

MARYLAND SEA GRANT GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Maryland Sea Grant (MDSG) is pleased to announce the availability of graduate research fellowships for 2013 – 2014. The fellowships are open to graduate students enrolled at any Maryland academic institution. To be eligible for this fellowship, students must be enrolled in a natural or social sciences graduate degree program and engaged in watershed, coastal or marine research that is relevant to Maryland and the [MDSG Strategic Plan 2010 – 2013](#). In addition to supporting the student's academic expenses, the fellowship will provide additional professional development opportunities in science communication, the science-to-management process and other relevant Sea Grant activities. MDSG is administered by the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science and funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the state of Maryland. MDSG is accepting applications until **September 17, 2012**.¹

I. FELLOWSHIP DESCRIPTION

Maryland Sea Grant is committed to supporting research, education and outreach on current and future issues affecting the Chesapeake Bay and Maryland's coastal waters. As part of this mission, we anticipate awarding up to five one-year or two to three two-year fellowships to support graduate students conducting research within Maryland's coasts and watersheds. These fellowships are available on a competitive basis. An applicant's research must be consistent with the Maryland Sea Grant strategic plan and address one of our four focus areas: 1) Resilient ecosystem processes and responses; 2) Viable coastal communities and economies, 3) Sustainable natural resources; and 4) Adaptation to climate change and sea level rise. Our [strategic plan](#) provides details regarding the focus areas. Maryland Sea Grant emphasizes translational research that is directly applicable to informing key stakeholders outside of academia.

Maryland Sea Grant seeks motivated and dedicated graduate students who are engaged in research that furthers the goals of MDSG in the coastal and marine science fields. We anticipate that this MDSG fellowship opportunity will reach a broad and interested graduate student audience in the natural and social sciences. We are interested in providing fellowship opportunities that increase diversity in the coastal and marine research graduate community, and thus, we encourage applications from students who have been historically underrepresented in the field of marine science.

As part of this fellowship experience, successful candidates should be committed to expanding their engagement with groups beyond academia. To assist with this, Maryland Sea Grant will provide outreach opportunities in core skills relevant to Sea Grant, including education, extension, and communications. As a requirement of the fellowship, in addition to a primary academic advisor, fellows will be expected to work with an

¹ In building regional cooperation, this fellowship request for proposals (RFP) is closely modeled after and consistent with the Virginia Sea Grant's graduate fellowship program RFP in 2012. We look to share training opportunities between our two programs and appreciate VA Sea Grant's consultation in the development of this MD Sea Grant RFP.

outreach or end-user mentor (i.e., extension staff, educator, or end-user) to ensure that their research results are useful to and used by resource managers, policy makers, educators, industry, NGOs, or other stakeholders.

Fellows will be selected based on their academic achievements, the relevance of the proposed research to [MDSG](#)'s mission, and their demonstrated interest in outreach activities. While all qualified graduate students should apply and will be fairly considered, MDSG is interested in increasing diversity in marine research as well as providing support and creating workforce development activities. Students working on coastal and marine research projects funded by non-Sea Grant sources are particularly encouraged to apply.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

The fellowships will provide support for up to two years for highly qualified graduate students (contingent upon the availability of federal funds). Continued support after the first year will be contingent upon satisfactory performance by the Fellow. The anticipated start date is January 1, 2013.

The fellowship provides an award of up to \$30,000 per year. We expect funding to primarily provide stipend support and travel expenses to a significant scientific meeting. Stipend support should be consistent with graduate student support within the home department. Additional funds may cover supplies and other research support costs. Applicants are encouraged to contact the program to discuss budget specifics during proposal development.

Most university-sponsored research programs will require that the award be made to a faculty member (typically the student's primary advisory). While MDSG will make all fellowship awards to the faculty member, students should have the primary leadership role in developing the fellowship proposal.

