The Appalachian College Association (ACA) is proud to provide substantial support toward the professional development of faculty members at its member institutions. The fellowships provide up to $20,000 for pre- or post-doctoral study. Fellowships are awarded in three categories: professional leave fellowships (maximum one semester and $20,000); summer research fellowships (maximum $7,500); and in-year research fellowships during the academic year (maximum $10,000). To be considered for support, ACA faculty must have served for at least two years in full-time status at her/his current ACA institution and must return to teach full-time at same school for at least one additional year after completion of the fellowship.

- **One-Semester Professional Leave Fellowships:** Faculty may apply for funding to support professional leave/sabbatical from their institution for a full semester. An application may seek up to a maximum of $20,000 to cover institutional expenses associated with the absence of the faculty member from her/his normal duties and/or costs associated with the research project. These funds may be used for post-doctoral research or to support pre-doctoral progress toward completion of one’s terminal degree.

- **Summer Research Fellowships:** Faculty may apply for support for their research during a summer term, up to a maximum of $7,500. These funds may cover costs associated with the research project, e.g., travel, research materials, and up to a maximum of $3,750 as direct stipend to the recipient. The proposed stipend will be evaluated by the Review Committee as it regards time and effort related to the project.

- **In-Year Research Fellowships:** Faculty may apply for support for release from their standard institutional duties during a semester in the academic year, or over a full academic year. These funds may be used to cover replacement expenses incurred by the institution and/or research costs associated with the applicant’s project. Projects entailing a standard one-course release are available up to a maximum of $5,000. Projects supported by release from two or more standard classes (or equivalent duties) may seek up to $10,000.

Fellowship funding must be designed to occur within a single academic/fiscal year, and support cannot be carried over into a new year. All recipients will be expected to furnish the ACA a final report on their projects at the end of the academic year in May, at which time final disbursement of funding will be provided to the institution.

**APPLICATION MATERIALS**

Qualified faculty members from ACA institutions may submit online application for fellowships each year during the fall semester. Normally, the application cycle will open in August and close at or near the end of October. (To assist member institutions in their personnel and budgetary planning, the ACA seeks to determine the fellowship recipients before the end of each fall semester.) In the application, candidates will denote which type of fellowship they are seeking. The required application materials include:

1) A project narrative explaining in detail the research and/or project, including the project goals, methodology, anticipated outcomes, and timeline. The narrative is limited in length, and it should also include a brief statement on the importance of this project to the individual, the institution, and/or the academic discipline. The methodology, anticipated outcomes, and timelines must be clear and realistic. The applicant should address how this work will inform the broader knowledge of the discipline. A page of works cited may be included.
2) Outline of the anticipated expenditures related to the fellowship request, e.g., amounts to be applied to offset the expenses of the leave or course releases (to institution or applicant), to cover other institutional expenses, to be used to cover legitimate expenses incurred by the applicant related to the research project.

3) Documentation that satisfies (at least) one of the following requirements:
   a. For applicants working toward a terminal degree seeking a pre-doctoral fellowship: Proof of admission to the terminal degree program and a transcript of work already completed in that program.
   b. For applicants seeking support for post-doctoral research: Applicants should submit a letter from a colleague from another institution who possesses expertise in the area of study, indicating the applicant’s competence to complete the project within the time allotted.

4) Letters of Support from the following persons:
   a. One’s Chief Academic Officer: This letter is very important as it should identify and explain the importance of the project to the institution and furnish an assessment of the applicant’s capacity to complete the proposed project in a competent and timely manner. It must also verify that the applicant and CAO have reviewed the anticipated expenditures in the proposal and agree with the final itemized budget. Letters should be on institutional letterhead.
   b. (For pre-doctorate proposals only) The advisor/mentor at the doctoral institution indicating the applicant’s ability to complete the proposed project (coursework) within the time allotted.

5) Current Curriculum Vitae, not to exceed five pages.

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

1) Only completed electronic applications submitted through the ACA’s web portal will be reviewed by the committee.

2) The applicant is responsible for ensuring that all parts of the final application, including letters of support, are uploaded in a timely manner. (The CAO’s letter of endorsement will be submitted electronically directly to the ACA.) Colleague endorsement letters may be submitted directly to the ACA electronically (rather than through the applicant), if preferred. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed by the committee.

3) All proposals should avoid professional jargon and be written so that individuals not in the specific discipline can understand the project.

4) If the applicant has previously received ACA funding for a similar project, include in the project narrative when the grant was received and evaluate the success of the previous effort.

5) The amount for the one-semester professional leave fellowship will depend in part upon the applicant’s salary during the application year and any other external support. If the fellowship is being used to offset the applicant’s lost salary, it will not allow for the individual to exceed lost income from her/his institution.

6) Other funding sources should be applied to faculty compensation before ACA funding. If all funding sources add up to more than the applicant’s salary, then the ACA will reduce the fellowship award accordingly. If other external funding comes through after the ACA Faculty Fellowship has been awarded, the ACA requires the ACA funding overage to be refunded to the ACA up to the amount of ACA’s original award.

