

Memorandum

TO: Physics & Astronomy Graduate Students

FROM: Christoph Boehme, Department Chair

CC: Physics & Astronomy Faculty, Andrew Ve'e, Marcia Cook deWolfe, Bryce Nelson

DATE: February 15, 2022

SUBJECT: Physics & Astronomy Graduate Student Travel Assistance Award



The March 2020 APS meeting was one of the first large scientific conferences that was cancelled due to COVID-19 and many meetings since then have been cancelled and/or postponed indefinitely, or they have taken place only in online formats, severely impeding personal interaction and discussion. Thus, one of the most significant losses of graduate student experiences caused by the pandemic has been the disruption of scientific discourse. Personal exchanges, discussions, meetings, whether in the form of visits at collaborating institutions, or scientific conferences, are important opportunities for graduate students to network, learn about the latest developments in their fields, and prepare the next steps in their careers, following graduation.

As it appears that in-person meetings and travel are about to become easier again in the near future, the Department of Physics & Astronomy has created the Physics & Astronomy Graduate Student Travel Assistance Program (PAGTAP) to help overcoming the lost experiences during the pandemic. The program aims to provide students with support for travel associated with presentations to the academic community and/or collaboration visits. The program starts immediately and it will last throughout the academic year 2022/2023, i.e. until June 30, 2023.

The program offers a one-time award per academic year of up to \$2,000 in support, meaning graduate students are only eligible to receive PAGTAP funds once for travel between 02/01/2022 until 06/30/2022 and again, once between 07/01/2022 and 06/30/2023.

Funds are awarded monthly on a first-come, first-serve basis. If there are no more funds available for the month of your event, your application could be waitlisted or rejected.

Application Process

The applicant will submit their application through the department travel coordinator (Andrew Ve'e) who will need to review and approve the application from a cost perspective, i.e. whether

reasonable flight fares have been chosen and/or hotel rooms. After the department travel coordinator has approved, the application will be forwarded to the Departmental Student Awards Committee (chaired by Kyle Dawson) who will approve the justification of the travel. Lastly, the application will go to the Department Chair for final approval.

Eligibility

- All currently (at the time of the request AND the time of travel) enrolled Physics & Astronomy graduate students (Master's, Ph.D., and professional students);
- For conferences, show verification of accepted abstract at the conference you are attending. For travel to collaborative meetings, provide also abstract for seminar or colloquium presentation. If no presentation is planned for a collaboration visit, enclose a brief statement from the hosting institution, e.g. the PI of the visited research group, explaining the goals of the visit;
- The maximum support per award will be \$2,000;
- Applications must be submitted before the travel dates;
- First and business class travel will not be supported.

The Application must include:

- A cover letter stating the purpose of the travel and why this is beneficial for graduate studies (do not exceed one paragraph);
- Associated documentation, e.g. accepted abstract, conference registration confirmation, letter of PI from visiting groups, etc.;
- A breakdown of the travel budget for the following eligible expenses only: Airfare/car mileage, ground transportation fares, lodging, abstract fees, conference registration fees, society memberships/membership fees if these reduce overall travel cost, poster preparation fees, training programs, tutorials, and mini-courses, travel audit fees. As per diem reimbursement is permissible, separate meal reimbursement will not be permitted;
- Receipts (if expenses have already happened) or reservation and/or registration confirmations as far as available at the time of the application;
- As all graduate students are also University employees, the travel reimbursement should be paid through Concur.

Reimbursements (early or final) for awarded students must be submitted to Andrew Ve'e. Funds awarded may only be used to pay for expenses directly related to the graduate student's travel and registration. The Department has the right to rescind the award if the graduate student cancels, does not attend, or fails to meet PAGTAB qualifications. Please also note that any awards not claimed within 60 days of travel will be forfeited.

Questions? Contact Andrew Ve'e at u0809830@utah.edu