

2017 Dow Doctoral Sustainability Fellows Call for Applications

The University of Michigan defines sustainability as solutions-driven scholarship and practice that seeks to safeguard the planet's life-support systems and enhance quality of life for present and future generations. The field is defined by the problems it addresses rather than the disciplines it employs. It draws from multiple disciplines of the natural, social, engineering, design, and health sciences; from the professions and humanities; and from practical field experience in business, government, and civil society.

The Dow Sustainability Fellows Program is currently seeking nominations from U-M faculty for doctoral candidates who are eager to join a community of scholars devoted to developing and implementing innovative ideas in pursuit of sustainability. Dow Doctoral Fellows come from academic departments throughout the university and seek to become sustainability leaders in academia, business, government, and non-governmental organizations. Selection criteria are outlined on page 2. Applicants should submit an "intent to apply" after securing a nomination commitment from their faculty advisor. Advisors will then be contacted to submit a nomination letter.

Overview

Made possible by The Dow Chemical Company, the University of Michigan's Dow Sustainability Fellows Program supports full-time graduate students and postdoctoral scholars who are committed to finding interdisciplinary, actionable, and meaningful sustainability solutions on local-to-global scales. The program prepares future sustainability leaders to make a positive difference in organizations worldwide, with the belief that diversity is key to individual empowerment, and the advancement of sustainability knowledge, learning and leadership.

See: <http://sustainability.umich.edu/dow>

As a recipient of this honor, each Fellow receives up to \$50,000 to help support his/her doctoral-level research and studies over two (2) years. Fellows are required to engage in monthly seminars and related activities designed to share and expand research perspectives and facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration, including collaborations with Dow Post-doctoral and Masters/Professional Fellows.

Applicants must have support from their U-M faculty advisor. Note: Each faculty member may support only one student advisee per year.

Requirements and Guidelines

1. Student Eligibility:

- a. Doctoral students actively pursuing interdisciplinary research addressing sustainability issues in any U-M Department, Interdisciplinary Program, School or College that has an approved doctoral program.
- b. A student is eligible for only one Dow Doctoral Fellowship award.
- c. Upon commencement of the fellowship in September 2017, an applicant must:
 - i. Have completed at least two semesters of graduate-level coursework toward earning the doctoral degree;

- ii. Have at least pre-candidate status; and
- iii. Intend to complete all doctoral degree requirements no earlier than April 2019.
- d. Fellows must reside in the Ann Arbor area for the duration of the Fellowship period (see section 6a).
- e. Applicants cannot hold appointments with work obligations at other academic institutions during the fellowship period.
- f. Students with funding already in place from other sources are eligible to be nominated for a Dow Doctoral Fellowship (see section 4b).
- g. Eligibility is contingent upon written declaration of matching financial support from the department chair or school/college dean using the matching support form (see section 5).

2. Selection Criteria:

Applications will go through an independent review and will be rated according to the following criteria:

- a. Degree to which the research proposal is relevant to sustainability
- b. Interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of the proposed work
- c. Potential for impact resulting from the proposed research
- d. Scientific/technical merit of the research proposal
- e. Productivity and quality of applicant's prior research and experiences
- f. Demonstrated qualities/accomplishments that show potential for sustainability leadership
- g. Desire for interdisciplinary balance in the cohort

3. Appointment Period:

- a. The appointment is for a minimum of 24 months, although Fellows are strongly encouraged to remain active in the program throughout their time at U-M and beyond.
- b. The appointment term will be effective September 2017.

