

## **Request for Proposals 2010 Water Institute Graduate Fellows Program**

The UF Water Institute is soliciting proposals to its new research and education initiative the **Water Institute Graduate Fellows (WIGF) Program** that will fund interdisciplinary faculty-graduate fellow teams to conduct integrative research in an emerging area of water science, broadly interpreted to include the social, natural, and engineering sciences. For a more complete description of the goals, structure, oversight and evaluation of the WIGF program see Appendix A.

The Deans of the UF Colleges of Agricultural and Life Sciences and Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Chair of the Department of Environmental Engineering have committed funding for Graduate Research Fellowships in support of this program. This funding will provide a \$25,000 per year stipend plus tuition waiver for 4 years to biennial cohorts of 4-5 Ph. D. students. The Water Institute will leverage this investment by providing a competitive graduate fellow research grants program to support field, laboratory and computer analyses by the faculty/student cohort (available budget approximately \$60,000 per cohort) as well as facilitating integrative activities to support their development into a cohesive interdisciplinary cadre of professional researchers (available budget approximately \$40K per cohort). The Water Institute will also provide a Research Coordinator for group facilitation; assistance with design, execution and evaluation of integrative activities; and proposal-writing assistance for development of external funding for the project.

Funding from other Colleges/Departments affiliated with the Water Institute (i.e. School of Natural Resources and the Environment, Civil and Coastal Engineering, Public Health, Design Construction and Planning) through the provision of additional Graduate Research Fellowships to the cohort may be provided on a case by case basis.

### **Proposal requirements:**

**Diverse group of faculty:** Proposals must involve a diverse group of at least 4 Water Institute affiliated faculty members: up to two from the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, up to two from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and up to one from the Department of Environmental Engineering Sciences. Participation of additional faculty members from other Colleges/Departments affiliated with the Water Institute is encouraged.

**Comprehensive interdisciplinary theme:** Proposals must describe a comprehensive interdisciplinary theme in an emerging area of water science appropriate for doctoral-level research that will serve as the foundation for graduate fellow activities. The proposal should describe the major individual research efforts for each of the graduate fellows and how they would be integrated to form the thematic basis for the interdisciplinary project. The research efforts should be described in sufficient detail for reviewers to assess their disciplinary scientific merit and relevance to the interdisciplinary project theme. The proposal should describe existing funding available

to support the proposed research, and/or specific plans to obtain external funding for research expenses, beyond the \$60,000 that will be available through the competitive graduate fellow research grant process.

**Strong collaborative interactions:** In addition to describing individual and collaborative research within the proposed theme, the proposal must describe proposed activities that will enhance the faculty-graduate fellow cohort's integration and help them develop skills to work in a collaborative interdisciplinary environment. These activities should be integrated with the research activities and be designed to enhance trans-disciplinary competencies i.e. foster the ability to work in diverse teams; create a system of communication and exchange that keeps cohort engaged; provide instruction in ethics and the responsible conduct of research; and/or provide training in communication of the substance and importance of research to disciplinary experts, interdisciplinary collaborators, and lay audiences. Examples of potential integrative group activities include summer field/travel experiences; development/team teaching of undergraduate courses; group projects with external stakeholders/agencies; participation in training programs focused on skill building in interdisciplinary teamwork, leadership, communication and information sharing; and organization and participation in interdisciplinary seminar series (i.e. Water Institute Distinguished Scholar Seminar series) and conferences (i.e. Biennial Water Institute Symposium).

#### **Detailed Submission Guidelines:**

1. Letters of intent, containing PI name, project title and faculty team must be submitted to the Water Institute ([wgraham@ufl.edu](mailto:wgraham@ufl.edu)) by Wednesday October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010.
2. Attendance at an information meeting on Monday November 1, 2010 is required for those who have submitted letters of intent (time and location TBA).
3. Proposals must be submitted electronically to the Water Institute ([wgraham@ufl.edu](mailto:wgraham@ufl.edu)) by Monday November 15, 2010 and should consist of the following materials:
  - Cover Page with project title, faculty team, and their affiliations. Signed by the PI and Co-PIs.
  - Interdisciplinary Research Theme (3- 6 pages) including description integrative interdisciplinary theme; background data and information to support theme; disciplinary and collaborative research questions and methods; and existing and potential sources of external funding for proposed research.
  - Proposed Integrative Activities (2-3 pages) including a description of overall team-building approach, philosophy and previous experience working in interdisciplinary teams; and a detailed description of the suite of integrative activities, with individual goals, timeline, budget, and proposed involvement of Water Institute staff for each.
  - Project Timeline (1 page) including timeline for student recruitment and selection, group proposal development, research and integrative activities, as well as the role and contribution of each member of the faculty team.
  - References

