

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ! **Federal Agency Name(s):** National Sea Grant College Program (Sea Grant), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce
- ! **Funding Opportunity Title:** Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship(Knauss Fellowship Program)
- ! **Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement
- ! **Funding Opportunity Number:** OAR-SG-2008-2000781
- ! **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):** 11.417, Sea Grant Support

Dates: Deadlines vary from program to program, but applications from prospective fellows to Sea Grant Colleges are generally due early to mid-March. Contact your state Sea Grant program (see IV.A. for program contact information) for specific deadlines. Selected applications from the sponsoring Sea Grant program are to be received in the NSGO either through Grants.gov no later than 5 pm Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on April 5, 2007. For applications submitted through Grants.gov APPLY, 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 a Fellowship 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.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Description

In 1979, the National Sea Grant Office, NOAA, in fulfilling its broad educational responsibilities, initiated a program to provide 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 Authority

The U.S. Congress recognized the value of this program and, in 1987, Public Law 100-220 stipulated the Sea Grant Federal Fellows Program was to be a formal part of the National Sea Grant College Program Act. The recipients are designated Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellows pursuant to 33 USC 1127(b).

II. Award Information

The local Sea Grant program receives and administers the overall cooperative agreement of \$41,500 per student on behalf of each Fellow selected from their program. Of this amount, the local Sea Grant program provides \$33,000 to each Fellow for stipend and living expenses (per diem). \$7,000 will be used to cover mandatory health insurance for the Fellow and moving expenses; any remaining funds 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 \$1,500 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 \$1,500 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. Awards are anticipated to start on February 1, 2008. Not less than 30 applicants will be selected, of which the selected applicants assigned to the Congress will be limited to 11.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Any student, regardless of citizenship, who, on April 5, 2007, 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.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Application information may be found at Grants.gov FIND. It may also be obtained from Sea Grant College Program Directors. The addresses of the Sea Grant College Program directors may be found on Sea Grant's World Wide Web home page (<http://www.seagrants.noaa.gov/other/programsdirectors.html>) or may also be obtained by contacting the NSGO (mail address: National Sea Grant College Program, 1315 East-West Highway, SSMC3, R/SG, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone: 301-713-2431 x124).

Application information may also be obtained directly from the Sea Grant's World Wide Web (<http://www.seagrants.noaa.gov/knauss/knausshowtoapply.html>)

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Applications must adhere to the provisions under "Applications" and the six requirements under "Required Elements" by the deadline of April 5, 2007. Failure to follow these restrictions will result in applications being rejected without review.

1. Applications

Interested students should discuss this fellowship with their local Sea Grant Program Director. 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. Applications must be submitted by the deadline set in the local Sea Grant announcement. Each Sea Grant program may select and forward to the NSGO no more than six (6) applicants based on the evaluation criteria used by the NSGO in the national competition.

2. 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 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 2007, summer 2007 and fall 2007 (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. Prior contacts/arrangements made with possible host offices will be cause for immediate disqualification from the process.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are to be received in the NSGO from the sponsoring Sea Grant program no later than 5 pm EDT on April 5, 2007. For applications submitted through Grants.gov APPLY, 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. Hard copy applications must be received by the NSGO by 5 pm EDT on April 5, 2007. 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, AIntergovernmental 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

Applications from Sea Grant programs should be submitted through www.Grants.gov. Grants.gov requires applicants (in this case Sea Grant programs) to register with the system prior to submitting an application. This registration process can take several weeks, involving multiple steps, including: 1) registration with the Central Contract Registry, 2) acquisition of a DUNS number, and 3) confirmation of registration with grants.gov. In order to allow sufficient time for this process, you should register immediately, even if you are not yet ready to submit your proposal.

More detailed instructions on submitting through grants.gov can be found at the grants.gov homepage: <http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted>.

Hard copy applications can be sent to Dr. Jacques L. Oliver, Knauss Fellowship Program Manager, National Sea Grant College Program, 1315 East-West Highway, R/SG, Rm 11718, Silver Spring, MD 20910. *Facsimile transmissions and electronic mail submission of applications will not be accepted.*

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

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

1. 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).

2. Quality of project and applicability to program priorities. The Knauss Policy Fellowship Program does not use this criterion (0 percent).

3. 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.

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 is based on the evaluation criteria listed. 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, a numerical ranking will be created for each of the panel member's scores by the Knauss program manager or designee. An average ranking will then be computed for each applicant. In general, the successful applicants will be selected based on the average ranking; however, the selecting official may select lower ranking 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 rank order 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 18, 2007. Funds are expected to be awarded by approximately February 1, 2008, 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

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 December 30, 2004 (69 FR 78389).

The NSGO will notify each unsuccessful applicant by informing the state Sea Grant Program 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 December 30, 2004 (69 FR 78389). 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: www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces140.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 Contact(s)

Contact Dr. Jacques L. Oliver, Knauss Fellowship Program Manager, National Sea Grant College Program, 1315 East-West Highway, R/SG, Rm 11718, Silver Spring, MD 20910; tel: (301) 713-2431 ext. 124