

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: 2010 Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship(Knauss Fellowship Program)

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: OAR-SG-2010-2001562

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.417, Sea Grant Support.

Dates: Applications from prospective fellows to the State Sea Grant College Programs (SGCP) are due February 20, 2009. Contact your state Sea Grant program (see IV.A. of the Federal Funding Opportunity for program contact information) for information on deadlines. Selected applications from the sponsoring SGCP are to be received in the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) through Grants.gov no later than 5 pm Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on April 03, 2009. For applications submitted through Grants.gov, a date and time receipt indication is included and will be the basis of determining timeliness.

Funding Opportunity Description: This notice announces that applications may be submitted for the Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship (Knauss Fellowship). The Knauss Fellowship is a program initiated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Sea Grant Office (NSGO), in fulfilling its broad educational responsibilities and legislative mandate of the Sea Grant Act, to provide educational experience in the policies and processes of the Legislative and Executive Branches of the Federal Government to graduate students in marine and aquatic-related fields. The Knauss Fellowship meets NOAA's Mission goal of Protect, Restore and Manage the Use of Coastal and Ocean Resources Through Ecosystem-Based Management.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

In 1979, the National Sea Grant Office, NOAA, in fulfilling its broad educational responsibilities, initiated a program with the objective of providing a unique educational experience in the policies and processes of the Legislative and Executive Branches of the Federal Government to graduate students who have an interest in ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources and in the national policy decisions affecting these resources.

B. Program Priorities

N/A

C. Program Authority

33 USC 1127(b)

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

The SGCP program receives and administers the overall cooperative agreement of \$44,000 per student on behalf of each Fellow selected from their program. Of this amount, the local Sea Grant program provides \$34,000 to each Fellow for stipend and living expenses (per diem). \$8,000 will be used to cover mandatory health insurance for the Fellow and moving expenses. Any remaining funds of the \$8,000 shall be used for the fellow during the Fellowship year, first to satisfy academic degree-related activities, and second for Fellowship-related activities. Finally, up to \$2,000 from the total \$44,000 can be used to cover placement week costs. Indirect costs are not allowable from the Federal funds either for the Fellowships or for any costs associated with the Fellowships, including the \$2,000 budgeted for placement week. These costs, though, can be denoted as matching funds. During the Fellowship, the host may provide supplemental funds for work-related travel by the Fellow. The SGCP awards 30-50 agreements each year. Not less than 30 applicants will be

selected, of which the selected applicants assigned to the Congress maybe limited to 10.

B. Project/Award Period

Awards are anticipated to start on February 1, 2010 and run for a year (12 months).

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument will be in the form of a cooperative agreement to each individual SGCP that will support a selected fellow. The award will be a cooperative agreement because of substantial involvement by the Dean John A. Knauss Fellowship manager in mentoring and hosting successful applicants.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Any student, regardless of citizenship, who, on February 20, 2009, is in a graduate or professional program in a marine or aquatic-related field at a United States accredited institution of higher education in the United States or U.S. Territories may apply.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

There will be the one-third required cost share of the total cost of the award for those applicants selected as legislative fellows.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

N/A

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application information may be obtained directly from Grants.gov. It may also be obtained from the Sea Grant College Program Directors. The addresses of the Sea Grant College Program directors may be found on Sea Grant's World Wide Web (<http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/other/programsdirectors.html>) or see section VII. Agency Contact Information.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applications by SGCP to the National Sea Grant Program must adhere to the provisions under "Applications" and the six requirements under "Required Elements" by the deadline of April 03, 2009. Failure to follow these restrictions will result in applications being rejected without review.

Applications: Applicants from states not served by a Sea Grant program should contact the NSGO; subsequently, the applicant will be referred to the appropriate Sea Grant program. Applicants should consult the Sea Grant program before submitting an application to it.

Required Elements - An application must include:

- (1) Personal and academic curriculum vitae (not to exceed two pages).
- (2) A personal education and career goal statement emphasizing the applicant's abilities and the applicant's expectations from the fellowship experience in the way of career development (1000 words or less). Placement preference in the Legislative or Executive Branches of the Government may be stated; this preference will be honored to the extent possible.
- (3) Two letters of recommendation, including one from the student's major professor; if no major professor exists, the faculty person academically knowing the applicant best may be substituted.
- (4) A letter of endorsement from the sponsoring Sea Grant Program Director.
- (5) Copy of all official undergraduate and graduate student transcripts.
- (6) Listing of classes and/or plans for spring 2009, summer 2009 and fall 2009 (not to exceed one page).

