

**Demystifying the Ford Foundation Fellowship Application**  
**UCSB Graduate Division, Fall 2016**  
**Thursday, October 17, 2016 at 11:00 – 12:30pm in SRB 2154**  
**Workshop organized by Miroslava Chávez-García**

## **Ford Foundation Fellowship Applications**

### Mission Statement:

“Through its Fellowship Programs, the Ford Foundation seeks to increase the diversity of the nation’s college and university faculties by increasing their ethnic and racial diversity, to maximize the educational benefits of diversity, and to increase the number of professors who can and will use diversity as a resource for enriching the education of all students.” (Source: <http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/FordFellowships/index.htm>)

### Eligibility:

- All U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, and U.S. permanent residents, individuals granted deferred action status under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, regardless of race, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, or sexual orientation,
- Individuals with evidence of superior academic achievement (such as grade point average, class rank, honors or other designations), and,
- Individuals committed to a career in teaching and research at the college or university level.
- If eligible, you will be evaluated on a diverse array of “Selection Criteria.” Go to the Ford Foundation website and *familiarize yourself with those criteria as well as the other criteria*. The suggestions they provide are helpful and speak directly to how you will be evaluated. Pay attention to all components, especially the supplementary materials.

Pre-doctoral Fellowship: A three-year program for graduating senior undergraduates as well first- and second-year students in a doctoral program. You are eligible to apply as long as you have three years remaining before your oral exams or before you become ABD. You will be asked to submit a form verifying your status. Deadline: **November 17, 2016**, (5:00 PM EST), Supplemental Materials, **January 10, 2017**. Award: \$24,000.

Dissertation Fellowship: A one-year fellowship for doctoral candidates in their last year of dissertation research and writing (with the emphasis on the writing). Deadline: **November 10, 2016** (5:00 PM EST), Supplemental Materials, **January 10, 2017**. Award: \$25,000.

Post-doctoral Fellowship: A one-year fellowship for recent PhDs. It is meant to help junior faculty (usually in their second, third, or fourth years) to publish their first book and secure tenure. Candidates sometimes propose a second book but the goal is to help applicants dedicated to diversity secure tenure. Deadline: **November 10, 2016** (5:00 PM EST), Supplemental Materials, **January 10, 2017**. Award: \$45,000.

### Ford Foundation “Perks”

All Ford Fellows are invited to attend the annual fall meeting where sessions on professional development are provided as well as opportunities to speak with publishers, gain professional insights and advice, and network with other current and former Ford Fellows. Later, you may be called (or you can volunteer) to lead workshops, speak at conferences, and participate in the review process of Ford applications. The Ford Foundation bills itself as the “Ford Family” and certainly that is the culture that is promoted (at least from my experience).

### **Components for All Applications**

Personal Statement: How do your lived experiences in school, research, work, and/or life align with the mission of the Ford Foundation? Note: Your presence in the university or the nature of your project are *not* enough to qualify for diversifying the professoriate. You need to state explicitly how you contributed to the expansion of the K-12-college pipeline, to the undergraduate-to-graduate school transition for others, or to any other concrete issue pertaining to access to higher education and equity. This is not a “boo-hoo” statement, as a colleague once phrased it, but an explicit discussion of how you made it possible for others underrepresented peoples to achieve their educational hopes and dreams.

Statement of Previous Research: What previous research have you conducted and how did that research prepare you for your current proposed project? In your discussion you should outline your research methods, sources, and major findings, especially at the dissertation and post-doctoral stage. Additionally, at the advanced levels, you should discuss the emergence of your research agenda or research streams, lines of inquiry, and potential impact on the broader field.

Proposed Plan of Study: What does your research contribute and why is that important? In other words, what does it add that we don’t already know and why is that significant? What are the main questions and/or tentative findings or arguments of your study? And, how do you plan to address the central issues of the study? And, if possible, discuss your preliminary findings, which will show that you are prepared to undertake the work, particularly at the predoctoral level. As Professor Edwina Barvosa noted in the session, at the dissertation level, you need to make a strong statement about what you have found and what kind of impact it will make. At the postdoctoral level, you need to emphasize the kind of impact your research is making or is about to make.

Letters of Recommendation: You will need at least three letters (five maximum, depending on application). If you are in graduate school, one must come from faculty adviser or at least one person from the current department. Ideally, find individuals with PhDs and those who know your academic work inside and out and can speak to the merits of your work. Be sure, if at all possible, that the individual can or will write a positive letter especially one that supports your research and your (background) story. Lukewarm or short letters hurt your case. Provide them with as much information as possible. Consider drawing up a “cheat sheet” or a talking points of sorts. Since the letters of recommendation are not due until several weeks after your application is due, send the referees all of your materials. That will help them write a stronger, more thoughtful letter. Give them ample time.