7) The fellowship is provided to institution rather than individual applicant. When the institution receives fellowship funds from the ACA, the institution determines how the faculty fellowship funding will be allocated based upon the initial proposal. The applicant is required to include the budget regarding expected expenditures from the fellowship support, with confirmation that the applicant and her/his CAO agree with the proposed budget.

8) The itemized budget may include expenditures related to reduced salary, replacement costs for the institution (if related to a one-semester fellowship or to an in-year grant for release from teaching or other institutional duties) and/or expenditures to be incurred by the applicant related to the specific
proposal. In addition, pre-doctoral applicants may include in their budgets the costs of tuition or other direct costs associated with progress toward the completion of degree, i.e., instructional expenses. Replacement costs for a one-semester leave may not exceed $20,000. Replacement costs for in-year grants may not exceed $5,000 per standard course release or equivalent, and up to no more than $10,000 per recipient.

9) The maximum award for a summer research grant is $7,500. No more than $3750 may be requested in direct stipend to the applicant. Proposals for the Summer Research Fellowship require an itemized budget, and any proposed stipend will be evaluated by the Review Committee as it regards time and effort related to the project.

10) Faculty who have signed a contract for a book with a for-profit press (i.e. not a university press) and want a fellowship to conduct additional research or to revise their manuscript are ineligible.

11) Member institutions may not have reviewed more than four applications for any form of fellowships in a single year. A single institution may not receive awards totaling more than $40,000 funding in each application cycle. For institutions submitting multiple applications, the CAO is encouraged to prioritize the proposals for the Review Committee; however, final determination of awards remains with the Review Committee. Schools will determine internally which applications will be reviewed if more than four candidates exist.

12) While it is expected that fellowship research will inform course development, proposals with the primary goal of developing courses are discouraged.

13) The ACA does not withhold any taxes or fees from the award amount. Any necessary deductions are the responsibility of the institution or the individual.

14) An individual who receives a fellowship is responsible for following all guidelines of the award:
   a. A report on the project is expected by no later than May 15 of the year the funding is expended. The report must include a final expenditure budget. If any remaining expenditures are outstanding, these should be included in the report as best estimates. (If there are unusual circumstances regarding spending later in the cycle, the recipient should work directly with the ACA to establish an alternate timeline.)
   b. Each fellow is expected to provide a final report (no more than two typed single-space pages) that captures the essence of the project, e.g., its goals and outcomes. The final report should include a general accounting of expenditures from the fellowship, which is expected to abide by the original proposal agreed upon by applicant and CAO (unless approved for adjustment by the ACA and CAO during the project).
   c. Recipients are required to return to full-time duty at their ACA institution for at least one full year after completion of the fellowship.
   d. Fellowship recipients may also be required to participate in assessment activities (such as a one-year follow up questionnaire and a five-year follow up questionnaire) requested by ACA program staff.

The ACA reserves the right to withhold any final allotments of the fellowship until the recipient’s final report, with record of expenditures, is furnished to the ACA.

EVALUATION AND AWARDS

The quality of the proposal is the top priority in evaluating and awarding fellowships; however, other factors also affect the final decision. Listed below are the ratings topics and values the committee uses for each final application. These ratings are a starting place for the Fellowship Review Committee’s discussion, not the final arbiter. The five-person Fellowship Review Committee is composed of Chief Academic Officers from ACA institutions, elected by the Council for Chief Academic Officers; CAOs on the committee, per policy, do not review applications from their home institutions. Members of the committee have opportunity to discuss each application individually and apply their professional judgment with each application.
Ratings Scale for ACA Fellowship Applications

- Presentation of Proposed Project: Quality and Substance (scored between 0 and 10 points)
- Feasibility of the proposed timeline (0 to 2 points)
- Benefit/importance to home institution (0 to 8 points)
- Importance to one’s academic field (0 to 3 points)
- CAO Endorsement (0 to 5 points)
- Reviewer Recommendation(s) (0 to 3 points)
- ACA Resource Use Priority (up to 5 points)
  - 5 points for faculty who will complete terminal degree
  - 4 points for faculty who will make substantive progress toward (but not complete) a terminal degree
  - 3 points for faculty engaged in post-doctoral research
- Recent Fellowships at Applicant’s Institution (up to 4 points)
  - 4 point if the institution’s last fellowship recipient was in 2017-18 or earlier
  - 3 points if the institution had a fellowship recipient in 2018-19
  - 1 point if the institution had a fellowship recipient in 2019-20
  - 0 points if the institution had a fellowship recipient in 2020-21

Maximum Score: 40

A high scoring proposal is not a guarantee of funding. Typically, the requests for fellowships far exceed the funds available in any given year. Therefore, it is quite probable that some strong proposals will not receive awards.

DIRECT YOUR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS TO:

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Appalachian College Association

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