FLORIDA SEA GRANTCOLLEGE PROGRAM

FY 2023 Graduate Student Coastal and Ocean Fellowship Competition

The Florida Sea Grant (FSG) 2023 Graduate Student Coastal and Ocean Fellowship Program is designed to help Sea Grant fulfill its broad educational and training responsibilities while supporting existing research efforts in fields related to ocean and coastal resources. The objective of the program is to increase the national supply of individuals educated and trained in the assessment and sustainable utilization of ocean and coastal resources. This Fellowship will provide graduate students the opportunity to extend their research with the goal of addressing the needs of stakeholders and contributing to the peer-reviewed scientific literature on a topic of relevance to coastal and marine resources. Given the broad scope of Focus Areas (see below), research can span a wide range of disciplines (e.g., natural or social sciences, engineering, planning and design, science communication, policy and legal analysis, architecture, business, education, arts and humanities, etc.). In accordance with the Guidelines for Sea Grant Fellowships (15 CFR 917.21):

> *Innovation and uniqueness will be significant factors in the determination of which applications will be funded. Another factor considered will be the potential of the proposed program to stimulate interest in marine related careers among those individuals; for example, minorities, women, and the handicapped whose previous background or training might not have generated such an interest.*

Moreover, the National Sea Grant College Program champions diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ) by recruiting, retaining and preparing a diverse workforce, and proactively engaging and serving the diverse populations of coastal communities. Sea Grant is committed to building inclusive research, extension, communication and education programs that serve all people regardless of backgrounds, circumstances, needs, perspectives and ways of thinking. Sea Grant programs should encourage proposals that include diverse participants with regards to age, race, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, disabilities, cultures, religions, citizenship types, marital statuses, education levels, job classifications, veteran status types, income, and socioeconomic status.

A. IMPORTANT DATES

- Competition announcement release date: September 8, 2022

- Applications due: October 21, 2022, 3:00 PM ET

- Notice of competition results: January 13, 2022 (earlier if possible)

- Fellowships begin: February 1, 2023

- Fellowships end: December 31, 2023

B. CONTACTS

- Fiscal/budget questions: Rod Venegas; rodvenegas@ufl.edu; (352-392-5870)

- Content and proposal preparation questions: Dr. Charles Sidman csidman@ufl.edu; (352-392-5870)

- eSeaGrant submission questions: Dr. Nancy Montes; nancymontes@ufl.edu; (352-392-5870)

C. ELIGIBILITY

Applications will be accepted from graduate students enrolled toward an advanced degree (Masters, Ph.D., or J.D.) in a field related to the marine and coastal sciences. The graduate degree must be awarded through an accredited institution of higher education in Florida. The individual must be enrolled as a student in order to use the fellowship.

D. SIZE OF AWARDS

FSG anticipates funding eight fellowships, each capped at $25,000 during the period 2/1/2023 to 1/31/2024. Graduate student fellowships are exempt from institutional IDC but will be subject to 50% match of non-federal funds (e.g., tuition, faculty mentor's time, etc.).

E. PRIORITY TOPICS

Graduate Student Fellowship application proposals must address at least one goal associated with a focus area identified in the Florida Sea Grant 2018-2023 Strategic Plan (accessible at the following link). https://www.flseagrant.org/publication/florida-sea-grant-college-program-2018-2023-strategic-plan/

This competition has distinct criteria for projects that support diversity, equity, inclusion, and or justice (DEIJ). Refer to the National Sea Grant Program's DEIJ vision statement for additional information at: https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Network%20Visioing/DEI_Vision_Final_10122018.pdf

F. APPLICATION ELEMENTS
Each section below asks for information to be entered directly into an online text box or uploaded as a PDF in the eSeaGrant system. The Appendix contains information on using the eSeaGrant system.

Student information

5. **Student name and contact information**: Provide the first and last name of the student, university/college email, and preferred telephone number.

6. **Curriculum vitae**: Attach a PDF file of student's CV. The CV must not exceed 2-pages, single-spaced, with 12-point font.

