The Dr. Dionel Avilés ’53 and Dr. James Johnson ’67 Fellowship Program
Reviewers Informational

Dr. Shannon D. Walton
Assistant Dean
Graduate and Professional School

February 2, 2021
9:30 am – 10:30 am
CST
Zoom
Presentation Outline

• Avilés-Johnson Fellowship Program Nomination

• Avilés-Johnson Fellowship Program Review Process

• Obstacles to Achieving Diversity & Excellence
  – Addressing and Reducing Biases

• Avilés-Johnson Fellowship Program Timeline

• Questions
Avilés-Johnson Fellowship Program Nomination

• **Nomination letter** clearly describing nominee’s: 1) superior academic performance, 2) relevant experiences outside the classroom, and 3) other indicators of future success (*2 page maximum*).

• **Diversity statement** addressing how the nominee will contribute to diversity in the nominating department/program, university, and/or future profession. The diversity statement must include relevant supporting data and narrative about the basis of the nominee’s eligibility regarding noted markers of diversity. Failure to include this information disqualifies the nomination. (*1 page maximum*)
Letters of Recommendation

For master’s and doctoral nominations of students NOT currently enrolled at TAMU:
  - At least one, but no more than three (3), letters of recommendation for the nominee.

For master's or doctoral nominations of students currently enrolled in a TAMU undergraduate or master’s program:
  - Two (2) new letters of recommendation for the student (no more than four (4) total pages).
Avilés-Johnson Fellowship Program Nomination

- Nominee’s resume or curriculum vitae
- **Financial Commitment** summary noting the department/program’s financial offer to complement the collaborative funding package
- **Completed graduate admissions application** (e.g. ApplyTexas, EngineeringCAS, Apply Yourself, etc.) to Texas A&M University
  - Candidates do not have to be admitted at the time of nomination
Nomination – Diversity Statement

• The diversity statement **must** include relevant supporting data *and* narrative about the basis of the nominee’s eligibility regarding the noted markers of diversity.
Sample Diversity Statement

- Diversity marker identified
- Relevant supporting data
- A narrative describing how the applicant will contribute to the diversity of the nominating department/program, university and/or future profession
- Less than 1 page
- Sources identified

Jane Doe is a first-generation, female college student, a target population designated in OGAPS’ strategic plan for the Graduate Diversity Excellence Fellowship. According to the DARS certified enrollment report, first-generation students comprise approximately 15.8% of doctoral students at Texas A&M University. This percentage is substantially less than the percentage of first-generation undergraduate students which is currently 26%. Additionally, of the total population of doctoral students in the College of Liberal Arts, only 25% are classified as first-generation. Through their unique perspectives and experiences, first-generation students enhance classroom learning and campus diversity.

Sources:
https://ogaps.tamu.edu/OGAPS/media/media-library/documents/Strategic%20Plan/OGSPlanAugust22-BWebX.pdf/
https://www.bestcolleges.com/perspectives/first-generation-students/
Review Process

- Diverse Review Committee
  - 99 reviewers from 12 different TAMU colleges
- Master’s and Doctoral nominations reviewed separately
  - Master’s = 2 reviewers for each nomination
    (1 reviewer within the college, 1 reviewer outside of the college)
  - Doctoral = 3 reviewers for each nomination
    (1 reviewer within the college, 2 reviewers outside of the college)
- Number of Reviews
  - 2020-21 Award Year each reviewer assigned 10-12 nomination packets
- Ratings based on four categories
  - 1 to 10 scale (10 = highest/best)
Review Process – Evaluation Criteria

• **Evidence of superior academic achievement** such as class rank; GPA; quality of undergraduate institution; honors or other awards; etc.

• **Relevant experiences outside of the classroom** such as extracurricular experiences related to course of study; leadership experiences; work experiences; military experiences; internships; personal history; international experiences (i.e., study abroad, semester at sea, etc.); research experiences (either at their own university or in summer undergraduate research opportunities at other universities); oral or poster presentations; publications; etc.
Review Process – Evaluation Criteria

- **Non-cognitive and personal attributes** that speak to the nominee’s research potential, adaptability, creativity and collegiality; motivation and experience; persistence in and commitment to educational success; social and emotional skills and character traits; etc.
### Review Process – Scoring Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 - 10</td>
<td>Absolutely outstanding, likely to be among top 2% of all graduate applicants in this category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - 8</td>
<td>Very strong with only minor weaknesses, likely in the top 5-10% of all graduate applicants in this category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 7</td>
<td>Commendable, but lacking in several areas, likely to be in the top 20% of all graduate applicants in this category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 5</td>
<td>Good, but not in the top 20% of all graduate applicants in this category.</td>
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Review Process

• Reviews are completed in InfoReady system
• Score each application based on the guidelines of the scoring rubric.
  – Option to provide comments
• Scores and comments reviewed by GPS for biases, inconsistencies and irregularities

Check your email for a message from support@inforeadyreview.com that looks similar to the following:

Hello,

Hunter Welch has requested your assistance to act as a Reviewer for Dr. Dionel Avilés ’53 and Dr. James Johnson ’67 Fellowship Program (Masters Nominations). There is an application ready for your review. Please complete this by Sunday, February 14, 2021. Thank you!