III. ELIGIBILITY

Students must be enrolled in or admitted to a full-time graduate or professional degree program at a Maryland academic institution at a graduate level. Students who have not yet enrolled should submit a letter of acceptance from the dean of the graduate program through which they are enrolled at their college or university with their application package. Students may be working toward a degree in any natural or social science discipline, as long as their research is Chesapeake Bay watershed-, coastal- or marine-related and relevant to the mission and strategic plan of MDSG.

IV. REQUIREMENTS

Graduate student fellows who are selected will be required to:

- Provide academic progress reports to MDSG on an biannual basis, including a final report and copy of their thesis or dissertation;
- Select and work with a mentor who is an extension, education, or communication staff person or an end-user of research results (e.g., resource manager, teacher) to

ensure that research results are appropriately communicated and translated for end-users;

- Participate in MDSG-sponsored outreach activities, anticipated to be 1-3 activities;
- Attend a national meeting approved by MDSG (include travel in budget); and
- Acknowledge the support of MDSG in all relevant scientific presentations and publications.

At a minimum, outreach or end-user mentors are expected to periodically (no less than 4 times/year) meet with the fellow to reflect upon their research design, activities, and plans and provide guidance on issues associated with communicating the information to non-experts, advancing the information to managers or policy makers, promoting adoption of the innovation or technology, or other application of results. In some situations, outreach or end-user mentors may serve on a student's academic committee. The exact role of the outreach mentor is determined and defined by the applicants, in conjunction with their primary advisor and their mentor.

An outreach or end-user mentor could be from the public, private or non-profit sector. While they could be extension agents, educators, or communicators with Sea Grant or the Cooperative Extension program, they do not need to be. They should be individuals in a professional situation that requires the application of scientific information and research, particularly the information, data and findings coming from the applicant's research project, to a pressing management or policy decision. Maryland Sea Grant can provide assistance to prospective fellows in identifying potential mentors.

V. APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND SUBMISSION

Adherence to the format requirements is mandatory. Font size can be no smaller than 11 point and margins must be at least 1 inch on standard 8.5x11 inch paper throughout the document. Applications should include:

- Cover Sheet (1-page maximum)*: This should include detailed contact information for the applicant, their faculty advisor and the outreach or end-user mentor, funding level requested, degree being sought, field of study, title of proposed project, and any institutional signatures required by the home institution's sponsored research programs office or other similar office.
- Academic CV/Resume (2-page maximum)*
- Undergraduate and graduate school transcripts (unofficial copies are acceptable)*.
- Two letters of recommendation*: One letter of recommendation should come from your primary faculty advisor. A second letter should come from the outreach or end-user mentor indicating a commitment to mentor and including a description of the role that the mentor will play in the fellow's academic experience. If an applicant wants assistance identifying potential outreach or end-user mentors, or would like to talk further about this expectation, they are encouraged to contact MDSG.
- Career Goal Statement (1-page maximum)*: The statement should describe the applicant's educational and professional goals, and how these goals fit into broader societal needs. The statement should emphasize how this fellowship would contribute to the applicant's goals.

