

Brackenridge Fellowship

Application Materials and Instructions

1. **Brackenridge Fellowship Program Application Form** (online, see website)

2. **Project Proposal:** A 2-3 page description of the project you propose to do if awarded a Brackenridge Fellowship. It must be typed (double-spaced, in 12-point font, with 1 inch margins), have a title and numbered pages, and show your name at the top of every page. (If you choose to include references and/or a figure or two, they do not count against the page limit.) The project proposal is the key element of your application. How should you write it to make your application competitive?

The interdisciplinary nature of the Brackenridge communities requires every member to learn to discuss her/his research in language that all members of this community can understand. This means that the use of discipline-specific jargon and those terms or acronyms common in your field MUST be translated into commonly understood language. You should therefore regard your project proposal as your opportunity to demonstrate your interest in becoming a member of this community by proposing your project in terms that are understandable to a smart but diverse audience. Students are encouraged to have peers in other disciplines read their proposals to ensure it is understandable.

In addition to meeting this overall criterion, a competitive proposal must include sections that deal, at least briefly, with the following topics: (1) a general introduction that provides a context for your project which your diverse audience could be expected to be familiar with; (2) an explanation of where/how your project fits into that larger context and how it would contribute to an improved understanding of the larger question; (3) an answer to the “So What?” question, i.e. an explanation why your project’s contribution is important in the context you described in (1) above (“important” does not have to mean “have a marketable outcome” ; (4) the specific questions/goals/ objectives that your project aims to answer/achieve; (5) an outline of the method(s) you will use to carry out your project; (6) an assessment of the feasibility of completing your project within the time period of this fellowship; and (7) if your project is part of a larger group effort, you should identify clearly the aspect(s) of the project that you will be responsible for.

3. **Statement of Interest in the Community:** A short, typed statement (no more than 1 page, double-spaced, 12- point font, with 1-inch margins) indicating why you are interested in

participating in the interdisciplinary community of the Brackenridge seminar. This is your opportunity to demonstrate your interdisciplinary interests and indicate both what you could contribute and what you hope to take away from the experience. Please be specific. You may also want to highlight classes, activities, hobbies, or other interests that illustrate your interest in a variety of subjects outside your own area (humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, professional schools).

4. **Academic Transcript:** This need not be an official transcript issued by the Registrar's Office, but please make sure it is up to date and shows your name, your declared major(s)/minor(s)/certificate(s), and your current GPA.

5. **Letter of Recommendation from Your Mentor:** A signed 1-2 page confidential letter that addresses the following points:

- In what context and for how long have you known this student?
- Have you discussed the proposed project with the student?
- In your assessment, is the student prepared to carry out the proposed project?
- Can you provide the student with the resources needed to carry out the project?
- Will you be able to find the time to mentor the student during the project?
- What degree of independence will the student have in carrying out the project? And to what extent was the student involved in developing the idea for the project?

The mentor should be a Pitt faculty member or an experienced graduate student (ideally, someone who has taught undergraduate students). The mentor should also have an academic background appropriate for the student's project. The mentor must submit the letter via the online application system. Mentors will receive an email requesting their letter to do so only once the student's application has been submitted. If you are submitting your application at or near the deadline, your faculty mentor will have an additional three days to submit the letter. Students are encouraged to request this letter from their mentor well in advance of the application deadline so that once their mentor's letter is requested, they can promptly submit it.

6. **Submitting the Application:** Submit your application online before the deadline stated on the website. Please do NOT mail your application.