Policies and Procedures

of the

Awards Committee

Department of Geosciences

Committee Members:

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Auburn University

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Contents

Introduction

Section 1. General Policies

Section 2. Student Travel Grants

Section 3. Student Research Awards

Section 4. Nomination Procedures

Section 5. Outstanding Student Awards (OSAs)

Appendix 1. Faculty votes and committee decisions on GAB Fund key issues

Appendix 2. Departmental expectations of student grant/award winners

Appendix 3. Geosciences Advisory Board (GAB) Outstanding Student Awards

Introduction

The polices and procedures established in this document are primarily intended for the grants and awards funded by the Geosciences Advisory Board (GAB); however, they also apply to the various other grants and awards offered by the department, college, university, and external organizations.

The GAB Fund was established in 2013 by alumni of the department to support student and departmental needs. The GAB, in collaboration with the department chair (Mark Steltenpohl), approved a budget designating the amounts to be distributed in each of the following categories:

1. Student Travel
2. Student Research
3. Seminar Fund
4. MS Student Signing Bonuses
5. Freshman Recruiting Scholarships
6. Outstanding Student Awards

The department chair subsequently charged the awards committee with developing policies and procedures for disbursement of the funds. In developing the policies and procedures specified in this document, the committee relied on input from the faculty and the chair to resolve various issues. Faculty votes and committee decisions on “key issues” are documented in Appendix 1.
Section 1. General Policies

1. Student travel and research awards funded by donations made to the department shall be officially listed as “Grants” (e.g., Geosciences Advisory Board Student Travel Grant), except for awards with “pre-designated” titles.

2. The committee shall strive to review applications and notify grant/award recipients within 7-10 days of grant/award deadlines.

3. Student grant/award winners are required to comply with departmental expectations as specified in Appendix 2.

Section 2. Student Travel Grants

The following guidelines shall govern the disbursement of funds available to support student travel to professional meetings.

1. Student travel grants shall be distributed once in fall semester and once in spring semester. Tentative deadlines for submitting applications shall be as follows:
   - Fall: October 01
   - Spring: February 15

2. The funds available to be distributed each year shall be divided evenly between fall and spring.

3. Students may apply for a student travel grant offered by the department in both fall and spring semesters, but may NOT apply for more than one per semester. More specifically, a student may not apply for a GAB student travel grant and an Icenogle student travel grant in the same semester.

4. The funds available to be distributed shall be divided among the applicants who demonstrate a clear need for support.

5. Priority status shall be granted to students who have not previously received funding for travel from the department.

6. The awards committee shall determine the amount of funds to be disbursed to each applicant based on need and the policies established herein.

Section 3. Student Research Grants

The following guidelines shall govern the disbursement of funds available to support student research activities “other than travel to professional meetings.”
1. Student research grants shall be distributed in spring semester only. Applications shall be due on the same date as established for the submission of student travel grants in spring.

2. Students may apply for more than one student research grant offered by the department per academic year. However, a student must submit an application to a particular grant opportunity in order to receive funds from that particular account. More specifically, the committee shall not approve the disbursement of funds to a student from an account (i.e., grant opportunity) in cases where the student did not submit an application for that particular grant opportunity.

3. The funds available to be distributed shall be divided among the applicants who demonstrate a clear need for support.

4. Priority status shall be granted to students who have not previously received funding for research from the department.

5. The awards committee shall determine the amount of funds to be disbursed to each applicant based on need and the policies established herein. Furthermore, the committee shall use its best judgment in determining the amounts to distribute among the applicants in cases where a student applies for support from multiple grant opportunities (e.g., simultaneous, duplicate applications to GAB Research Grants-in-Aid and Hargett-Dunston or Waters/Folse).

Section 4. Nomination Procedures

The following guidelines shall govern the process of nominating a student (or faculty colleague) for an award.

1. Individual tenured/tenure-track faculty members are responsible for making all nominations, not the awards committee. The individual who makes the nomination shall henceforth be designated as the “nominator.”

2. The nominator must submit the nomination in writing (e.g., email) to the committee in advance of any deadlines specified by the committee.

3. The nominator shall be responsible for preparing and submitting all supporting documents. However, the nominator may collaborate with other faculty in the preparation and submission of the nomination documents.

4. In cases where an organization (e.g., AU, COSAM, or an external agency) specified a limit on the number of nominations that may be submitted from the department, the awards committee shall determine a) that a nomination may move forward in the event that it is the lone nomination; or b) which nomination(s) to submit from the department in the event that the number of nominations exceeds the limit.
5. In “limited nomination” cases, a “screening deadline” shall be set approximately 2 weeks in advance of the final deadline in order to provide the nominator(s) adequate time to prepare the final nomination documents (e.g., time to request and acquire outside letters of reference).

6. In cases where there is no limit on the number of nominations that may be submitted from the department, the awards committee shall NOT participate in any aspect of the nomination process.

Section 5. Outstanding Student Awards (OSAs)

The following guidelines shall govern the procedures for the selection of students to receive outstanding student awards. Specific eligibility requirements and nomination procedures for the Geosciences Advisory Board (GAB) OSAs are provided in Appendix 3.

1. Candidates for outstanding student awards must be nominated in accordance with the guidelines established in Section 4: Nomination Procedures.

2. The awards committee shall verify that all nominations meet eligibility requirements and departmental standards. Nominations that do not meet requirements/standards shall NOT be approved to receive further consideration.

