JULIAN DIERKES
ASSOCIATE DEAN, FUNDING, G+PS
PREPARING EXCELLENT
APPLICATIONS FOR FALL FELLOWSHIP COMPETITIONS

PREPARING APPLICATIONS
• Think/plan/write now!
• Work backward from deadlines to include
  ▪ Time for referees
  ▪ Feedback from peers
  ▪ Considered revisions
• Share drafts/ask for others’ applications
• Seek feedback beyond specialization
• Does your application generate enthusiasm?

RELEVANT COMPETITIONS
Deadlines
- Vanier: September 3 CA 🇨🇦
- Canadian Graduate Scholarships Doctoral Program (CGSD): Sept 17 CA 🇨🇦
- Canadian Graduate Scholarships Master’s Program (CGSM): December 2 CA 🇨🇦
- Affiliated scholarships (follows CGS) CA 🇨🇦
- Pierre Elliot Trudeau Foundation: mid December CA 🇨🇦

Check on changeable specifics regularly!
https://www.grad.ubc.ca/scholarships-awards-funding/award-opportunities

OVERVIEW
• What is adjudication?
• What are selection criteria?
• How to talk about your past and future research trajectory
• Reference letters
• Some writing suggestions

ADJUDICATION
• Peer review is fundamental to science
• Adjudication processes ensure fairness
• Adjudicators select excellence among highly qualified applicants
• Consistent rankings by adjudicators
• You cannot second-guess adjudicators
• Large number of applications but little time
• Many adjudicators search for additional information online

SELECTION OF ADJUDICATORS
• Big competition = more variable adjudicators in substantive expertise on specific applications & disciplinary expectations
• Conflict of interest
• Multiple adjudicators
• Expectation of fairness & dedication
SELECTION CRITERIA

• Past academic excellence
• Future research potential
• [Communication, leadership, etc]

Relative importance varies by competition, but is specified by instructions.

FOLLOW GUIDELINES

• Instructions are carefully worded
• If there is something you disagree with in instructions, ask questions, but follow guidelines
• If guidelines specify criteria, speak to all of these in your application

SPECIFIC ELEMENTS: CV

• Think about narrative (selection of research topic, events/breaks in progress)
• Not all entries are automatically meaningful to all audiences
  - Kinds of publications, rates of productivity, positions, incl academic positions, etc
• Define and highlight your personal contributions, esp in collaborations
  - "I designed the experiment..."
  - "While we designed the study jointly, I focused on identifying the research site..."

PROPOSED RESEARCH

• Must be easy to read, including in its use of technical, (sub)discipline-specific terminology
• Clear discussion of objectives of research/hypotheses
• Highlights contributions to be made
• Do-able in terms of methods, time, resources
• Detailed proposals beat out vague plans

REFERENCE LETTERS

• Plan ahead
• Developing a “stable” of references vs not overburdening referees
• Be strategic in selection
• Give (gentle) instructions, including elements to highlight, address, etc.
• Do legwork for referees
• Provide referees with complete information/drafts of application

OTHER CRITERIA

• What are selection criteria? Speak to them!
• Always be specific, give examples
• Let referees know about non-standard criteria
• Clarify role
  - In organizing grad conference, did you set the agenda, select papers, or handle logistics?
  - As a volunteer, what exactly did you do?
  - If dissemination of results will rely on “a website” how will you find audience/audience find you?
THINK ABOUT FORMATTING

Application forms specify most formatting parameters, but

• Use (sub)headers to structure text
• Think about reminders to adjudicators when they review an application
• Consider bold or italics to highlight
• Be obvious by mirroring application instructions: If criterion is “Research”, why not have a subheader, “Research: [insert your topic here]”?

MAIN LESSONS

- Start thinking now
- Draft versions of research proposal
- Start assembling necessary pieces
- Have conversations with supervisor, potential letter writers
- Find peer groups to share with
- Maintain wellness/reduce stress

julian.dierkes@ubc.ca