2016 Dow Doctoral Sustainability Fellows
Call for Applications

The University of Michigan defines sustainability as solutions-driven scholarship and practice that seeks to safeguard the planet's life-support systems and enhance quality of life for present and future generations. The field is defined by the problems it addresses rather than the disciplines it employs. It draws from multiple disciplines of the natural, social, engineering, design, and health sciences; from the professions and humanities; and from practical field experience in business, government, and civil society.

Overview

The Dow Sustainability Fellows Program supports full-time graduate students and postdoctoral scholars at the University of Michigan who are committed to finding interdisciplinary, actionable, and meaningful sustainability solutions on local-to-global scales. The goal of the program is to create a lifelong Community of Scholars devoted to developing and implementing innovative ideas in pursuit of sustainability. Each year, the program provides a select group of outstanding doctoral students with the resources and opportunities necessary to become sustainability leaders in academia, business, non-profit organizations, and government. The group is selected to represent a balance of interests to enhance the interdisciplinary nature of the collaboration. Through a mix of financial support, intellectual exchange, interdisciplinary collaboration, and social activities, we seek to create cohorts with the ability to understand and effectively communicate the complex and interdisciplinary nature of sustainability.

As a recipient of this honor, each Fellow receives up to $50,000 to help support his/her doctoral-level research and studies over two (2) years. Fellows are required to engage in monthly seminars and related activities designed to share and expand research perspectives and facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration, including collaborations with Dow Post-doctoral and Masters/Professional Fellows.

*Applicants must have support from their U-M faculty advisor. Note: Each faculty member may support only one student advisee per year.*

Requirements and Guidelines

1. Student Eligibility:
   a. Doctoral students actively pursuing interdisciplinary research addressing sustainability issues in any U-M Department, Interdisciplinary Program, School or College that has an approved doctoral program.
   b. A student is eligible for only one Dow Doctoral Fellowship award.
   c. Upon commencement of the fellowship in September 2016, an applicant must:
      i. Have completed at least two semesters of graduate-level coursework toward earning the doctoral degree;
      ii. Have at least pre-candidate status; and
      iii. Intend to complete all doctoral degree requirements no earlier than April 2018.
   d. Fellows must reside in the Ann Arbor area for the duration of the Fellowship period (see section 6a).
   e. Applicants cannot hold appointments with work obligations at other academic institutions during the fellowship period.
f. Students with funding already in place from other sources are eligible to be nominated for a Dow Doctoral Fellowship (see section 4b).

g. Eligibility is contingent upon written declaration of matching financial support from the department chair or school/college dean using the matching support form (see section 5).

2. Selection Criteria:
Applications will go through an independent review and will be rated according to the following criteria:

a. Degree to which the research proposal is relevant to sustainability
b. Interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of the proposed work
c. Potential for impact resulting from the proposed research
d. Scientific/technical merit of the research proposal
e. Productivity and quality of applicant's prior research and experiences
f. Demonstrated qualities/accomplishments that show potential for sustainability leadership
g. Desire for interdisciplinary balance in the cohort

3. Appointment Period:
   a. The appointment is for a minimum of 24 months, although Fellows are strongly encouraged to remain active in the program throughout their time at U-M and beyond.
   b. The appointment term will be effective September 2016.

4. Award:
   Awards are distributed to the Fellow's home School/College in September, each year of the Fellowship. Funding distribution rules are as follows:
   a. The Fellowship provides up to $50,000 to help support the Fellow's research.
      i. No more than $25,000 will be awarded during each year of the Fellowship (September 2016-August 2017; September 2017-August 2018).
      ii. If desired by the Fellow, the award can be dispersed over a time period that exceeds 24 months, as long as the Fellow remains active in the program during the period of his/her award.
      iii. Dow support may be used to cover tuition, registration fees, stipends (up to the equivalent of a 50% GSRA for the students’ home department), health insurance, and research-related expenses that are pre-approved by the Dow Fellows Program Director.
   b. Fellows who already have funding from other sources, or who acquire such funding during their time in the program, can defer, without penalty, their Dow Fellowship funding until after their other funding sources expire, or decline funding altogether. Deferring or declining funding does not impact participation in the Fellows program.
   c. Fellows completing their doctoral degree prior to the end of the Fellowship period (May 2018) will have their Dow support reduced on a prorated basis, in accordance with comparable Rackham policies. Specifically:
      i. A Fellow is eligible to receive support covering tuition, registration fees, and health insurance for the term in which the student defends his/her dissertation up to the amount remaining in the student's Fellowship account.
      ii. Dow support of stipends ends the month in which a student defends unless the student provides compelling reasons as to why stipends should continue. The Program Director will review these requests to make a final decision.
      iii. Unexpended funds remain the property of the Dow Fellows Program.
d. All unexpended funds remain the property of the Dow Fellows Program and must be returned from the Fellow’s home School/College.

5. Matching Requirement:
   a. Dow awards are contingent on additional support that increase the level of total support to at least the equivalent of a 50% GSRA appointment in the student’s home department (i.e., health insurance for 24 months, tuition for four terms, and the appropriate stipend).
   b. Support previously committed to the student for the time period in which support from the Dow Fellowship is granted, including tuition support, may count toward the match.
   c. Support must be verified by the department chair or school/college dean using the matching support form available on the application website. Failure to provide and document such support will lead to the application being rejected without review.