7. **Career goal statement:** Enter the student's personal and professional goal statement (200 word maximum). This statement emphasizes the applicant's circumstances, abilities, and interest in coastal and ocean science. It could also include how the project may relate to FSG's diversity goals and interests in helping underserved populations.

8. **Undergraduate and graduate student transcripts:** Upload a single PDF of all undergraduate and graduate transcripts. Unofficial copies will be accepted.

Project information

5. **Title:** Please try to be descriptive yet concise.

6. **Abstract:** Summarize the proposed research to be conducted as part of the fellowship. Include the need, method(s) and anticipated outcomes. 200 words maximum.

7. **Primary Focus Area:** Identify the focus area from FSG's 2018-23 Strategic Plan to which the project is most aligned (i.e., Healthy Coastal Ecosystems, Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, Resilient Communities and Economies, or Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development).

8. **Narrative:** Describe the proposed work following the sections a-e below. Upload as a single PDF not to exceed 5 pages of 12-point, single spaced text.

    a. **Relevance.** Why is this topic important? How is it innovative and unique? Describe the problem or opportunity using quantitative information. What is the relevance to Florida Sea Grant priorities? FSG recognizes it has a particular and unique opportunity to support NOAA's commitment to diversity and inclusion by taking an intentional step that encourages applicants to consider diversity and inclusion as part of their research; if applicable, describe how the proposed fellowship research broadens the participation of underrepresented groups and how they may benefit from its outcomes in this section.

    b. **Goal and objectives.** Concisely state the overall goal of the proposed fellowship project. List the objective(s).

    c. **Research design.** Describe the methods to be used to complete the project. What are the main technical or analytical components? How does this project complement or extend the existing plan of work toward the advanced degree? Identify any partner organizations or entities that are involved.

    d. **Expected scientific outcomes and associated broader impacts.** What are the expected results at the conclusion of the work under this one-year project?

    e. **Literature citations.** Include citations for each scientific reference in the document. As this is supplemental work, please identify only the top references (e.g., no more than 5-10).

9. **Budget**: In the eSeaGrant budget form, enter the total cost of each budget item on the form. Each budget item must include a justification for the expenditure that can be entered in the associated text box. Eligible budget items for this federally- funded opportunity include - but are not limited to - stipend, tuition, fees, health insurance, travel, page charges for publications, and materials and supplies. Matching costs should be enumerated but university indirect costs should not be included for this competitive research fellowship program.

Recommendation and attestations

10. **Letter of recommendation:** A letter of professional recommendation is required from the faculty that will serve as mentor and supervisor for the proposed research project. The letter must describe the faculty mentor's role in supervising the proposed research undertaken as part of the fellowship in addition to the capabilities and qualities of the applicant, importance of the proposed work and ability for the work to be completed within one year. To remain confidential, faculty advisors must upload a PDF of their letter directly into the eSeaGrant site; the supervisor/recommender will receive an invitation with further instruction when the applicant enters the name and contact information into eSeaGrant as they begin the application process. The letter must not exceed 2-pages, single-spaced, with 12-point font.

11. **Attestations:** Advisors who are submitting letters of recommendation on behalf of student applicants will be asked to attest to the student's good academic standing and adherence to applicable university codes of conduct. Regarding the latter, supervisors will be asked to promptly (within 10 days of the determination of a finding) notify Florida Sea Grant should the student or mentor be the subject of or perpetrate an ethical violation, which can take the form of harassment, assault, sexual misconduct or discriminatory behavior. Ethical

violations on the part of students and/or their mentors can result in the withdrawal of the fellowship award. The student mentor and the applicant will be required to attest to observing high ethical standards during the period of the fellowship. In addition, the faculty mentor will attest to ensuring that all applicable NOAA compliance documents will be completed, and where necessary copies of documents provided, prior to commencement of work including but not limited to (1) a Data Management Plan (see NOAA's Public Access to Research Results Plan https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/10169) and (2) an Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (NEPA Questionnaire; see Https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation).

12. **Letter of Institutional Commitment:** Upload a letter of commitment from the relevant institution's sponsored research office.