## **Dissertation Fellowships & Additional Materials**

Annotated Bibliography: Select the top ten most relevant primary and secondary sources for your work. Begin your list with the primary sources. You might include three-to-four collections or materials that inform your work. Then you can list the top secondary sources that shape or have shaped your work. Spend two-to-three sentences explaining how those documents feed into your work and perhaps how you diverge, add to, perhaps revise, the interpretations.

Dissertation Completion Plan: Provide an overview (a timeline noting completion of chapters by months and year) of how you plan to complete the study, that is, what last-minute research (if any) and writing needs to be done. Be specific about your research questions. You might also provide names of chapters, if you wish, as well as restating and demonstrating that you will be *done* by the end of the fellowship year. Be sure too to discuss your findings or some of your findings. If you neglect to do so, the committee will assume you are NOT ready or prepared to complete your dissertation in the fellowship year.

Dissertation Abstract: Provide a succinct statement of your project, your major arguments or findings, your intervention in the literature and our knowledge more broadly, and sources consulted. The abstract, like your overview of your project, should have an opening statement that grabs the reader. Do not just duplicate the introductory paragraph of the plan of study and use it as the abstract. Do not take the easy way out. The committee has many, many applications to review. Plus, remember, take advantage of all the space that you have in the application.

## **Post-doctoral Fellowship Competition**

Abstract of Proposed Plan of Study: As noted above, provide a succinct statement of your project, your major arguments or findings, your intervention in the literature and our knowledge more broadly, and sources consulted. The abstract, like your overview of your project, should have an opening statement that grabs the reader's attention.

Proposed Plan of Study and Long Range Career Goals: State your current or future employment plans and your goals for publications including the book for tenure as well as the second book project. Provide an overview (a timeline noting completion by months and year) of how you plan to complete the study.

Host Institution & Mentor: You will need to identify a mentor at a host institution who is willing to provide guidance during the fellowship year. They should be associate professors and, ideally, full professors who will be able to provide a strong letter welcoming your presence in their department. If possible, ask them to list the resources that will be available and, most importantly, how they too have contributed to diversifying the professoriate. Finally, be able to state how and why they make for an excellent fit with your scholarship and goals for diversifying the academy.

## **Additional Resources and Information:**

- For past resources on earlier Graduate Division sponsored Ford workshops, see: <http://www.archive.gradpost.ucsb.edu/funds/2013/10/16/ford-foundation-fellowships-workshop-recap.html>

- For more insights on applying to the Ford Foundation Fellowship programs, see “Preparing a Successful Grant or Fellowship Application,” *Organization of American Historians Newsletter* 37, No. 3 (August 2009), 7, 14.  
[https://www.academia.edu/12155286/\\_Preparing\\_a\\_Successful\\_Grant\\_or\\_Fellowship\\_Application\\_Organization\\_of\\_American\\_Historians\\_Newsletter\\_37\\_No.\\_3\\_August\\_2009\\_7\\_14](https://www.academia.edu/12155286/_Preparing_a_Successful_Grant_or_Fellowship_Application_Organization_of_American_Historians_Newsletter_37_No._3_August_2009_7_14)
- To view samples of successful essay submissions related to the Ford Fellowship, you may visit the Graduate Student Resource Center at SRB 1215.
- For questions related to interdisciplinary research and preferred submission area or subarea, contact [Chris O’Brien](mailto:cobrien@nas.edu) at the National Academy of Science Fellowships Office: [cobrien@nas.edu](mailto:cobrien@nas.edu) or 202-334-2883.
- For writing resources, some suggested books are:
  - Becker, H. S. (2010). *Writing for social scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book, or article*. ReadHowYouWant. com.
  - Cahn, S. M., & Cahn, V. (2013). *Polishing Your Prose: How to Turn First Drafts Into Finished Work*. Columbia University Press.
  - Zinsser, W. (1991). *On writing well*. HarperCollins Publishers.

### **Recognition of Contributors**

A big “thank you” to Ester Trujillo, a former UCSB GradDiv Funding Peer and PhD candidate, who shared her insights with me in drawing up this document. Thanks, too, of course to all the current and past Ford Fellows for sharing their insights with me on the process of applying. Finally, *gracias* to the panelists at this workshop for their illuminating insights and practical tips, Professors Edwina Barvosa (Feminist Studies) and Denise Segura (Sociology) and PhD Candidate Rosie Bermudez (Chicana/o Studies), all current and former fellows.