- F. *Project Description (5-page maximum, including figures, tables, and other graphics):* The narrative should include the subsections listed below. It is intended to be a brief summary of the proposed thesis or the general intended area of study, but should include sufficient detail to evaluate the appropriateness and feasibility of the approach, and the alignment of the project with MDSG's strategic plan.
- a. **Rationale.** Provide the need for the research project, background information, and how the proposed project addresses a specific MDSG mission and strategic plan focus (e.g., reference the strategic plan priority that the research will address). Connect the research to the broader impacts it will have beyond the academic community.
 - b. **Objectives.** List the objective(s) and/or hypothesis(es) of the research project, including a brief statement of the context of the proposed project in relation to other related work or fields of related research. Be careful to state the purpose of the work as the objective rather than to list project activities or tasks.
 - c. **Methods.** Describe the methods, approaches, and techniques that will be used to meet the objectives.
 - d. **Anticipated Benefits.** Describe the results to be achieved by the project, how these results relate to current knowledge of the proposal topic, and of what use the results will be for specific audiences or end-users. A brief description of the outreach, education or dissemination strategies to be used should be included. This strategy should go beyond traditional dissemination (e.g., presentations and peer-reviewed literature) to reach end-users directly (e.g., training workshops, development of appropriate outreach products for non-scientific audiences, work with K-12 students and teachers, develop training manuals for end-users). Applicants are strongly encouraged to work with their mentor to develop their outreach strategy.
 - e. **Partners and Research Team.** Briefly describe the research team and their roles and responsibilities, including the role of the outreach or end-user mentor.
- G. *Literature Cited*
- H. *Timeline and Tasks:* The schedule should show, in table form by month, the milestones and tasks to be achieved (e.g., field work, data analysis, work with outreach mentor, development of outreach products) and the anticipated dates for achieving those tasks.
- I. *Budget Form 90-4 and Budget Justification:* Forms and sample justification can be found on the [MDSG website](#). Applicants may also request an account to access the [MDSG online budget worksheets](#) to create the project summary (90-2), budget (90-4) and budget justification forms. Up to \$30,000 per year for up to two years can be requested for any reasonable and necessary student support and research expenses. We expect funding to primarily provide stipend support and travel expenses to a significant scientific meeting. The budget may include funds for supplies, tuition, fringe benefits, and/or travel to field sites. Student salary must be consistent with graduate salaries and benefits from their respective academic department. Indirect costs are not allowable and no match is required for this fellowship. Applicants are encouraged to contact MDSG to discuss budget specifics during proposal development. Additionally, for currently enrolled students, MDSG strongly

encourages them to work with their home institution's sponsored research programs office to develop their budgets.

- J. *Proof of acceptance and enrollment in a graduate program in a relevant field of study is required for students just beginning their graduate work.*

VI. DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION

Applications must be submitted via email to research@mdsg.umd.edu by 5:00 p.m. EDT on September 17, 2012 in Word or PDF format. Insert "MDSG Maryland Sea Grant Graduate Fellowship 2013" in the email subject line. Confirmation of application receipt will be sent by return email to the originating mailbox only. Please contact Mike Allen or Jenna Clark (contact information below) if you do not receive confirmation shortly after submitting your proposal. Letters of recommendation may be mailed, faxed or emailed as a PDF to Fredrika Moser directly. MDSG will not accept late proposals under any circumstances, so please allow ample time to submit your proposals before the deadline. If you do not have email access, please contact MDSG at the phone number below. Applicants are reminded to follow submission policies of their home institutions (e.g., obtaining institutional review and signatures).

VII. REVIEW PROCESS

MDSG will assemble a peer-review panel composed of the MDSG interim director, faculty, and end-users (e.g., extension staff, resource managers, private and non-profit sectors, and/or additional stakeholders familiar with the coastal and ocean resource issues faced by Maryland, the region, and the nation). MDSG follows strict conflict-of-interest policies. The panel will review applications and select award recipients based on the following criteria for each applicant:

- Projected success in their field of study (including their plan of study; the applicant's skills including organization, analyzing, communicating, and research)
- Demonstrated commitment to watershed, coastal and marine sciences (including applicant's degree of study; the applicant's potential for leadership in the field, demonstration of maturity, responsibility, and integrity; the applicant's enthusiasm for the application of research to the greater community)
- Special or unique attributes to the field of watershed, coastal and marine sciences (including applicant's demonstrated potential and problem solving, as well as the applicant's background)

Notification of awards is expected by December 14, 2012. MDSG expects to fund 2-5 fellowships for the 2013–2014 period.

VIII. CONTACT

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact either the MDSG Interim Director, Fredrika Moser, or the Research and Education Coordinator, Mike Allen, to discuss their proposal ideas.

Fredrika Moser, Interim Director
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