



MELLON MAYS UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWSHIP at the UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Preparing highly qualified undergraduates to become scholars and work toward ending racial disparities in academia.

Our Mission

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

In June of 1969, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation was established as a nonprofit philanthropic organization with a mission to aid and promote such religious, charitable, scientific, literary, and educational purposes as may be in the furtherance of the public welfare or tend to promote the well-doing or well-being of mankind.

In 1989, the Foundation made a long-term commitment to help remedy the serious shortage of faculty of color in higher education through the Mellon Minority Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) program. In 2003, the Foundation reaffirmed its commitment changed the name of the program to the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship program, to symbolically connect the mission to the stellar achievements of Dr. Benjamin E. Mays.

Benjamin Mays

Benjamin Elijah Mays was born in 1895 in South Carolina and graduated from Bates College in Maine in 1920. He went to the University of Chicago for his master's degree and doctorate, and while he was working on those degrees, he was ordained into the Baptist ministry. He taught at Morehouse College and at South Carolina State College. He spoke early and often against segregation and for education. He received nearly thirty honorary doctorates and other honors and awards including election to the Schomburg Honor Roll of Race Relations. He had been a model for one of his Morehouse students, Martin Luther King, Jr., and he served the young minister as an unofficial senior advisor.

The Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship

The fundamental objective of MMUF is to address, over time, the problem of underrepresentation in the academy at the level of college and university faculties. This goal can be achieved both by increasing the number of students from underrepresented minority groups who pursue PhDs and by supporting the pursuit of PhDs by students who may not come from traditional minority groups but have otherwise demonstrated a commitment to the goals of MMUF. The MMUF welcomes applications from students in the humanities and humanistic social sciences. The MMUF program is designed to encourage fellows to enter PhD programs that prepare students for professorial careers; it is not intended to support students who intend to go on to medical school, law school or other professional schools.

The University of Chicago is one of only 46 schools and consortia nationwide that the Mellon Foundation has funded to conduct this program. Currently, 35 private colleges and universities, 8 public institutions in the US, and 3 schools in South Africa participate in MMUF. As of 2014, over 4000 students have been selected as fellows, more than 500 of whom have earned the PhD.

Who should apply to the MMUF?

College **second years** who (1) are interested in pursuing a PhD in an MMUF-supported field (2) are interested in research (3) enjoy writing (4) find their major exciting (5) are either: of an underrepresented minority background, OR can demonstrate a commitment to ending racial disparity &/or promoting cross-cultural understanding (through co-curricular involvement).

*Note that there is no required minimum GPA.

How Should I Prepare for this Application?

- Arrange to meet with Elise LaRose 2-4 times. She will address your questions, and help you prepare, step-by-step, a strong application.
- Identify a faculty member who can write a recommendation for you.
- Request a copy of the application. Develop your essays ahead, and leave yourself time to revise them.
- Think about a research project you would like to develop.
- Reflect on your intellectual development & why you might be interested in becoming a scholar and researcher.
- Consider why and in what ways you promote cross-cultural understanding, and how you contribute to efforts that work toward end racial inequities.
- Explore who among our faculty you might be interested in having serve as your faculty mentor. (Note: At the time of application, you are not obliged to have already secured a faculty mentor. If admitted, we assist you in building these relationships.)

MMUF Expectations at the University of Chicago

- Commit to participating in the University of Chicago's MMUF Program for two full years.
- Maintain a minimum of a 3.0 GPA
- Complete a thesis for your major
- Take at least 1 research methods course in your major.
- Take ENGL 13000 "Little Red Schoolhouse" before you graduate.
- Take 2 Colonizations courses before you graduate
- Complete research plan and report before and after your independent research.
- Participate fully in all components of the MMUF Fellowship (Summer Research Training Program, Bi-Weekly Seminars, Annual Conferences, etc)
- Work closely with a faculty mentor: Take at least two courses with your faculty mentor and meet quarterly with that mentor to discuss your work.
- Build relationships with two other faculty members in order to be well positioned to ask for two additional recommendation letters for graduate school.
- Attend at least one other professional conference of choice before graduating.
- Meet as requested with the MMUF Faculty Director, Professor Travis Jackson.
- Meet individually on quarterly basis with Elise LaRose, MMUF Program Director.

Deadline: April 15, 2020

MMUF Components:

Summer Research Program
Annual Conferences
Financial Support
Bi-weekly Seminars
Field Trips, Workshops

MMUF Designated Fields:

- Area Studies
(Latin American Studies, East Asian Studies, Comparative Race & Ethnic Studies, etc.)
- Art History
- Anthropology
- Classics
- English
- History
- Linguistics
- Literatures/Languages
- Music
- Philosophy
- Political Theory
- Sociology
- Theater and Performance Studies

Financial Award:

Summer Stipend (\$3,900/summer)
Quarterly Stipends (\$800/quarter)
Research travel funds (\$600/year)

If you enter into a PhD program within 39 months of graduating:

- Up to \$10,000 loan repayments
- Up to \$7,500 for research expenses

Benefits of MMUF

- Mentoring at many levels: includes working with administrators, graduate students, summer program, instructors, and faculty members
- Guidance in how to build relationships with faculty members.
- On-going support in refining your research questions and in framing and organizing your research projects.
- Assistance in locating/accessing additional research resources.
- Guidance in applying to fellowships and PhD programs.
- Entering the MMUF Community: Membership in the vibrant, international community of MMUF scholars, a community that will support you for years to come.
- While in graduate school, the Mellon Foundation continues supporting you by offering multiple opportunities to apply for research development grants, and to attend conferences and workshops.
- Professional Programs: These are run by the Woodrow Wilson Foundation and include both those in the academy as well as those who have pursued other career paths.

FAQ

Q: Do I need to have a faculty mentor already lined up?

A: No, not at all. We will assist you in securing a mentor.

Q: Is there a minimum GPA?

A: No, but we would like to see that you are doing well in courses related to your research interests.

Q: What if I don't go to a PhD Program? Will I owe money back?

A: No, and you will always be considered part of the MMUF international community. The saying goes, "Once a Mellon, always a Mellon!"

Q: By the time I might be ready to apply to graduate school, what if I change disciplines?

A: Preparing a competitive application to PhD programs is something that we help you with, and it is not uncommon for people to change disciplines.

Q: Research! I am only a second year. This is scary!

A: Meet with current MMUF students, graduate student alumni & program staff. We will help you sort this out. No need to be scared!

Q: Why are some fields of study excluded?

A: The Mellon Foundation is committed to transforming the academy. They are first and foremost a foundation that supports the arts and humanities. They have excluded certain fields because some majors are common feeders to professional careers.

More Information:

MMUF General Information

www.mmuf.org

www.mellonmays.uchicago.edu

Apply to MMUF!

www.mellonmays.uchicago.edu/apply

Mellon Mays Programs for PhD students

www.ssrc.org/programs/mellon-mays-graduate-initiatives-program/

Mellon Mays Programs for Alumni

www.woodrow.org