Billington Student Research Fellowship in US History
Occidental College, 2020 Guidelines

The History Department is pleased to announce the Billington Student Research Fellowship in US History, which will fund two summer research fellowships for undergraduates conducting archival/primary source research in US History. This is a competitive fellowship and History majors who have completed their junior year will be given some preference in the process. All projects related to the history of the United States from its colonial era to the recent past are eligible. The Billington Student Fellows will participate in the ten-week Summer Research Program offered by the URC. They will also receive a stipend of $4500 paid over ten weeks, subsidized on-campus housing, and a small budget (up to $500) for research expenses. Faculty sponsors who work with students over the summer will receive a stipend of $1000.

The deadline for the Billington Student Research Fellowship is 4pm on Monday, February 10, 2020. Application forms, project proposal, personal statement, budget, and faculty mentor’s recommendation are due by the deadline in the URC office located in the Library/Academic Commons, Main Floor (Old Wing): Room 253A (entrance through Cumberland Reading Room). Additional information and application materials will be posted on the History Department & URC Websites.

Please direct any questions about the Billington Student Research Fellowship to Sharla Fett, History, at sfett@oxy.edu.

About the Billington Fund at Occidental College
The Billington Student Research Fellowships are made possible by the estate of historian Ray Allen Billington and supplemented by a grant from the Times Mirror Foundation. This generous fund brings a distinguished Billington Professor to Occidental College and the Huntington Library every other year. The Billington Student Research Fellowships follow in the tradition of supporting teaching and learning at American liberal arts colleges.

Objectives of the Billington Student Research Fellowship
Research in archival, oral history, or other primary source materials stands at the heart of the historical discipline. Through this competitive summer research fellowship, Occidental History Department offers students an extended opportunity to engage in original historical research and analysis. Billington Student Research Fellows will gain advanced research skills by conducting original historical research in archives, oral history projects, or other special collections in the Los Angeles area.

Support
Billington Student Research Fellows in US History will receive a (taxable) stipend of $450 per week for ten weeks of research. Fellows who choose to live on campus will receive a housing subsidy depending on financial need. Generally, the amount awarded for summer research is taxable, but the College is not obligated to withhold taxes or send a 1099, so students should retain a copy of their contract as part of their tax records. Since individual tax liability depends on each individual's circumstances, Fellows should contact a personal tax advisor with any questions or concerns. In addition, there is $500.00 available to cover research expenses. (Please see URC Summer Research Program website for more details on housing and taxes.)
Expectations
The Billington Student Research Fellowship Program expects close collaboration between Billington Student Fellows and their faculty mentors, as well as interaction between Fellows with their peer researchers in the summer program. Cross-disciplinary exchange will also be facilitated by attendance at the URC’s lunchtime plenary gatherings, featuring guest speakers, lab tours, and roundtable discussion.

Billington Student Research Fellows are expected to:
- a full-time exclusive commitment by Fellows for the entire stated ten-week program period (except in very unusual circumstances, late starts and early departures will not be allowed)
- participation in research ethics training -- in-person at our ethics seminar and through completion of an online certification program
- participation in all area meetings and plenary gatherings
- regular on-campus meetings with the mentor
- participation in the assessment effort
- submission of an abstract of the work
- submission of a five to ten page final report to the URC and to the faculty mentor before receipt of the final study grant payment. (Note: Faculty members may require a longer report. In such cases, the URC will accept a copy of that report. You will not need to write two reports).
- if appropriate, presentation at the fall SCCUR conference. Fellows may also consider presenting their work at the spring NCRC (Harvard) or NCUR (institution varies by year) conferences or other national/professional conferences. The URC may be able to award funding for conference travel presentations.

In addition, there is an expectation that all Fellows will have and maintain high academic and social standing. Applicants should note that their grade report and personal conduct record will be reviewed as part of the application process.

Selection Process
Applicants will be considered by a committee of History Department Faculty members. Students who are selected will be notified before Spring break if possible so that all applicants can make their summer plans accordingly. Factors considered during the selection process are:
- The quality of the proposal, including a demonstrated knowledge of the proposed primary source collection.
- The strength of faculty support
- An effective personal statement
- An academic history consistent with the ability to do the proposed research

Application Process
Students who would like to apply for the Billington Student Research Fellowship should develop an outline of their project and approach a faculty member with whom they would like to work to discuss the feasibility of collaborating with her or him over the summer. Many faculty members prefer that student research be closely aligned with their own work. After you and your potential faculty mentor have agreed to apply for the Billington Student Research Fellowship, you can open an application cover sheet.
Each application must include: (forms available on History Department and URC websites under Billington link)

- Cover sheet – It is a fillable PDF form. Make sure to fill it in completely before printing. You may need to download and install the free Adobe Acrobat reader in order to be able to fill it in via Adobe Acrobat.
- Proposal
- Personal Statement
- Proposed Budget (required; if no budget is requested, check the appropriate box on the budget sheet)
- Mentor’s letter of recommendation specifying his/her role in mentoring you on this project.

All materials submitted as part of the application must use 8.5" x 11" paper, single sided, with 1-inch margins and using Times New Roman or Arial type font no smaller than 11 point and with at least 1.5 line spacing. Paper clip pages together — please do not staple!

Proposals should be approximately 3-4 pages. You should describe the research question you intend to investigate, the archive, library, or special collection that you plan to work in, the specific sources that you will consult, and the methods you propose to use. Explain why your project is important, and what it contributes to understanding of the subject. Literature citations should be included where appropriate (for tables and figures as well as quotes or paraphrased evidence). The proposal should be written to be understandable to a non-specialist.

A Personal Statement of no more than two pages should indicate your preparation (for example, relevant course work completed) to undertake the project, and how this fellowship fits with your educational and career plans.

In addition, fill out the Budget form with justification/explanation of each proposed expense is required if support for supplies, local travel, etc. is requested. Research expense support will be limited to a maximum of $500.00; please bear this in mind as you discuss the feasibility of your project.

Pursuant to federal law and College policy, all research involving human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the College’s Human Subjects Research Review Committee before research begins.

Your Faculty Mentor’s Recommendation must include a description of her/his role in mentoring you in your project. Mentors are expected to be available to the Fellow on a continuing basis, to meet regularly with them in person or via Skype, and to provide support and guidance in carrying out the research project and preparing a final report, poster, or other culminating project. You may submit a confidential hard copy of the faculty recommendation in a signed, sealed envelope with your application with your application, or your mentor may submit the recommendation by email to urc@oxy.edu.

All application materials are due in the URC office by 4pm on Monday, February 10, 2020.

The two student Billington Fellows will be notified by Spring Break so that all applicants can make their summer plans accordingly. Please direct any questions about the Billington Student Research Fellowship to Sharla Fett, History Department at sfett@oxy.edu.
Guidelines for College Subsidized Room and Board Support
Billington Student Research Fellows are eligible for subsidized on-campus room and board. Room and Board support for those students choosing to live off-campus is not available. The Undergraduate Research Center (URC) advisory committee has recommended that summer research students living on campus contribute a portion (depending upon financial need) toward the cost of their summer room and board package. Room and Board is available from Tuesday, May 26th through Saturday, August 1st, 2020 only. On-campus housing may be available in weeks prior to and shortly after the program, however there will be no subsidies offered for those weeks and arrangements must be made directly through Residence Life.