4. Award:

Awards are distributed to the Fellow's home School/College in September, each year of the Fellowship. Funding distribution rules are as follows:

- a. The Fellowship provides up to \$50,000 to help support the Fellow's research.
 - i. No more than \$25,000 will be awarded during each year of the Fellowship (September 2017-August 2018; September 2018-August 2019).
 - ii. If desired by the Fellow, the award can be dispersed over a time period that exceeds 24 months, as long as the Fellow remains active in the program during the period of his/her award.
 - iii. Dow support may be used to cover tuition, registration fees, stipends (up to the equivalent of a 50% Graduate Student Research Assistant (GSRA) for the students' home department), health insurance, and research-related expenses that are pre-approved by the Dow Fellows Program Director.
- b. Fellows who already have funding from other sources, or who acquire such funding during their time in the program, can defer, without penalty, their Dow Fellowship funding until after their other funding sources expire, or decline funding altogether. Deferring or declining funding does not impact participation in the Fellows program.
- c. Fellows completing their doctoral degree prior to the end of the Fellowship period (May 2019) will have their Dow support reduced on a prorated basis, in accordance with comparable Rackham policies. Specifically:



- i. A Fellow is eligible to receive support covering tuition, registration fees, and health insurance for the term in which the student defends his/her dissertation up to the amount remaining in the student's Fellowship account.
- ii. Dow support of stipends ends the month in which a student defends unless the student provides compelling reasons as to why stipends should continue. The Program Director will review these requests to make a final decision.
- iii. Unexpended funds remain the property of the Dow Fellows Program.
- d. All unexpended funds remain the property of the Dow Fellows Program and must be returned from the Fellow's home School/College.

5. Matching Requirement:

- a. Dow awards are contingent on additional support that increase the level of total support to at least ***the equivalent of a 50% GSRA appointment in the student's home department (e.g., health insurance for 24 months, tuition for four terms, and the appropriate stipend)***.
- b. Support previously committed to the student for the time period in which support from the Dow Fellowship is granted, including tuition support, may count toward the match.
- c. Support must be verified by the department chair or school/college dean using the matching support form available on the application website. ***Failure to provide and document such support will lead to the application being rejected without review.***

6. Fellows Requirements and Responsibilities:

- a. Fellows must reside in the Ann Arbor area for the duration of the academic year during the Fellowship period. Reasonable absences for fieldwork may be permissible, but must be disclosed to and approved by the Program Director in advance. Awards may be revoked if the Fellow fails to fully disclose and seek approval for fieldwork absences. Even if absences are approved, awards may be deferred during the time of the fieldwork. ***Extended absences are not permitted, under any circumstances, during the first semester of the Fellowship period (Fall 2017).***
- b. Throughout the appointment period, fellows must actively pursue completion of degree requirements, such as enrollment in the U-M program cited in their application.
- c. Fellows must actively participate in the program seminars that occur monthly, from September through April each year.
 - i. Fellows who are unable to attend a seminar must notify the Dow Fellows Program Director in advance.
 - ii. While participation in 100% of the monthly research seminars is strongly encouraged, participation in 5 of 7 per year is a requirement.
 - iii. Fellows must attend at least 50% of the informal discussions, held monthly during the academic year.
- d. Fellows must attend at least 2 additional co-curricular sessions offered per year (skill sessions, additional research seminars, monthly dinner seminars, etc.)
- e. Fellows are recommended to attend monthly dinner seminars with Distinguished Faculty Fellows in Sustainability
- f. Fellows must present their research as part of the program seminars at some point during the Fellowship period.
- g. Fellows must participate in both Dow Annual Symposia during their Fellowship period, and present a poster there at least once. The 2017 Dow Annual Symposium will be held on Saturday, November 18, 2017.
- h. Fellows must engage in the *Michigan Journal of Sustainability* as a collaborative project with other Fellows during the course of the Fellowship period (such as authoring an

article or serving on the editorial board). Petitions to complete an alternative collaborative project will be allowed and approval granted by the discretion of the Program Director.

- i. Failure to meet these requirements may result in a revocation of the fellowship. Participation will be evaluated each semester.
- j. Fellows are expected to present their research to other program stakeholders at some point during the fellowship period as requested.
- k. All Fellows are required to follow the University of Michigan, Graham Sustainability Institute and/or other relevant policies related to academic integrity and related issues.

7. Faculty Advisor Responsibilities:

- a. The faculty advisor(s) of the Fellow must be willing to serve as a reviewer on future Fellowship review processes.
- b. Advisors are encouraged to participate in Fellowship activities, such as the annual dinner.

