

Announcement of JPL Graduate Fellowships Program (JPLGF)

In his Semiannual State of the Lab Address on 27 October, 2008, Dr. Charles Elachi announced a new program that will enable graduate students to spend substantial periods of time at JPL on research projects under the guidance of JPL advisors, possibly in collaboration with the students' academic advisors. A joint meeting of the Education Office and the Office of Chief Scientist was held on Thursday, 4 December, to describe the JPL Graduate Fellowships Program (JPLGF) to the community and to answer questions. A pdf version of this presentation may be viewed at <http://scienceandtechnology.jpl.nasa.gov/newsandevents/announcements/>. That document gives the rationale for the program, summarizes its key features and compares them with those of existing programs that bring graduate students to JPL, and outlines the procedures that would be followed by a JPL researcher in seeking and bringing on a student collaborator.

The purpose of this message is to announce that JPLGF is now available >for use, to highlight selected material from the presentation, and to call for Announcements of Opportunity from those JPL researchers wishing to take advantage of this new program.

1. JPLGF is a program designed to give graduate students the opportunity to conduct research at JPL that is supportive of their graduate studies and at the same time is compatible with the task-order assignment of the JPL advisor. Ideally, a project will be of interest to the student's university graduate advisor as well, so the arrangement will permit three-way collaboration. JPLGF is not a "jobs" program. The student will be an affiliate, not an employee, and should not be brought here to support day-to-day JPL project and program activities other than research.
2. Under JPLGF, initiative may be taken at any time of the year to bring on a student, so there is no pre-determined schedule and there will be no annual "call." The periods during which the student is at JPL may, however, be constrained by the requirements and characteristics of the academic schedule. Note that the length of the student's first stay at JPL must be ten weeks or more. Other arrangements may be made on a case-by-case basis for students attending local universities.
3. The JPL research advisor is responsible for supplying funds to pay the graduate student's stipend, travel expenses, housing allowance, and other allowed costs under the program, and also for paying the JPL "charge-back" costs.
4. All payments to the student under JPLGF will be made by transferring funds from the advisors account by means of a subcontract work order (SWO) to Coahoma College in Mississippi, the chosen subcontractor for handling the financial aspects of program administration. There are other means of transferring money to universities to pay students; they do not fall within the scope of JPLGF. JPLGF is more affordable than some alternative program options because of the use of an

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- external entity to handle the financial transactions. (See Slide 11 in the presentation.)
5. JPLGF is open to foreign nationals as well as to U. S. citizens and legal permanent residents. At this time, we require that the foreign national or LPR be attending a U. S. university. The JPL advisor is responsible for preparing and following through with host-hire package.
 6. JPLGF is implemented in cooperation with the National Space Grant College and Fellowships Program. Each student in the program must be registered with his or her local Space Grant consortium.
 7. Once the student has been identified and has registered on the JPL web site for the program (<http://jplgf.jpl.nasa.gov/index.cfm> - to be activated on 1/9/2009), the Education Office will, as for other Education Office programs, coordinate the procedures necessary to obtain badges, ensure that safety requirements are met, and provide an orientation.
 8. The procedures that a JPL researcher must follow to bring a graduate student on board are outlined on Slides 12-16 of the 4 December presentation. The process calls for the preparation of an Announcement of Opportunity. A template for the AO may be found at <http://scienceandtechnology.jpl.nasa.gov/newsandevents/newsdetails/?NewsID=187>. Note that, for some situations, an AO may not be required (e.g. see Slide 15 of the 12/4/2008 presentation).
 9. Linda Rodgers is the coordinator for JPLGF. She may be reached at 4-3274 or via Linda.L.Rodgers@jpl.nasa.gov<<mailto:Linda.L.Rodgers@jpl.nasa.gov>>. Questions may also be addressed to Bill Whitney, 4-4410 or William.M.Whitney@jpl.nasa.gov<<mailto:William.M.Whitney@jpl.nasa.gov>>. Feedback and suggestions on programmatic aspects of JPLGF may be addressed to Cinzia Zuffada in the University Research Affairs Office, 4-0033.