Application: 4 Pimentel Court
Name: Hunter Welch

[View Application]
Review Process

Login for Texas A&M University Users

Use your Texas A&M NetID to log into InfoReady Review.

Texas A&M University Login
Review Process

- After reviewing the information provided by the nominator in the application section, be sure to look at any attached documents on the right side of the page.
Review Process

- After reviewing all of the application materials, complete your review by filling in the areas asking for your comments and ratings at the bottom of the form.
Review Process

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Review Process

- After reviewing all of the application materials, complete your review by filling in the areas asking for your comments and ratings at the bottom of the form.
Review Process

- You will be asked to rate the applications on a scale from 1 to 10 in three categories. When you finish with your ratings, simply click on “Submit Review”.

Your review was submitted!
Thank you for taking the time to review and provide feedback on this application.

Application Title: 4 Fimertel Court
Application ID: 000277
Review Deadline: Sunday, February 14, 2021

To start your review, click “Show Application Details” below to view the application.

*Please indicate whether you approve or do not approve this application moving forward in the competition:

- I Approve
- I Do Not Approve
Use these arrows in order to navigate between and complete any other reviews you may have been assigned.
Obstacles to Achieving Diversity & Excellence

• Unintentionally biased evaluations and judgments

• Over-reliance on poor indicators of talent
  – Perceived caliber of an institution
  – Author of letter of recommendation
97% of schools believe that applicants should be reviewed in a fair, and objective manner. However, less than half (47%) believe bias could be a factor in their school’s admission process.

- 2016 Kira Admissions Bias Assessment
How Bias Creeps into the Review Process

• Lack of consistency
  – Reviewer criteria
  – Number of references
  – Method of review

• Inherent cognitive biases
Avilés-Johnson Fellowship Program Submission Deadlines

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, Feb. 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Doctoral Nominations Round 1 submission deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, Mar. 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Doctoral Nominations Round 2 submission deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, Mar. 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Master’s Nominations, including Bush School and Mays Business School submission deadline</td>
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- [https://grad.tamu.edu/Buttons/Funding-Opportunities/Aviles-Johnson-Fellowship-Program](https://grad.tamu.edu/Buttons/Funding-Opportunities/Aviles-Johnson-Fellowship-Program)

- There is no difference between the rounds aside for the targeted master’s or doctoral nomination. We understand that departments/programs vary regarding their recruitment timelines and the two rounds hopefully accommodate for some of the variance.
## Avilés-Johnson Fellowship Program Timeline – (ROUND 1)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., Feb. 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Doctoral Nominations Round 1 submission deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri., Feb. 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Reviewer assignments announced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues. Feb. 9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Conflict of Interest - deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri., Feb. 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; – Mon., Feb. 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Nomination review window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon., Feb. 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Reviews due from reviewers (scores and comments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon., Feb. 22&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Departmental award notifications emailed (includes students awarded as well as those not awarded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. Mar. 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; – Thurs. Mar. 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Award letters emailed to students and CC nominator/DH/Graduate Advisor/GOC Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. Apr. 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; – Thurs. Apr. 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Track responses from students (yes, no, no response)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs., Apr. 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Deadline to accept fellowships</td>
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Questions?
Nine Forms of Bias

• **Groupthink** (sometimes called The Bandwagon Effect)
  – Occurs when members of a group set aside their own opinions, beliefs, or ideas to achieve harmony.

• **Halo Effect**
  – Occurs when one excellent quality (such as a very high test score, a compelling experience, or strong reference) deflects other flaws in an application and makes an applicant appear more positively through the rest of their application.

• **Confirmation Bias**
  – Occurs when an individual seeks, interprets, selects, or remembers information in a way that confirms his or her own beliefs or ideas.

• **Ingroup Bias** (Similarity-Attraction Hypothesis)
  – Occurs when a reviewer gives an applicant preference because they perceive the applicant to be within the same “group” as them.
Nine Forms of Bias

- **Conservatism** (Belief Revision)
  - Has nothing to do with political views. Occurs when reviewers maintain a prior view without properly adjusting for new information.

- **Bizarreness Effect**
  - Occurs when a bizarre or unique characteristic makes a nominee stand out above others. In most cases, bizarreness effect favors applicants with higher income or, in general, more privileges.

- **Stereotype Bias**
  - Occurs when stereotypes influence and impact how a reviewer rates an applicant.

- **Status Quo Bias**
  - Difficult to identity. It is an emotional attachment to the current state of being; an aversion to change. Occurs when a reviewer fears the possible risk of the unknown, the change, and discount the benefits because of this fear.

- **Recency Bias**
  - Occurs when a reviewer assigns more weight to an applicant that was recently reviewed than an applicant reviewed further back in time. Generally avoidable.
Ways to Reduce Biases

- Identify where bias occurs.
- Develop a training or workshop for reviewers.
- Enlist a consistent number of reviewers for each applicant.
- Create a comprehensive rubric.
- Review applicants independently.
- Be open to a wide realm of student experiences to include students from all backgrounds.
- Set limits and realistic timelines.