

Student Roles and Responsibilities
Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship Program

As a Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship (WDGF) recipient, you are part of a nationally recognized program that has become a model for private support of graduate education. Established in 1997, the program was created through the foresight and generosity of three major partners: the University of Wisconsin Foundation, Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF), and alumni donors.

Because these three entities continue to make a significant investment in this program, the Graduate School is committed to our being good stewards of the resources they have entrusted in us. In particular, we are always striving to show our appreciation to major donors who have made the fellowships possible. This is where you can help us significantly.

As a fellowship holder, you are a leading example of our commitment to recruiting the best and brightest students to study at UW-Madison. For this reason, your role as an ambassador of the program is vital to its future success. The information that follow outline important areas where you can help us thank program investors and demonstrate our achievements in research and graduate education.

If you have questions regarding the guidelines outlines here, please contact David Weerts, director of development for the Graduate School at (608) 262-5250 or by email at david.weerts@uwfoundation.wisc.edu.

Thank you in advance for your assistance. With your help, we hope to expand the program and provide even greater opportunities for future UW graduate students. Again, congratulations and best wished in your studies

Sharing Your Research

It is critical that our partners have an understanding of the research that you are conducting. Beyond the natural interest it generates, a thumbnail sketch of your work can help demonstrate the depth of research activity taking place on campus. Upon receiving a personal request from the dean, you will be asked to complete and submit the following information to the Graduate School:

Your Name

Name of Fellowship

Status (e.g., First-year doctoral student, dissertator, etc.)

Major

Department

School/College

A paragraph (in layperson's terms) about your research, i.e., what you are doing and why your research is important and exciting.

Speaking Opportunities

Under special circumstances, you may be asked to briefly discuss your research at an event featuring alumni, donors, and UW Foundation or WARF board members. While these occasions would be rare, we ask you to consider the prospect of giving such a talk. The dean or dean's designee will contact you if your assistance is needed.

Contact with Fellowship Donors

Your fellowship was made possible through a generous gift made by an individual, family, foundation, or corporation. The Graduate School makes a special effort to show our appreciation to these major donors through events, letters, and special gatherings. Your participation in thanking donors is an important piece of our stewardship plan. Therefore, we look forward to your participation and assistance in these areas:

Letter to your donor:

Upon receiving your fellowship, you will be asked to send a letter of thanks to the particular donor that made your award possible. As a courtesy and for purposes of promoting the program, the dean of the Graduate School should be copied on your correspondence. The dean or dean's designee will contact and assist you regarding this letter, but general guidelines include:

Thanking the donor for their generosity.

Explaining how the fellowship is helping you pursue your graduate studies.

Briefly discussing your research and why it is important and exciting.

Special occasions:

In some cases, your donor may live locally and want to be in contact with the students supported through their fellowship gift. Under these circumstances, the UW Foundation will arrange special gatherings, such as a hosted lunch or dinner, to introduce donors to their fellowship recipients. A staff member at the UW Foundation will contact you in these special instances.

Annual recognition event:

Each year the Graduate School hosts a spring reception and dinner to recognize the support of fellowship donors. Invited guests include major benefactors, school/college deans, UW Foundation staff, WARF board members, and the Chancellor. Your attendance at this event is critical, as it provides an extraordinary means to introduce you to donors and campus officials.

Typically, one or two fellowship recipients are asked to briefly present a summary of their research during the dinner program. It is in this respect that we ask you to consider the prospect of giving such a talk.

You will receive a formal invitation to this event in the spring. Full details will be provided by the UW Foundation.

For additional information please contact:

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