Program Overview

The Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) Program is the centerpiece of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's initiative to increase the commitment to diversity in the faculty ranks of colleges and universities. The University of Southern California’s MMUF program is a partnership between the College of Letters Arts and Sciences, the Office of the Provost, and the Division of Student Affairs.

Two principal goals guide MMUF:

• To identify, support, and mentor highly qualified underrepresented undergraduate students and other students interested in diversifying faculties in higher education, and encourage them to pursue a Ph.D. in fields where diversity has not been historically present.
• To increase the number of faculty from underrepresented groups at colleges and universities throughout the country and abroad in order to bring a wider range of experiences and perspectives to teaching and scholarship.

MMUF Nationwide

Thirty-four colleges and universities, and the member institutions of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) participate in MMUF. Nearly 2,000 students have been selected as Mellon Fellows since the fellowship was established in 1988. Currently, over 100 Mellon fellows have earned their Ph.D. and hold faculty positions at institutions across the country. An additional 500 students are enrolled in doctoral programs, or are undergraduate fellows working with faculty mentors in preparation for faculty careers.

Activities

Annual Western Regional Conference

The USC, Stanford University, Heritage University, and Cal Tech Mellon programs collaborate to host an annual regional conference. The conference provides an opportunity for fellows to meet each other, discuss research ideas, and motivate each other to succeed in their academic and personal lives. It is typically held near the end of the fall semester (mid to late November or early December), at one of the four campuses.

Mentor-Fellow Interaction

Fellows work with their mentors to develop their scholarly interests into research projects. Fellows are expected to present their research through scholarly articles, oral
reports, workshops, conferences, multimedia displays, and at USC’s annual undergraduate symposium for scholarly and creative work.

The interaction that occurs between mentors and fellows typically includes:

- development of a plan for working together and a timeline for completion of the project
- regular communication (meetings, emails, phone calls, reviews of report drafts, etc.)
- exchange of articles or suggested readings about research or topics of interest

**Workshops, Meetings, and Other Activities:**

- Mellon Fellows “Beginning of the Semester” Meeting (1 per semester)
- Mellon Fellows Spring Dinner (April)
- Graduate School Workshops on various topics (1-2 per semester)

## Financial Assistance

### Research Stipends

Fellows receive a stipend of $1400 during the fall and spring semesters to support their research efforts. Additionally, during the summer months, each fellow receives a $3,600 stipend.

### Loan Repayment

The Mellon Mays Fellowship offers a loan forgiveness program to help students overcome disincentives to pursue an academic career caused by undergraduate loan indebtedness. Fellows who enroll in a Mellon approved Ph.D. program within 39 months of receiving their undergraduate degrees are eligible for up to $10,000 in undergraduate loan payments. The program repays guaranteed student loans in installments. The first $5,000 is disbursed in yearly increments of up to $1,250 for four years. The second $5,000 is paid upon receipt of the Ph.D., provided the degree is completed within six years.

## Selection and Eligibility

Fellowships are awarded to USC sophomores during the spring semester. Participation in the program is limited to students considering graduate study towards a Ph.D. in Mellon-supported fields. Participation is not limited by a student’s undergraduate field of concentration. The following factors are considered in the selection of fellows:
1. Sophomore standing (juniors are welcome to apply), pursuing a major or minor in a Mellon-approved field of study (see a complete list of Mellon-approved majors and minors below).
2. Academic promise
3. Interest in pursuing an academic career in a Mellon-designated field of study
4. Potential for serving as a mentor and teacher to a wide variety of students
5. Demonstrated commitment to increasing opportunities for underrepresented populations, breaking down stereotypes, increasing cross-racial and ethnic understanding, and enabling others to better understand persons of different races and ethnicities
6. Commitment to participating fully and enthusiastically in all aspects of the MMUF program, including attendance at conferences and meetings
7. Status as US citizen or permanent resident

**MMUF-Supported Fields of Study at USC**

**Majors:**

- American Studies & Ethnicity
- African American Studies
- Anthropology
- Art History
- American and English Literature
- Asian American Studies
- Astronomy
- Chicano/Latino Studies
- Classics
- Comparative Literature
- Computer Science
- Chinese
- Earth Sciences
- East Asian Area Studies
- East Asian Languages and Cultures
- Ecology
- Earth Sciences
- English
- Environmental Studies
- Gender Studies
- Geological Sciences
- German
- Foreign Languages and Literature
- French
- History
- Italian
Japanese
Judaic Studies
Korean
Mathematics
Musicology
Philosophy
Physics
Physics/Computer Science
Political Theory
Religion
Sociology
Spanish
Demography
Population Studies

Minors
Ancient Religion and Classical Languages
African American Studies
American Studies Cultural Area Studies
Art History
Astronomy
Chicano/Latino Studies
Classics
Comparative Literature
Cultural Studies
East Asian Area Studies
East Asian Languages and Cultures
English
Gender Studies
History
Mathematics
Philosophy
Physics
Religion
Sociology
Spanish