3. A student who receives an outstanding student award shall retain his/her eligibility to be nominated for other outstanding student awards.

4. A student who graduates at the end of the Fall Semester shall retain his/her eligibility to be nominated for outstanding student awards presented in the following Spring Semester.

5. Award winners shall be selected by an anonymous vote of the tenured/tenure-track faculty. Non-tenure track faculty may contribute to the preparation of nomination materials and discussion of candidates, but they are not eligible to vote in the election.

6. Student award prizes (e.g., GAB Outstanding Student Award) shall be limited to cash and plaques/certificates, unless specified otherwise.
Appendix 1.

Faculty Votes and Decisions on Geosciences Advisory Board (GAB) Fund Key Issues

Faculty Poll Results: 14 Jan 2014

1. GAB student travel funds will be used to support 1) individual student needs for travel to professional meetings and 2) mileage expense for departmental vehicle travel to professional meetings.

2. GAB Outstanding Student Awards will be divided into separate categories for students in Geology and students in Geography.

3. GAB Outstanding Student Awards will be divided into separate categories for undergraduate students and graduate students.

4. GAB Outstanding Student Awards will be restricted to first-place winners only.

Faculty Poll Results: 17 Feb 2014

1. The distribution of GAB student travel funds will be split annually as follows: 2/3 dedicated to individual student travel grants and 1/3 dedicated to departmental vehicle mileage expense for travel to professional meetings.

Faculty Poll Results: 03 Mar 2015

1. A student who receives an outstanding student award shall NOT be restricted from competing for other outstanding student awards.

Awards Committee Meeting Decisions: 01 April 2015

1. The department chair agreed with the awards committee’s observation that several of the GAB Fund categories were not award-related (i.e., Seminar fund, MS graduate student and freshman student signing bonuses, and the recently created GeoClub fund) and, thus, fell outside the scope of an awards committee. The chair further agreed to assign responsibility for these non-awards accounts to other committees/task forces. The awards committee would retain responsibility for 1) student travel, 2) student research, and 3) outstanding student awards, but no other accounts at this time.

2. The department chair communicated to the committee that there was no longer a need to use GAB student travel funds to cover department vehicle mileage expenses for trips to professional meetings.

*NOTE: Faculty poll results on 17 FEB 2014 are no longer in effect. Henceforth, all GAB student travel funds shall be dedicated solely to supporting individual student travel grants.

Last updated: 15 April 2015
Appendix 2.
Departmental Expectations of Student Grant/Award Winners

Student recipients of grants and awards presented by the Department of Geosciences are expected to abide by all departmental and university rules and regulations that may apply to the funds given him/her including, but not limited to, the following stipulations:

1. Keep a record as to how the funds were spent and be able to present this record, including any applicable receipts, to the committee or department chair upon request.
2. Inform the committee of any changes in your plans that may affect how or when the funds are spent, if that differs from what is stated in your original proposal.
3. Return any unspent funds remaining after your project or travel is over.
4. Present (personally or in writing) the findings of your research or a summary of your funded experiences upon request from the awards committee, department chair, or alumni board.
5. Acknowledge the source of your funds in any publication, thesis, written paper, or presentation (poster or oral) that was prepared as a direct result of your departmental funding.
6. When applicable, present your findings or results at a professional meeting, a symposium on campus, or to the department at large (e.g., in a departmental seminar), as deemed appropriate by your advisor, the department chair, or the Awards committee.
7. When applicable, assist the departmental staff in accounting for the use of your funding, including (if needed) the preparation and documentation of an AU Request for Authority to Travel (RAT) and follow-up receipted voucher.
8. Abide by any and all other stipulations of any grant or award that the committee, department chair, or faculty advisor may request of you at the time of the award, during the performance of the activities proposed by you for the grant or award, and anytime soon thereafter.
Appendix 3.
Geosciences Advisory Board (GAB) Outstanding Student Awards

2015 Spring

Awards:

1. Outstanding Undergraduate Student in Geology
2. Outstanding Undergraduate Student in Geography
3. Outstanding Graduate Student in Geology
4. Outstanding Graduate Student in Geography

Eligibility Requirements:

Undergraduate Students

1. Currently enrolled in the AU Department of Geosciences as a geology or geography major, respectively.
2. Minimum GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale)
3. Demonstrate significant achievements in one or more of the following—(a) classroom performance, (b) research, (c) departmental or college service/outreach, and (d) leadership.

Graduate Students

1. Currently enrolled in the AU Department of Geosciences geology or geography graduate program, respectively.
2. Minimum GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale)
3. Demonstrate significant achievements in one or more of the following—(a) classroom performance, (b) thesis research, (c) laboratory or classroom instruction, (d) departmental or college service/outreach, and (e) leadership.

Nomination Packages: Nominations are to be made by faculty members of the Department of Geosciences. Nomination packages should include: (1) a letter prepared by the principle nominating faculty member that clearly outlines the nominee’s achievements in the areas listed above (a-e); (2) up to three additional supporting letters from departmental faculty and/or others who can attest firsthand to the nominee’s achievements; (3) an updated CV/résumé prepared by the nominee; and, if pertinent, (4) any additional documents that demonstrate outstanding achievements (e.g., teaching evaluations, award or grant notifications, etc.).

*Nomination packages must be submitted electronically as a single PDF.*