6. Fellows Requirements and Responsibilities:
   a. Fellows must reside in the Ann Arbor area for the duration of the academic year during the Fellowship period. Reasonable absences for fieldwork may be permissible, but must be disclosed to and approved by the Program Director in advance. Awards may be revoked if the Fellow fails to fully disclose and seek approval for fieldwork absences. Even if absences are approved, awards may be deferred during the time of the fieldwork. Extended absences are not permitted, under any circumstances, during the first semester of the Fellowship period (Fall 2016).
   b. Throughout the appointment period, fellows must actively pursue completion of degree requirements (i.e., be enrolled in the U-M program cited in their application)
   c. Fellows must actively participate in the program seminars that occur monthly from September through April.
      i. Fellows who are unable to attend a seminar must notify the Dow Fellows Program Director in advance.
      ii. While participation in 100% of monthly seminars is strongly encouraged, participation in 75% of monthly seminars is a program requirement.
          1. Failure to meet this requirement may result in a revocation of the fellowship.
          2. Participation will be evaluated each semester.
   d. Fellows must present their research as part of the program seminars at some point during the Fellowship period.
   e. Fellows must participate in both Dow Annual Symposia during their Fellowship period, and present a poster there at least once.
   f. Fellows must actively participate in at least 50% of additional program activities including, but not limited to:
      i. Informal discussions. (Each month, one fellow will be designated to arrange and lead an informal discussion, and compile and present a summary, at the next monthly seminar.); and
      ii. Skill training sessions.
   g. Fellows must engage in a collaborative project during the course of their Fellowship period. Fellows can either: a) Write an article and/or be on the editorial board for the Michigan Journal of Sustainability; b) Be a team member in the Dow Distinguished Awards for Interdisciplinary Sustainability competition; c) Petition the Dow Fellows Program Director to conduct a self-determined project that includes collaboration with at least one other Fellow. Examples of successful past petitions include creating a new course (e.g., “Sustainable Neighborhoods in Detroit”), a journal article for Sustainability Science and the creation of the Michigan Journal of Sustainability.
h. Fellows may be asked to present their research to other program stakeholders at some point during the fellowship period. Fellows are expected to oblige such requests.

i. All Fellows are required to follow the University of Michigan, Graham Sustainability Institute and/or other relevant policies related to academic integrity and related issues.

7. Faculty Advisor Responsibilities:
   a. The faculty advisor(s) of the Fellow must be willing to serve as a reviewer on future Fellowship review processes.
   b. Advisors are encouraged to participate in Fellowship activities, such as the annual dinner.

Application Procedure

Required Application Materials: Student applications must be submitted online at http://graham.umich.edu/application-request/34552 and must include the following:

1. An “Intent to Apply” accessible at the URL above by December 22, 2015. Applicants will be asked for contact information, a proposal title, an abstract of 100 words or less, as well as the name of their advisor and at least one additional recommender. This submission triggers requests for the faculty advisor nomination letter as well as the recommendation (see 3 & 4 below). This should only be submitted if faculty advisors have agreed to nominate the student.

2. A completed online submission by January 22, 2016, consisting of a single PDF file that includes:
   a. A statement of educational goals and planned research of no more than 1000 words written by the student. This statement should:
      i. Clearly describe the student’s planned research and how it relates to sustainability.
      ii. Explain how participation in the Dow Doctoral Fellows program will enhance the student’s ability to pursue and engage in impactful sustainability work.
      iii. Describe how the student’s research extends or can extend beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. (Note: One of the major purposes of these fellowships is to encourage cross-disciplinary study with potential impact. Research efforts that are confined to a single discipline are unlikely to receive funding through this program.)
      iv. Clearly communicate to an interdisciplinary faculty review panel that the student’s work has the potential for great scholarly significance and impact.
      v. Include adequate scholarly references (not counted in the 1000 word limit.)
   
   b. A short, critical thinking essay (no more than 500 words) answering the following question: “In what ways does fostering a diverse and inclusive community affect pathways to sustainability?”

   c. A curriculum vitae describing the candidate’s:
      i. Educational background
      ii. Major awards and honors received
      iii. Membership in professional organizations (if applicable)
      iv. Complete list of publications and presentations (accepted, submitted, etc.)
      v. Outreach efforts
   
   d. Transcripts of all graduate and undergraduate coursework. Unofficial transcripts are acceptable.

3. Nomination letter from the student’s U-M faculty advisor (Nominator) that explains why the student is a strong candidate for the Fellowship, and verifies that the student is in good standing and making satisfactory progress toward the completion of their doctoral degree. Advisors must also confirm that students are not planning to finish their doctoral studies prior to April 2018. Nominators will be asked specifically to comment on the applicant’s communication, teamwork, and interpersonal skills. Nominators will be sent a direct URL to submit letters confidentially, once the Dow Program receives the student’s “Intent to Apply”.

4. One letter of recommendation from a second individual (recommender), familiar with the student’s work. Recommenders will be asked specifically to comment on the applicant’s communication and interpersonal skills. Recommenders will be sent a direct URL to submit letters online, confidentially, after the Dow Program receives the student’s “Intent to Apply”.

APPLICATION DEADLINES:

- December 22, 2015: “Intent to Apply” due by 11:59 pm, EST.
- January 22, 2016: Full application, and letters of recommendation due by 11:59 pm, EST.

EXPECTED AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT: April 29, 2016

CONFIDENTIAL: All applications will be handled confidentially.

CONTACT:
- Email: nberg@umich.edu
- Phone: (734)-647-6863
- Website: Dow Sustainability Fellows, Doctoral Program, http://sustainability.umich.edu/dow/doctoral