- Brief (maximum of 2 pages) Curriculum Vitae for the Principal Investigator and each of the Co-PIs and a list of their currently funded research with percent time commitment to each funded project.
- Statement of Departmental Support for proposal and any Department-specific teaching requirements that may required of Graduate Fellows.

Proposals must be emailed to the Water Institute in ms word or pdf format. Documents should be single spaced with font size no smaller than 12 point. Every effort will be made to notify Principal Investigators of their award status by November 30, 2010.

### **QUESTIONS**

Contact: Wendy Graham ([wgraham@ufl.edu](mailto:wgraham@ufl.edu)). Phone: 352-392-5893

## **Appendix A: 2010 Water Institute Graduate Fellows Program Description**

An important component of the Water Institute's Strategic plan is to recruit and train excellent students to pursue careers in water-related science, engineering, policy, planning, and management, with an interdisciplinary focus. The new Water Institute Graduate Fellows (WIGF) program is intended to meet the challenges of educating Ph.D. scientists and engineers, with both interdisciplinary backgrounds and deep knowledge in chosen disciplines, who will pursue water-related careers in research and education. The program will support institutionalization of the Ph.D. student cohort model developed in the UF Adaptive Management of Water Wetlands and Watersheds IGERT program, and will further the development of a supportive environment for integrative research, training, and education in water-related sciences and engineering at UF.

The UF Water Institute, with support from the Colleges of Agricultural and Life Sciences and Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Department of Environmental Engineering Sciences has established a new education and research initiative **The Water Institute Graduate Fellows (WIGF) Program**. This program will fund interdisciplinary faculty-graduate fellow teams to conduct integrative research in emerging areas of the water sciences and to participate in interdisciplinary graduate education and training activities. The program will support:

- Biennial cohorts of 4-5 Ph. D. students by providing 4-5 Graduate Research Fellowships, \$25,000 per year stipend plus tuition waiver for 4 years.
- A competitive research-grants program for Water Institute Graduate Fellows to support field, laboratory and computer analyses by the cohort (available budget approximately \$60,000 per cohort)
- Support for integrative activities to support the team's development into a cohesive interdisciplinary cadre of student and professional researchers (available budget approximately \$40,000 per cohort).

### **Evaluation and Oversight:**

The WI Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) will oversee the WIGF program. The FAC will solicit, review and select the winning proposal, and in conjunction with the faculty members involved in the proposal, develop graduate student recruiting plans and materials.

The Water Institute will advertise the fellowships nationally, seeking top candidates to work with faculty on the selected proposal. A fellows selection committee composed of the proposal faculty members and members of the FAC will review applicants and make final selections. In selecting applicants, the selection committee will work closely with the proposed faculty advisors and Departments of the Colleges providing the Fellowships to insure that applicants meet departmental, college, and university requirements. Special

attention will be given to increasing diversity and members of underrepresented groups in recruitment and selection. For accounting purposes, each fellow will have the departmental home of their major advisor.

### **Criteria for Evaluating Long-Term Program Success:**

The goal of the Water Institute Graduate Fellows program is to produce professionals with a strong holistic understanding of the bio-physical, technological, ecological, social and economic challenges to sustaining water resources. The success of this program will be measured by:

- The quality and diversity of graduate fellows recruited
- Level of faculty/graduate student participation in, and evaluation of usefulness of, interdisciplinary team building activities
- Graduate Fellow research relevance and quality
- Number of external proposals submitted (and funded) by Faculty-Fellow Cohort
- Numbers of peer reviewed publications, white papers, and presentations at professional meetings resulting from the WIGF program
- Professional placement of graduate fellows

### **QUESTIONS**

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