teaching and work experiences relevant to your field of study since entering college/university. Experiences do not have to be limited to the academic realm. (Up to but no more than five are recommended."
  - "List your significant academic honors, fellowships, scholarships, publications and presentations."
- Note that special characters (e.g. " "") will show up as question marks (?) on the final form. If you copy and paste items from your CV into the text editor, look out for weird characters on the final application.
- If the application system won't accept your .pdf file, use a pdf printer (like this one: http://www.bullzip.com/products/pdf/info.php) to "print" your application as a new .pdf file and try uploading again.

Preparing your essays

- Multiple drafts
  - Don't get discouraged!

- Ask a variety of people to read over it - get different perspectives

- Capture the reviewer's attention
  - **Bold** or *italicized* font
  - Sections (i.e. background, methods, research aims, etc.)
  - Clear section on broader impacts and intellectual merit
  - Title for research proposal
  - Introductory narrative
  - What are reviewers looking for – broader impacts and intellectual merit
  - Conference presentations
  - Capability – methodological capability – had training and access to data, research is possible
  - How have your experiences informed your work and your identity as a young researcher?

What are the reviewers looking for?

- Broader impact
  - **Research project**: Communicate how your research adds to the bigger picture of scientific advancement and knowledge.
    - Broader impact makes your social scientific research relevant to a natural scientific audience.
    - Also, can you disseminate your research to the public through outlets other than the typical academic outlets?
  - **Personal statement**: Demonstrate how you actively contribute to the scientific community or to other important initiatives beyond the narrow scope of your research.

- Intellectual merit
  - **Research proposal**: Research builds off of current knowledge and theory in your discipline and contributes important information back to your discipline.
  - **Personal statement**: Not only is your research feasible and needed, but you have the skills and capability to carry it out successfully. Illustrate this through your experience, skills, and training.

  See the GRFP merit review criteria: https://www.nsfgrfp.org/applicants/application_components/merit_review_criteria

Examples from our reviewer comments and experience:

- Demonstrate public outreach and scientific contributions
  - Public or conference presentations, papers, etc.
  - Show your commitment to the local, global, and/or scientific community

- Demonstrate your ability to actually carry out the research
  - Highlight specific training, skills, and collaborations with experts in your field
  - Discuss how your past experiences inform your research

- Use your personal essay to tell a story that illustrates your passion for and interest in your research area

- Don't always ignore the weaknesses in your application - Embrace them and turn them into strengths. (i.e. past academic record, GRE scores, "random" non-academic experiences, lack of training, etc.)

- Oh, and don't forget about the incentive grant!

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