Application Procedure

Students must submit all fellowship application materials online at <http://graham.umich.edu/application-request/39433> and include the following:

1. An “**Intent to Apply**,” accessible at the URL above, by **December 22, 2016**.
 - a. Contact information,
 - b. Proposal title,
 - c. An abstract limited to 100 words,
 - d. The name of their faculty advisor (Note: The faculty advisor must agree to nominate the student),
 - e. The name of at least one additional recommender.

The *Intent to Apply* submission triggers a request for the faculty advisor (nominator) listed on the Intent form to develop and submit a nomination letter on behalf of the student. The submission also triggers a request for recommender(s) to submit a nomination letter (see 3 & 4 below).

2. **A completed application package submitted by January 19, 2017**, consisting of a single PDF file including:
 - a. **A statement** of educational goals and planned research limited to 1000 words. This statement should be written by the student and must:
 - i. Clearly describe the student’s planned research and how it relates to sustainability (see U-M definition on page 1).
 - ii. Explain how participation in the Dow Doctoral Fellows program will enhance the student’s ability to pursue and engage in impactful sustainability work.
 - iii. Describe how the student’s research extends or can extend beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. (Note: A primary purpose of the Dow Sustainability Fellows program is to encourage cross-disciplinary study with potential impact. Thus, research efforts confined to a single discipline are unlikely to receive funding.)
 - iv. Clearly communicate to an interdisciplinary faculty review panel that the student’s work has the potential for great scholarly significance and impact.
 - v. Include adequate scholarly references (not counted in the 1000-word limit).

- b. **A short, critical thinking essay** (limited to 500 words) answering the following question: “In what ways does fostering a diverse and inclusive community affect pathways to sustainability?”
 - c. **A curriculum vitae** describing the candidate’s:
 - i. Educational background,
 - ii. Major awards and honors received,
 - iii. Membership in professional organizations (if applicable),
 - iv. Complete list of publications and presentations (accepted, submitted, etc.), and
 - v. Outreach efforts
 - d. **Transcripts** of all graduate and undergraduate coursework. Unofficial transcripts are acceptable.
 - e. **Matching Financial Support Form** (available at <http://sustainability.umich.edu/media/files/2017-Dow-Doctoral-Matching-Funds.pdf>), with all required signatures.
3. **Nomination letter from the student’s U-M faculty advisor** (nominator) that explains why the student is a strong candidate for the Fellowship, and verifies that the student is in good standing and making satisfactory progress toward the completion of their doctoral degree. Advisors must also confirm that students are not planning to finish their doctoral studies prior to April 2019. Nominators will be asked specifically to comment on the applicant’s communication, teamwork, and interpersonal skills. Nominators will be sent a direct URL to submit letters confidentially, once the Program receives the student’s “Intent to Apply”.
 4. **One letter of recommendation from a second individual** (recommender), familiar with the student’s work. Recommenders will be asked specifically to comment on the applicant’s communication and interpersonal skills. Recommenders will be sent a direct URL to submit letters online, confidentially, after the Dow Program receives the student’s “Intent to Apply.”

APPLICATION DEADLINES:

- **December 22, 2016:** “Intent to Apply” due by 11:59 pm, EST.
- **January 19, 2017:** Full application, unit commitment form, and letters of recommendation due by 11:59 pm, EST.

EXPECTED AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT: April 28, 2017

Dow Fellows Program Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement

Supporting sustainability scholars, the Dow Sustainability Fellows Program is aligned with the U-M commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Program efforts focus on ensuring that each student thrives. Scholars learn that diversity is key to individual empowerment, and the advancement of sustainability knowledge, learning and leadership at U-M and worldwide.

See: <http://sustainability.umich.edu/dow>

CONFIDENTIAL: All applications will be handled confidentially.

CONTACT:

- **Email:** nberg@umich.edu
- **Phone:** 734-647-6863
- **Dow Sustainability Fellows, Doctoral Program Website:**
<http://sustainability.umich.edu/dow/doctoral>