



## **ADMINISTRATIVE FELLOWS PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **How old is the program?**

The program began in 1986 and was developed jointly by Penn State's Commission for Women and the President's Office. To date, 59 employees have participated.

### **Who are the mentors?**

Three mentors are chosen from members of President's Council.

### **Why should I apply? What difference does it make for me and the University?**

If you are interested in expanding your understanding of the University and in understanding the ways in which decisions are made, then this program is for you. What you bring to the program is a fresh perspective that administrators appreciate as they strive to continuously improve Penn State. Personally, you will also find that you will grow in many ways and achieve a better sense of your leadership abilities and interests. The program may suggest new career possibilities for you.

### **In what kinds of activities are fellows involved?**

A key focus is the opportunity to "shadow" the mentor (e.g., going to meetings with the mentor and discussing observations about those sessions). Also, there is a core set of activities in which all fellows participate, such as meetings of the Board of Trustees, Academic Leadership Council, Central Enrollment Management Steering Group, and Faculty Senate. Many fellows also develop projects based on identified unmet needs in the administrative unit. For example, Fellows have been involved in planning for the College of Information Sciences and Technology, the Bryce Jordan Center construction, and The Schreyer Institute for Innovation in Learning (now The Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence), and diversity strategic planning for the Commonwealth Campuses.

### **Can employees from locations away from University Park apply?**

Absolutely yes, and are encouraged to do so.

### **If I am located away from University Park, where do I live and who pays for living expenses?**

A modest stipend is available to aid in covering living expenses.

**What type of flexibility will I have?**

With your mentor's guidance you will develop a learning plan and goals and identify activities to meet those goals. Historically, mentors have been sensitive to needs for flexibility, such as family responsibilities. To enable you to get the most from the fellowship, it is important to leave your "old" position behind and totally immerse yourself in your new experience.

**What kind of time commitment is expected?**

That's really up to the fellow and the mentor, but the fellowship assumes a full-time commitment.

**What if I find that I don't like administrative life?**

That's what this program is all about, i.e., to provide a sense of what an administrator's life is like. You are under no obligation to seek an administrative position in the future.

**Can I return to my old position if I want to?**

Absolutely, in fact, that is the assumption of the program, although it may lead you to consider new career opportunities.

**What are the backgrounds from which previous Fellows have come?**

They have come from all over the University, from Residence Life and the Corporate Controller's Office to the various academic colleges and campuses. Former fellows have been both faculty and staff members.

**What kind of interaction would I have with my mentor and how many hours a week?**

Mentor-Fellow pairs have reported a wide variety of experiences. From a recent evaluation of the program, all indicated that the relationships were positive and professional. In addition to attending meetings together, mentors and fellows meet on a regular basis.

**What has happened for previous Administrative Fellows after their year?**

While the goal of this program is to increase the pool of women and minorities qualified for administrative careers, there are no guarantees for new jobs upon completion of the program. Former Fellows have gone on to become deans, associate deans, vice provosts, and directors.

**Does it matter if you have no experience, nor any long-term interest, in a position/career in the areas that the fellowships are offered?**

No, the goal of the program is to offer learning opportunities and opportunities for growth, not a position in the office where the fellowship is completed.

**Who pays my salary?**

The President's Office compensates your unit, which continues to pay your salary.

**I hold a fixed-term appointment. Am I eligible to apply?**

Faculty and staff interested in applying must hold a standing (full-time) appointment. Wage payroll and fixed-term appointments are not eligible.

**How do I apply?**

A call for nominations is published on the *NewsWire* late in the fall semester. Applications are available at <http://www.psu.edu/vpaa/> or from the office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs who administers the program. Interviews are held in February and selection announcements made in April or May.

**What kinds of information should I put in the cover letter?**

Delineate specifically why you are interested in the program and what you would bring to it.

**How are fellows selected?**

A committee including former Fellows, Chair of the Commission for Women, Vice Provost for Educational Equity, Associate Vice President for Human Resources, and the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs evaluate each application. After candidates are interviewed by the committee, recommendations are forwarded to the mentors. Mentors will interview candidates forwarded by the committee and make the final selection.

**Is it okay to apply again even if I have not been selected?**

It is often the case that individuals apply more than once before they are accepted.

**Who assigns the appropriate fellow for each mentor?**

The Selection Committee takes into account the preference that the applicant has stated, and works to match the candidate's background and goals with the characteristics of the mentor's office.

**How long is the fellowship?**

Fellowships generally follow the academic calendar, although the start and stop dates are somewhat flexible.

**How do I prepare for the interview?**

Think about the reasons for your interest in the program, and consider issues facing higher education and Penn State. Think also about your strengths and weaknesses and about ways in which you have contributed to diversity at Penn State.