

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR HUMAN GENETICS GRADUATE STUDENTS**

**Carl Thummel, Director of Graduate Studies (EIHG 5200)**

**Kandace Leavitt, Human Genetics Program Manager for Grad. Student Affairs (EIHG 2100)**

Provided that the student's progress and performance are considered satisfactory by his/her Supervisory Committee, the Department is committed to providing support for graduate students throughout their tenure in the department. Support from any source, however, will not be permitted after seven years at the University (1 year in the combined program and six years in one or more Department).

**A. Current Stipend and Tuition Waiver.** The current stipend is \$27,000 annual, with a full tuition waiver for each semester. The stipend amount is set by the Molecular Biology Program. If not a resident of the state of Utah, students must apply for residency as soon as they have completed 40 graduate credit hours, in order to obtain the reduced in-state tuition (see Kandace). This is usually achieved by the end of the Fall Semester in the second year of graduate study. Students who do not apply for residency will be responsible for paying their own tuition. See 'Tuition Benefit Program' below.

**B. Other Employment.** Students are not allowed to engage in other employment while in the graduate program.

**C. Health Insurance.** Health, dental and vision coverage through the University of Utah Student Health Policy will be provided for all students. Family coverage is available for students with uninsured dependents. In addition, accommodations can be made for students who need to take time off to care for an ailing family member. Students may waive the right to use the University health insurance policy if they are covered by another form of insurance (e.g. through a spouse). Under these circumstances, the money that would normally be used to provide insurance for these students will be returned to general department funds in support of graduate student education.

**D. Travel funds.** Students can apply for travel funds from the Human Genetics Department. These amounts do not exceed \$500, are awarded in cases where the student will travel to a meeting to present their research (i.e. a poster or talk), and are provided once per fiscal year (starting 7/1). A travel request form should be obtained from Kandace and returned to her with the appropriate information. If the request is approved, the student must arrange their travel through the Human Genetics Dept office. These arrangements should be made at least a month in advance of departure. Note that the Graduate School also offers travel awards of \$400 (see information below).

**E. Fellowships, Grants, Awards.** All graduate students in the Human Genetics Department are expected to apply for fellowships and grants during the course of their stay in the department. If outside fellowships or awards are secured, the department will fund the difference between the two supports, but the total will not exceed that of the standard graduate student stipend. If the

total fellowship exceeds that of the current stipend, no additional stipend will be paid to the student by the department.

Applying for independent fellowship support is good training that allows students to think about their projects in terms of a fundable research project. These awards also free up funds that are normally used for graduate student support, allowing that money to be put to other uses that will benefit students in the department. Finally, this is an excellent way to enrich the student's CV. Below is some information regarding the funding sources that are available. Be sure to tell Kandace if you are awarded a fellowship or a slot on a training grant so that she can change your funding status and avoid problems with your stipend.

### **Predoctoral Fellowships**

The NIH and a number of private funding organizations, such as the American Heart Association, offer predoctoral fellowships. Talk with your advisor if you are interested in applying for these funding opportunities. In particular, the NIH NRSA F31 awards are open to all domestic students in the Department and should be considered. More information can be found here: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-14-147.html>.

There are also two highly prestigious (and competitive) awards that are available to starting second year domestic graduate students (right after they join a thesis lab – this is from the NSF) and third and fourth year International Students (from HHMI). They are listed below:

#### 1. National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship

The purpose of the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) is to help ensure the vitality and diversity of the scientific and engineering workforce in the United States. The program recognizes and supports outstanding graduate students who are pursuing research-based master's and doctoral degrees in fields within NSF's mission. The GRFP provides three years of support for the graduate education of individuals who have demonstrated their potential for significant achievements in science and engineering research. The ranks of NSF Fellows include numerous individuals who have made transformative breakthroughs in science and engineering research, many who have become leaders in their chosen careers, and some who have been honored as Nobel laureates. The deadline for this application is in late October during the fall semester of the student's second year of graduate student (first year in the Dept. of Human Genetics). More information can be found online at:

[Homepage - NSF Graduate Research Fellowships Program \(GRFP\)](#)

#### 2. Howard Hughes Medical Institute International Student Research Fellowships

Students eligible for nomination are international graduate students in the biomedical or related sciences who have demonstrated exceptional talent for research, are in the second (or third) year of graduate study, have entered a laboratory in which they will conduct their dissertation research, and are **not** U.S. citizens, noncitizen nationals, or permanent residents of the U.S. For details of the fellowship and selection process, see [http://www.hhmi.org/grants/individuals/intl\\_fellows.html](http://www.hhmi.org/grants/individuals/intl_fellows.html)

The University of Utah Graduate School will select up to 7 students to make full applications to HHMI. Contact the Graduate School for more information.

**There are also several funding opportunities that are more broadly available to students. All students should consider applying to the following:**

**1. NIH Training Grants** are available to Human Genetics graduate students. The ones that have supported most students in our Department are Genetics and Developmental Biology. Students, however, are also supported by other Training Grants, including Microbial Pathogenesis, Metabolism, and Neuroscience. These training grants advertise on a regular basis for new trainees - keep an eye on the bulletin boards. Trainees are selected based on applications that are submitted to an advisory committee. These NIH-supported training grants require that trainees be a US citizen, US noncitizen national, or a permanent resident. In addition to stipend support, the training grants provide money for travel to meetings, journal subscriptions, and other material that enhances the student's education. There are also annual retreats supported by the training grants that provide additional opportunities for training and for meeting colleagues in other departments. In many cases, students who are not supported by the grant can attend these retreats and find out more about their community and about funding opportunities.

**2. Graduate Research Fellowships** (\$17,000 + tuition) are awarded each year by the University. Our department has been able to secure 1-2 of these per year. Students should apply for these! These also provide a good source of income for outstanding foreign students who are not eligible for NIH Training Grant support. Information can be found at: <http://www.gradschool.utah.edu/tbp/finassist.php#fellowships>. These applications should be submitted to the Office of Sponsored Projects.

**3. Graduate Research Supplemental Travel Awards** are offered by the University. This provides up to \$400 for students to attend a scientific meeting to present their research as a match to the departmental travel award. Funds become available July 1 each year and continue until they run out – so the earlier you apply the more likely you will get funded. Funding usually runs out in the spring. Instructions that can also be found on the Graduate School's website: <https://gradschool.utah.edu/current-students/graduate-student-travel-assistance-award/>

More information on funding opportunities for students can be obtained from the Graduate School Office in the Park Building (1-7642), or from Kandace or Carl Thummel.