Geography Department Policy on Graduate Student Travel Support

Graduate students in the Geography Department are encouraged to attend professional meetings and to present papers at these meetings. This is a wonderful opportunity to mature as a professional geographer and to make contacts.

In order to help support graduate student attendance at professional conferences, the following departmental support is available on a first come first serve basis until allocated funds have been depleted. (It is anticipated that these funds will normally not be used for graduate students who are Graduate Research Assistants unless the subject of their paper falls outside of the research area of the grant from which they are being funded. Research Graduate Assistants are encouraged to explore the funding opportunities listed in steps 1 and 3.)

Steps involved in obtaining support:

1) Many of the leading Geography organizations will waive or cover registration fees for students giving papers. AGU for example, has a travel award of $600 for students who are presenting a paper and are members of AGU. You should review these options first.

2) The department will consider the following support levels:
   a. Registration fees for any relevant conference, if not covered by conference.
   b. Up to $100 in additional support (accommodations/travel expenses) for graduate students to give papers/presentations at regional meetings and associations.
   c. Up to $250 in additional support for graduate students to give papers/presentations at national association meetings (like the AAG national meeting).

3) Determine if you are eligible for either of the Graduate School’s travel awards: http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/Fellowship/goldhaber/index.html. These awards are partially contingent on matching funds. Matching funds could be obtained from step 1 and/or 2 above. If you are eligible for a graduate school travel award, departmental support will be contingent on your application for this award.

4) For planning purposes please explore all potential funding options available to you. The available departmental support is not designed to cover all of your expenses. However, when combined with other potential support, the total amount of support available is much more significant.

5) To request travel support, please send Dr. Ralph Dubayah the following items:
a. A memo, countersigned by your advisor, requesting support for the trip and outlining your anticipated costs.
b. An abstract of the presentation you plan to give at the conference. This abstract will be posted on the departmental web pages.
c. Completed paperwork for the Graduate School travel awards (please leave the matching departmental award section blank). If you are not eligible for either Graduate School travel award, please provide details.
d. Completed paperwork for any potential conference or related association support. If you are not eligible for, or if conference related support is not available, please provide details.

6) Departmental travel funds will be awarded on a first come first serve basis until allocated funding has run out. You will be informed within two weeks about the amount of money the department is able to provide.

7) Graduate students who are presenting papers at national level meetings and who have carefully reviewed the national conference and graduate school’s travel funds options will be given preference if simultaneous requests are received and there are not sufficient funds.

8) It is always a good idea to be creative and strategize with fellow graduate students to reduce the costs of the trip (for example sharing a hotel room). This would help maximize the amount of support that could be provided by the existing dollars.

9) It is required that you provide Dr. Ralph Dubayah with a written summary of the conference within two weeks of your return. The summary will be posted on the departmental web site with your abstract.