**MU Fellowships Office Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**4.29.15**

**Follow-Up from December**

**Spring Nominations**
- At our December meeting we discussed the possibility of moving the campus endorsement process for award programs (Fulbright, Marshall, Mitchell, Rhodes, Truman) that require students to apply through the institution to the spring.
- Currently, we are not ready to move formal nomination processes to the spring. As things stand now, students typically do not commit to applying for a Fulbright grant or other major fellowship until at least the end of the spring semester.
- While we will keep the option of moving campus nominations for major post-bac awards to the spring in our back pocket, we plan to keep the Truman Scholarship nomination process in the fall. Truman applicants (third year undergraduates) benefit from the additional time that November campus nominations provide.

**Award for Academic Distinction**
- On Sunday, April 26th, twelve outstanding MU undergraduates were recognized as the second class of Award for Academic Distinction recipients.
- This year the Award for Academic Distinction Committee received about 60 applications. Thank you to anyone who submitted nominations. This student-initiated award program is likely to become another strong tradition at the university.
- Josh Murray, who writes most of the undergraduate studies press releases, will likely send out a press release about the award’s ceremony soon.

**Budget**
- We don’t have any big budget updates as Dr. Spain is still waiting to hear from the powers above him in regards to the FY16 budget.
- We hoped to bring on a faculty fellow this fall, but we have to wait to see how the budget shakes out.
- David ____ asked if we are currently understaffed. The answer to this question depends on how many students apply for fellowships. If we have 30 Fulbright applicants and 30 students applying for NSF GRF (the number of applicants we would like to see for these programs this fall), then we will likely reach our capacity for providing the quality of service we hope to give to each of our applicants.

**Summer 2015**
- Thank you to the Office of Undergraduate Research and _____ for partnering with us to talk with Summer Welcome students about the Fellowships Office! Rachel, the office’s graduate assistant, will be in India this summer, so we
appreciate the help covering the table we normally staff at the Summer Welcome Student Activities Mart.

Recap of 2014-2015

- Tim used the “Fellowship Applications and Selections, 2014-2015” document attached to this email to summarize the number of applicants for each award, finalists, selections, and honorable mentions or alternates if applicable.
- In this discussion Tim emphasized the importance of giving context to the numbers reported in the attached table. While the Fellowships Office with the help of our campus partners can work to increase the number of applicants and the quality of applications we have for each award, we do not have control over students’ applications once students hit the submit button on them.
- For example, although we had 12 Fulbright finalists this year, we could easily have half that number of finalists in the coming application cycle. There is no telling how many finalists and recipients we will have from year to year. This year we had strong Fulbright applicants who were not selected as finalists. Once students’ applications leave our hands, it is hard telling what sets some applications apart from others.
- For these reasons we focus less on reporting percent increases or decreases in students selected as finalists, alternates, or recipients than helping students develop what we hope will be competitive applications.

Focus Groups

- This April we hosted two focus groups with students who applied for fellowships throughout the year to learn:
  - How students first heard about the Fellowships Office
  - How we can better assist students applying for fellowships
  - What students gain through the application process
  - Students’ reflections on the experience as a whole
- The theme that resonated the most across both groups was the importance of faculty involvement for students applying for fellowships. Students recognized that any success associated with the Fellowships Office is a result of campus-wide collaborations. From faculty who serve on interview committees, to recommenders across campus, to the Fellowships Office Advisory Committee members, countless people contribute to the student development process the Fellowships Office strives to facilitate. To put this collaboration in terms of a cliché, the phrase “it takes a village to raise a child” clearly communicates the importance of faculty in the fellowships application process.

What can we do for you?

- Tim finished the meeting asking what can the Fellowships Office do to support you as our Fellowships Office campus advocates?
• Whether that support comes in the form of us presenting to your classes, hosting workshops tailored to students in your department, or providing handouts for you to distribute to Summer Welcome students (a request from Vickie Shahan), we want to know how we can help you help us.

Looking Forward

Targeted Workshops
• Last Friday we partnered with Dr. Nicole Monnier and Dr. Seth Howe in the German and Russian Studies Department to host an interactive workshop for students interested in applying for the Critical Language Scholarship, Boren Scholarship, and/or a Fulbright grant.
• Twelve highly engaged students (especially for a Friday afternoon!) attended the workshop, and Nicole and Seth said they look forward to hosting one again next year.
• We are highly interested in hosting targeted workshops for students across campus, so please let us know if you would like to collaborate in this way.

Fulbright and NSF: Application Goal
• Tim shared that he would like to see at least 30 Fulbright applications and 30 students apply for the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship this fall. In Fall 2014, we worked with 26 Fulbright applicants and 28 NSF GRF applicants.
• Tim said that MU could likely have 40 students applying for each of these programs, but there are MU students who could be competitive applicants not applying for these programs.
• Increasing the number of applicants goes back to creating and maintaining strong relationships with our campus advocates, especially you all as advisory committee members, who point students toward fellowship opportunities. We are confident we will see increased numbers of applicants through the continued contributions people across campus make to the office.

What should we as advisory committee members be doing between now and the fall meeting?
• Send your outstanding students our way!
• Think about ways that we can collaborate with you and the area of campus you represent to educate your students about fellowship opportunities (i.e. hosting a workshop or information session tailored to the interests of your students).