

The 2014 McConnell Scholars Award

Rationale

The Graduate College would like to attract the best and brightest students and develop new pipelines for recruiting outstanding undergraduates by offering no more than 6 assistantships to new, full-time students enrolled in a traditional RU campus graduate program for two academic years, excluding summer sessions. Among these, for 2014-2015, we have 3 available new scholarships to award and 3 continuing scholarships. In most cases, the McConnell Scholars Award amounts to the equivalent of the total monetary package awarded to a Graduate Teaching Fellow. The award covers 9 credits of tuition each fall and spring term along with a \$11,000 work stipend for the academic year. A non-Virginia resident may potentially receive an award of over \$25,000 for the fall 2014 and spring 2015 terms, through a combination of out-of-state tuition and stipend awards. Because the McConnell Scholar award is a two-year award, the second year includes whatever tuition increase occurs that year. Each student will work with an established or promising mentor on research, creative activity, and/or grant-writing. The major goals of the award are to:

- Recruit outstanding graduate students.
- Model engagement with a first-class mentor.
- Promote diversity within our graduate applicant pool.
- Expand the scope of the graduate applicant pool.

Criteria

1. The student must have established a record of excellence in her or his undergraduate studies as defined by GPA, standardized test scores/percentiles, and special undergraduate major-related activities.
2. Students who are from an underrepresented group as defined by the demographics of a program's discipline will be given priority to promote diversity within the graduate program.
3. Students from quality, underrepresented undergraduate institutions will be given priority in order to establish a pipeline with those institutions.

All of the information above must be provided in order for a nominee to be considered, regardless of whether it is required by the graduate program to which she or he is applying.

Selection

Information will come from Graduate Coordinators, the nominee's graduate college application, and the proposed mentor for a given nominee.

- Graduate Coordinators will submit names of nominees along with corresponding names of specific mentors for each candidate by June 30th.
- The Graduate College has or will have the application materials for each nominee on record.
- The mentor must provide:
 - A 200 word description of the activities and goals of the mentorship opportunity for the student.
 - Her or his CV.

A committee composed of the Graduate Dean, the Vice-Provost for Academic Affairs, and the Associate Graduate Dean will rate each nominee on the criteria described above - along with the mentorship plan - on an objective basis using rating scales.

*Any number of nominees may come from any program. The selection of award recipients will be based on **merit** alone, not by a program or college quota system.*

Evaluation and Retention

An award recipient must maintain a graduate GPA of at least 3.5 per term in order to retain the award. The student may not receive a grade lower than a B in any term to retain the award. The student must also abide by the *Student Code of Conduct*.

The awardee must present her or his work at a campus forum during her or his last term of study.

Benefits

- Recruit excellence.
- Expand applicant pool.
- Model effective mentorship.
- Initiate earlier recruitment efforts.

Required Attachments:

- *Coordinator rank-ordered list of scholarship nominees and mentors*
- *Mentor's description of plan for each scholarship nominee (200 word max)*
- *Mentor's CV*

For further information:

Contact Dr. Laura Jacobsen, Associate Dean, at ljacobsen@radford.edu or 540-831-5470.