

OccidentalCollege



Professional Advantage Post-Graduation Fellowship in Psychology

- **Objective:** To support up to three exceptionally promising Psychology majors in an intensive professional development experience during the summer immediately after graduation
- **Overview:** The summer after commencement presents a terrific opportunity for new graduates to enhance their readiness for success in graduate school and, after that, a psychology-related career. Currently, for a variety of reasons, a rich summer experience eludes most graduates at Oxy and elsewhere, including those destined to accomplish great things. This fellowship program will enable two or three of them to design a summer experience that will increase their competitiveness for admission to and success in a high-quality graduate program and will help them cultivate relationships in academe, K-12 education, business, and/or clinical settings that will facilitate entry into those communities.
This program will fund new graduates (1) to conduct high-quality empirical research at Oxy or another institution or (2) to participate in an externship in businesses, schools, clinical settings, or not-for-profit organizations. In every case, a Department faculty member will serve as a mentor, in addition to supervision provided at any non-Oxy venues. Explicit attention would be paid to vital professional tools such as comportment, ethics, vita/resume preparation, letters of intent, manuscript preparation, conference presentations, interviewing, and other tools/skills as appropriate to the Fellow's goals. The Fellow also would play a role in the mentoring of current Psychology majors participating in the summer research program and fall semester psychology coursework, creating a multigenerational mentoring cascade.
Prospective Fellows will submit a proposal in the spring of their senior year and will undergo a rigorous selection process. In consultation with their faculty mentor, they will develop and articulate a summer experience appropriate for a college graduate of their unique qualifications and aspirations. Funding at a level of \$30,000 per year will be sufficient to make the experience feasible for a broad cross-section of students and attractive to faculty mentors and collaborators at non-Oxy venues.
- **Details:** Details of selection, scope (by example), budget, and assessment are as follows:

Selection

Process: The Pro-Ad program will be advertised to psychology seniors during the fall semester. Students will develop a proposal in consultation with their Oxy faculty mentor, aiming for a deadline in February. Department faculty will review and rank the proposals. Up to three students will be offered a fellowship, and one or two others will be selected as alternates. If no proposals are deemed excellent in all respects, no fellowships will be awarded. Students will be notified of outcomes between early- to mid-March. Those selected for funding at a non-Oxy venue then would have to secure a commitment from the non-Oxy mentor by late March. If one declines or is unable to secure a commitment from a non-Oxy mentor, the fellowship will be offered to an alternate.

Criteria: Applications would be evaluated on the following bases:

Eligibility: Students meeting these criteria will be invited to apply:

- Declared Psychology major;
- On track to graduate the following May;
- Committed to earning a doctorate in Psychology (PhD, PsyD), terminal Masters degree in Psychology (MSW, MFT, MA in I/O), or other professional degree appropriate to a

psychology-related career (health, law, business, education, sport), with funding priority in that order; and

- Plans to begin graduate/professional school within three years of graduation.

Quality of proposal: Each applicant will be asked to articulate her/his psychology-related professional goal, a detailed plan for the fellowship, and how the two are linked, i.e. how the knowledge and skills gained through the fellowship experience will significantly increase the applicant's competitiveness for admission to high quality graduate/professional programs and, thereafter, success in her/his chosen career path. The difference between the fellowship experience and what the applicant accomplished as an undergraduate must be clear. The proposal also must include/demonstrate:

- a statement of how her/his professional success will benefit others;
- a clear understanding of the programmatic objectives of the fellowship;
- a feasibility assessment, including a well-informed plan for gaining necessary institutional review board or other administrative approvals;
- a description of the nature and extent of the working relationship between Fellow and mentor(s);
- an unofficial transcript for all college-level work (including any transfer credits);
- a plan for "giving back" to the Department during the summer and/or the following academic year (e.g. presentations to majors, working with Psi Chi on a service project, guest lectures, online mentoring, etc.); and
- a budget to cover costs associated with the fellowship (travel, supplies, etc.)

The potential for the applicant to make her/his mark on the world, the creativity and impactfulness of the proposed fellowship experience, and the quality of the Fellow/mentor relationship will weigh most heavily in evaluation of applications.

Support of potential mentor(s): Every applicant must have a letter of support and commitment from a member of the Department, who would serve as the Fellow's mentor. The potential mentor's appraisal of the student's likelihood of achieving her/his goal and eagerness to work with her/him will be critical. If the proposal involves work at a non-Oxy venue (another academic institution, community organization, business, or school, etc.), the Oxy faculty mentor's letter of support must include a report on a preliminary feasibility assessment based on the Oxy faculty mentor's direct contact with the potential mentor at the non-Oxy site; if the proposal is selected for support, a letter of commitment from the non-Oxy mentor with authority to approve the fellowship then must be solicited. **Pending award decisions, applicants should not contact non-Oxy mentors directly.**

Scope of program: The application process will be open to students proposing on-campus and off-campus experiences. Fellowships involving international collaboration or travel will be considered. "Real life" examples of recent graduates who could have benefitted from this program include:

- Laura Cousins, '09: In her senior year, Laura completed a Practicum (unpaid, for academic credit) at City of Hope, on a project examining the cognitive effects of chemotherapy in children with cancer. The project director wanted to keep her on after graduation, in a full-time position with more responsibilities. Funding for the position did not come through in time, and Laura had to take another position.
- Brian Arizmendi, '10: This summer, Brian has an unpaid internship at USC, working on a twin study of childhood predictors of psychopathy (anti-social personality disorder). His participation is limited because he has to hold a paying job, too.
- Jesse Fisher, '10: This summer, Jesse has an unpaid internship at UCLA, working on a longitudinal study of how life stress in late adolescence relates to adult-onset anxiety disorders. Like, Brian, his participation is limited by a concurrent paying job.