All applicants will be evaluated solely on their application package according to the criteria listed below. Therefore, letters of endorsement from members of Congress, friends, relatives and others will not be accepted.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Eligible graduate students must submit applications to the SGCP by the deadline of February 20, 2009. After the State Sea Grant Program review, selected applications from the sponsoring SGCP are to be received in the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) no later than 5 pm Eastern Standard Time (EST) on April 03, 2009 through www.Grants.gov. A date and time receipt indication is included and will be

the basis of determining timeliness. Hard copy applications will only be accepted if a Sea Grant program can justify in writing that internet access is not available to them at the time of submission. Facsimile transmissions and electronic mail submission of applications will not be accepted. Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

E. Funding Restrictions

Indirect costs are not allowable from the Federal funds either for the Fellowships or for any costs associated with the Fellowships, including the \$1,500 budgeted for placement week. (15 CFR 917.11(e), "Guidelines for Sea Grant Fellowships"). These costs, though, can be denoted as matching funds.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Prior contacts/arrangements made with possible host offices before the start of the fellowship will be cause for immediate disqualification from the process. Eligible graduate students must submit applications to the SGCP. The addresses and contact information for each SGCP can be found at <http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/other/programsdirectors.html>. The addresses can also be received from Miguel Lugo, Knauss Fellowship Program Manager, National Sea Grant College Program, 1315 East-West Highway, R/SG, Rm 11718, Silver Spring, MD 20910. After the State Sea Grant Program review, selected applications from the sponsoring SGCP must be submitted through www.grants.gov. SGCP without internet access may send hard copy proposals to Miguel Lugo at the above address.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria and weighting of the criteria are as follows:

- 1 Recommendations and/or endorsements of student (15 percent total):
Endorsement/content of the letter from the applicant's Sea Grant Program Director, the applicant's major professor, and the second letter of recommendation.

- 2 Academic record and statement of career goals and objectives of student (45 percent total): Quality of the applicant's personal education and career goal statement (30 percent); Strength of academic performance (15 percent).
- 3 Quality of project and applicability to program priorities. The Knauss Policy Fellowship Program does not use this criterion (0 percent).
- 4 Additional relevant experience (40 percent total) related to: diversity of education, extra-curricular activities, honors and awards, and interpersonal, written, and oral communications skills. For the Knauss Policy Fellowship, relevant experience would be in Marine or aquatic-related fields.
- 5 Financial need of student. The Knauss Policy Fellowship Program does not use this criterion (0 percent).

B. Review and Selection Process

Each step in the selection process both at the state level and national level are based on the evaluation criteria listed in section V. A. At the state level, a panel composed of three members, all from the state SGCP, will individually discuss each application. Following this discussion, an individual score will be provided by each panel member. Once all applications have been discussed and scored, an average score will be computed for each application by the state SGCP. The successful applicants will then be submitted by the state SGCP to the NSGP for the national review.

For the national review by the NSGP a 10 member review panel will be assembled to select the class finalists. The panel will include representation from the Sea Grant Association, the National Sea Grant Review Panel, and the current class of Fellows. Each panel member is assigned applications to review before the panel meeting. During the panel meeting each application will be individually discussed. Following this discussion, an individual score will be provided by each panel member. Once all applications have been discussed and scored, an average score will be computed for each application by the Knauss program manager or designee. In general, the successful applicants will be selected based on the average score; however, the selecting official may select lower scored applicants based on the selection factors below. The successful applicants will then be placed into either the legislative or executive group by the selecting official based upon the applicant's stated preference, the application materials submitted, and the individual comments of the panel members.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official will award in order of average score unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon any of the following selection factors:

- 1 Balance/Distribution of funds:
 - a. Across academic disciplines
 - b. By types of institutions
 - c. Geographically
2. Availability of funds
3. Program-specific objectives
4. Degree in scientific area and type of degree sought

The Selecting Official makes final recommendations for award to the Grants Officer who is authorized to obligate the funds.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The competitive selection process and subsequent notification to the Sea Grant programs will be completed by May 23, 2009. Funds are expected to be awarded by approximately February 1, 2010, the start date that should be used on the Application for Federal Assistance (Form 424) for successful applications.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The NSGO will notify each unsuccessful applicant by informing the state SGCP through which the application was submitted via e-mail. This email will contain a written summary of the review panel comments. The state Sea Grant Programs will, in turn, formally notify each unsuccessful applicant and forward the summary comments provided by the NSGO. The applications that are not ultimately selected for funding will be destroyed one year after submission date.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of February 11, 2008 (73 FR 7696). You may obtain a copy of

these by notices by contacting the agency contact(s) under Section VII, or by going to the website at: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/index.html>

The National Environmental Policy Act: As defined in Sections 5.05 and Administrative or Programmatic Functions of NAO 216-6, 6.03.c.3, this is a fellowship project for which there are no cumulative effects. Thus, it has been categorically excluded from the need to prepare an Environmental Assessment.

Limitation of Liability: In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project.

C. Reporting

Financial reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Grants Officer and performance reports (summary of accomplishments and activities) are to be submitted to the NOAA Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program Manager. Financial reports are semi-annual and performance reports are annual. Reports may be required to be submitted either electronically or in hard copy.

VII. Agency Contacts

Contact Miguel Lugo, Knauss Fellowship Program Manager, National Sea Grant College Program, 1315 East-West Highway, R/SG, Rm 11718, Silver Spring, MD 20910; tel: (301) 734-1077 x 1075.

VIII. Other Information

N/A