G. REVIEW PROCESS AND SELECTION

Each application will receive three peer reviews with related expertise. Peer reviewers will include program staff and advisory committee members, and experts and/or scientists external to the program. A Technical Review Panel comprised of a subset of peer reviewers will be assembled to discuss and rank applications using the results from the reviews. All reviewers will attest to being free of any conflict of interest with respect to the applications they evaluate and discuss. The evaluation criteria include:

- **Strength of student applicant (35 points):** The strength of the applicant's academic achievements as provided in the CV, transcripts and the compelling nature of the applicant's career goals as they pertain to NOAA and Sea Grant's mission and vision.

- **Quality of proposed research (35 points):** The research is compelling, addresses an important and relevant topic, is well-described and complete, and the budget and timeline are appropriate. The fellowship would effectively leverage/add value to the applicant's existing research activities.

- **Letter of Recommendation (20 pts):** The letter describes an applicant with strong character, drive and commitment to their profession and towards others. The applicant is capable of conducting the research proposed and the work would strengthen the applicant's advanced degree. The extent to which the results would contribute to the peer-reviewed literature or result in a documented practical impact or accomplishment. All attestations were provided.

- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice - DEIJ (10 points):** Extent of personal qualities/actions exemplifying or supporting principles of DEIJ. Information to be obtained from the CV, narrative, career goals statement and/or letter of recommendation.

The Florida Sea Grant Director has final discretion to recommend applications for funding based on the reviews and discussions; administrative review; availability of funding; and FSG's objectives, needs, and priorities. Applications recommended for funding will be included in a Letter of Intent to fund selected fellowships that will be submitted by the Director to the applicable Federal Program Officer. Applicants will be notified once the applications are approved by the Federal Program Officer.

If selected, applicants will be asked to provide supplemental documents prior to the award (e.g., Data Management Plans, NEPA Questionnaire, required permits, etc.) and will be provided with information on how to submit a final report in in FSG's Online Activity Reporting System (OARS). Finally, Fellows will be asked to create a blog post on their research and participate in a webinar to present their research accomplishments and activities supported by this program.

APPENDIX

APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCESS VIA ESEAGRANT

Applications must be submitted through Florida Sea Grant's eSeaGrant system at https://eflseagrant.ifas.ufl.edu. New users to this system will need to create an account in eSeaGrant and should do so early in the process to avoid potential problems and risk missing the deadline. With an established account, users can save submission information and work on the application over time.

To establish login credentials:

1. Go to: https://eflseagrant.ifas.ufl.edu

2. Click the grey register button at the top right-hand corner of the window.

3. After you create your account, you will receive an email with login credentials. (If you do not receive a "Welcome" email with login credentials, please contact Nancy Montes at (nancymontes@ufl.edu).

4. Once you login with your credentials, you can change your password. To do so. click your name in the upper-right corner of the screen and select "My Profile."

Existing users can log in with a previously established username and password. If you have forgotten your password, please use the "forgot password" feature to trigger a reset. Start this submission process early to avoid potential problems and risk missing the deadline.

To start an application, or revisit/edit an existing application:

Application components within eSeaGrant correspond to the "Section F. Application Elements" section (above).

1. Click on "Fellowships" on the banner head and/or on the left side of the screen.

2. Search for and click on the application labeled "2023 Graduate Student Coastal and Ocean Fellowship Competition (Fellowship Applications)."

3. Upon entering eSeaGrant, the applicant will be presented with a series of tabs located on the left side of the screen. Each tab represents a section of the application and requires the applicant to add information either by uploading PDF files or entering information directly into a text box. Note that text boxes cannot accept headers, footers or page numbers.

Submission Preview:

You will have the opportunity to view your application before you submit. Please carefully review and, when satisfied, click on the SUBMIT button located on the right side of the window. Proposals are accessible for edit/review up until you click on the SUBMIT button. Once submitted, the application is final and cannot be changed.

For an example of how to submit application elements in the eSeaGrant system, follow the link below:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/9lnopv93ctstfqo/HowToSubmit_FL_eSeaGrant_Example.pdf?dl=0