PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The USC Enhancing Diversity in Graduate Education (EDGE-SBE) Program is a four institution alliance between Stanford University, Texas A&M, the University of Southern California and the University of Texas-Austin to help redress the under-representation of African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans in Ph.D. programs in the social, behavioral, and economic sciences. The broader mission is to prepare under-represented doctoral students for faculty careers.

The First-year Institute for Socialization and Research Training or “FIRST Summer Institute” offers directed research experiences and faculty mentoring based in the student’s specific program of study, as well as community-building with advanced graduate students and peer Fellows across a variety of departments. Regularly scheduled seminars provide participants the opportunity to exchange ideas, share information, and discuss issues pertinent to developing into a academic professional and pursuit of the faculty career.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

FIRST student participants, or “Fellows,” receive a $6,000 summer stipend to offset the financial demands and opportunity costs associated with full-time summer study for graduate students. The stipend is an award that is separate from other merit-based awards distributed during the normal academic year.

Under-represented students matriculating to or enrolled in pre-selected Ph.D. programs in the social, behavioral, and economic sciences at USC are encouraged to apply to the program.
FIRST participants should be available full-time from the end of May through the end of July. Participants may not enroll in classes nor hold employment during the program without consent of the program directors and faculty mentors. All FIRST seminars and activities take place on the USC campus.

**ELIGIBILITY**

Participants must be US citizens or permanent residents of the United States and a member of an under-represented racial/ethnic group including African American, Latino/Hispanic, or Native American.

Prospective participants may be a promising applicant to one of the designated SBE Ph.D. programs during the fall application season OR a currently enrolled Ph.D. student at the pre-qualifying exam stage (preferably first-year students).

Finally, participants must also be enrolled in a USC Ph.D. program housed in one of the targeted SBE areas of study (see http://grad.usc.edu/EDGE/default.aspx). Participants must be highly interested in and committed to pursuing an academic career.
APPLICATION

Applicants must submit an application to the EDGE-SBE program staff available online at http://grad.usc.edu/EDGE/prospectiveStudents.aspx. Applicants must have genuine interest in research and university teaching as a career.

For more information about becoming a FIRST Fellow, visit us at http://grad.usc.edu/EDGE/prospectiveStudents.aspx. Applications are available to eligible candidates in early November through May.

PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

FIRST participants are expected to pursue substantive, independent, scholarly research over the summer under close supervision of a faculty mentor. The time commitment to the research efforts should be no less than 20 and up to 40 hours per week. Full participation in regularly scheduled seminars with other participants, faculty, and staff is mandatory. At the end of the summer program, participants are required to submit a project for presentation before the FIRST Summer Institute research community.
PROGRAM BENEFITS

The First-year Institute for Socialization and Research Training (FIRST Summer Institute) at the University of Southern California is a scholarly experience that seeks to enhance diversity in graduate education through enhancement of the research experience of beginning doctoral students of color.

The broader mission is prepare under-represented doctoral students for faculty careers. A cohort of doctoral students, or “Fellows”, participate in a series of seminars which foster community-building in an intellectually stimulating and socially welcoming environment.

For additional EDGE-SBE program information and an application please visit our website at: http://grad.usc.edu/EDGE/prospectiveStudents.aspx
Graduate and professional education at the University of Southern California prepares students for leadership in research, teaching, the application of knowledge and professional practice. Excellence in graduate and professional education is critically dependent on the interaction of faculty members and students. The values that characterize these interactions include dedication to excellence, mutual respect, fairness, collegiality, honesty and integrity.

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