Hypothetical examples of other (non-research) experiences we would consider for funding include:

- On campus: An excellent student transfers to Oxy as a junior and does well in his coursework and fieldwork with children with autism. In his senior year, he assists a faculty member on a research

project but has insufficient time to advance to conducting an original empirical project, which is essential for admission to top PhD programs in clinical psychology. He proposes a project in cognitive development, with Dr. Andrew Shtulman (Cognitive) as mentor.

- Community based: A student aspiring to earn a PhD in Organizational Psychology and work in the private sector takes Organizational Psychology and Psychological Assessment and is mentored by Dr. Brian Kim during her senior year on a research project on detecting deception in employment settings. She has excelled in all of this work; however, she will graduate without first-hand workplace experience. She proposes to do an externship at Dreamworks, focusing on how the company identifies unusual potential for innovation during the hiring process. Dr. Kim (Organizational) would continue as her mentor.
- International: Inspired by the oil spill in the Gulf, a student proposes a social justice and oil project that includes spending 2-3 weeks in South Africa with Althea Banda-Hansmann, a Department alum and human resource professional in the oil industry (<http://za.linkedin.com/in/altheabandahansmann>). Dr. Jaclyn Rodríguez (Social) would serve as mentor.

Funds per Fellow

We propose a per Fellow budget of \$10,000:

- Stipend: \$5000, with the possibility of a \$1K means-tested supplement
- Project-associated expenses: up to \$2000
- Mentor stipend of \$2,000 (potentially divided between mentors, if more than one)

Allowing \$10,000 per Fellow, the annual expenditure would be \$20,000-30,000, depending on actual expense budgets and how many meritorious proposals are selected for funding.

- Fellows will be eligible for on-campus room and board (currently \$2370/10 weeks). On-campus housing is not available during the summer except during the summer fellowship period. This fact makes it highly desirable to have the formal fellowship period coincide with the 10-week undergraduate summer research program – though some Fellows may begin earlier and/or continue later than that period.
- The stipend is, appropriately, more than the summer stipend for undergraduates in Oxy's summer research program (\$3,900). It is not enough to persuade students motivated primarily by money to forego lucrative employment offers. The supplemented stipend is similar to what a full-time casual worker at the College would make in 10 weeks (\$5865, or \$30,500 annualized).
- Not all excellent applicants will be economically disadvantaged. Means-testing the supplement would provide additional support only to students with financial hardship.
- Fellows will have to pay taxes on the stipend; taxes will not be withheld, so they will be responsible for paying their own taxes. (Note: There is no mechanism by which Fellows would be eligible for health insurance.)
- Project-associated expenses will vary depending on the project. They will include such items as travel, disposable laboratory or office supplies, computer hardware or software, business cards, payments to research participants (typically \$10 each), or donations to not-for-profit fellowship venues.
- Grants to individual faculty generally provide a 2/9 summer salary (~ \$18K for faculty making \$80K). The suggested stipend will not serve as an inducement to faculty otherwise disinclined to serve as a mentor but will be an appropriate honorarium for their service.

Assessment

All agree that it is important to take stock of whether this program is worth the resources devoted to it. Assessment would consist of:

- Two reports from the Fellow due, respectively, one month and one year after the fellowship period ends. Guidelines for the report would ask the Fellow to describe what was accomplished during the summer and to reflect candidly on the experience vis à vis

- objectives stated in the original proposal. The last stipend check would be contingent on receipt of the report.
- A report from the faculty mentor and, if applicable, off-site supervisor. The report would consist of a candid appraisal of the quality and quantity of work accomplished by the Fellow and degree of professional development observed, keyed to the knowledge and skills articulated in the original proposal.

The Department shares with Tod White '59, benefactor of this pilot program, the vision of sustaining the program beyond the two-year pilot period and seeing the program expanded to other departments. We all agree that only a valuable, successful program should be sustained and expanded. For this reason, only exceptional proposal will be supported. After the inaugural year, we will be in a good position to determine together whether the program merits continuation and, if so, the feasibility of maintaining and/or scaling up the program with additional sources of support.

See application process checklist below for detailed information.

PRO-AD Fellowship Application Process Checklist

___ Secure Oxy faculty mentor for application process; provide one page summary including an overview of you as a psychology student (interests, course background, research experience, practicum experience, etc.) AND a statement of interests related to the fellowship. Identify possible fellowship mentors if able.

___ Craft proposal, in consultation with Oxy faculty mentor. Refer to this document for detailed information about the fellowship and what it involves.

___ Items to be included in application packet

___ project proposal

___ statement of feasibility from Oxy faculty mentor

___ budget

___ unofficial transcript

SUBMIT hard copy application packet to Dr. Gorman or Dr. Banis and Oxy Faculty Mentor by MONDAY FEBRUARY 15, 2011 4:00pm. Include cover sheet below as first page of application packet.

Name of Applicant:

Name of Oxy Faculty Mentor:

Items included:

___ **project proposal**

___ **statement of feasibility from Oxy faculty mentor**

___ **budget**

___ **unofficial transcript**

___ **List of potential faculty mentors and/or sites being considered**