



Graduate Fellowship Programs Under Title VII of the Higher Education Act (HEA): Background and Reauthorization

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Summary

Three graduate fellowship programs are currently available under the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, as amended. They are the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need Program, the Jacob K. Javits Fellowship Program, and the Thurgood Marshall Legal Educational Opportunity Program. The HEA is being considered for reauthorization in the 110th Congress. During the 109th Congress, legislation containing some revisions to the graduate fellowship programs was proposed. This report provides an overview of the graduate programs, including the purpose, eligibility criteria, award process, and funding. This report will be updated as warranted by significant legislation.

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Three graduate fellowship programs are available under the current Higher Education Act (HEA). The Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) program has supported academic programs since FY1988 to increase the number of graduate students in critical scientific and technical fields. The Jacob K. Javits Fellowship Program, first funded in FY1985, supports graduate study in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. The Thurgood Marshall Legal Educational Opportunity Program assists minority, low-income, or disadvantaged college students to prepare for and complete law school.

This report provides an overview of each of the current programs, including the purpose, eligibility criteria, award process, and funding.

Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need

The GAANN program (HEA, Title VII, Part A, Subpart 2) provides funding to academic departments at institutions of higher education (IHEs) to support graduate students of superior ability who demonstrate financial need and are pursuing the highest degree in their course of study. By supporting key disciplines, GAANN fellowships seek to increase the number of graduate students in critical scientific and technical fields and to “sustain and enhance the capacity for teaching and research in areas of national need.”¹

Areas of national need are determined by the Secretary of Education (Secretary) after consulting with the appropriate agencies and organizations. Supporting areas of national need is seen as contributing to national prosperity and economic competitiveness. The areas of national need have changed since GAANN fellowships were first offered in FY1988. Currently, the designated areas are biology, chemistry, computer and information sciences, engineering, geological and related sciences, mathematics, physics, and nursing.² Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary projects that incorporate two or more areas of national need may also be supported.

Academic departments of an IHE offering a graduate degree in an area of national need may apply for a grant under this program. Nondegree granting institutions that have formal arrangements with degree-granting institutions to support doctoral dissertation research may also receive a grant. Students receive the fellowship from the IHEs. A review panel of scholars evaluates the applications from institutions on “the quality and effectiveness of the academic program and the achievement and promise of the students to be served.”³ IHEs must also have policies and procedures to ensure that they seek students from traditionally underrepresented groups. In 2004, ED began a study to provide information on the educational and employment outcomes of participants in GAANN following two cohorts from 1997 and 1998. Preliminary data indicate that 60% of fellows are men, 83% are white, 8% are Asian, 7% are African American, and 4% are Hispanic. Among the two cohorts, 78% had completed their degrees, 9% were still pursuing a degree, and 13% had stopped working on a degree.⁴

¹ U.S. Department of Education, *Biennial Evaluation Report, FY 1995-1996*, (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1997), p. 535-1.

² U.S. Department of Education, *Fiscal year 2008 Justifications of Appropriation Estimates to the Congress*, (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 2007), vol. 2, p. R-98. (Hereafter cited as ED, *FY2008 Justifications of Appropriation Estimates to the Congress*.)

³ HEA §713 (a).

⁴ ED, *FY2008 Justifications of Appropriations to the Congress*, vol.2, p. R-102.

The GAANN fellowships are provided under three-year grants to academic programs. The minimum grant for a fiscal year is \$100,000, and the grant may not exceed \$750,000. Institutions must match 25% of the federal grant with nonfederal sources. Students may receive the fellowships for up to five years of study. Students receive a stipend to cover living expenses, whereas an institutional payment covers the fellow's tuition, fees, and other expenses. The amount of the student stipend is based on either the student's financial need or the level of support provided by National Science Foundation's Graduate Research Fellowship program, whichever is less.

Under the terms of the program, an academic department must provide GAANN fellows with at least one year of supervised training in instruction. This is usually accomplished by having fellows hold half-time teaching assistantships. The academic department is obligated to fulfill its commitment to students even if the funds provided are insufficient.

The \$30 million appropriated for GAANN in FY2007 (see **Table 1**) supported 702 fellowships through 158 awards. The average institutional award per student was \$13,000 and the average student stipend was \$30,000 for FY2007.⁵

Table 1. GAANN Appropriations: FY2003-FY2008

Fiscal Year	Appropriations
2003	\$30,798,000
2004	\$30,616,000
2005	\$30,371,000
2006	\$30,067,000
2007	\$30,067,000
2008 (President's request)	\$30,064,000

Source: CRS prepared table using ED Budget Justifications and ED FY2008 President's Budget Table (3/28/07).

Jacob K. Javits Fellowship Program

The Javits Fellowship Program (HEA, Title VII, Part A, Subpart 1) provides federal support for graduate study in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Financial assistance is made available to students who have shown superior academic ability, achievement, and exceptional promise. Fellowships are awarded to students pursuing a doctoral degree or a master's degree in fields for which the master's degree is appropriate for a tenure track position, usually a Master of Fine Arts (MFA).⁶

The Secretary appoints a nine-member Jacob K. Javits Fellows Program Fellowship Board that is responsible for establishing general criteria for awarding fellowships. The board also appoints panels of academic scholars in the arts, humanities, and social sciences to select the fellows. Twenty percent of the fellowships are awarded in the social sciences, 20% in the arts, and 60% in

⁵ ED, *FY2008 Justifications of Appropriation Estimates to Congress*, p. R-99.

⁶ U.S. Department of Education, Jacob Javits Fellowship Program website, available at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/jacobjavits/index.html>.

the humanities.⁷ Some of the selected fields of study include (in the arts) creative writing, music performance, studio arts, theater arts; (in the humanities) archaeology, comparative literature, English language and literature, foreign language and literature, history, philosophy; and (in the social sciences) anthropology, economics, political science, and public policy.⁸

Students who are entering graduate school for the first time or who, at the time of application, have not completed their first year of study are eligible to apply for a Javits Fellowship. Applicants must be accepted to, or currently attending an IHE in one of the selected fields of study. Fellowships are awarded for a period of up to four years. Recipients are selected through a national competition based on “demonstrated achievement, financial need, and exceptional promise.”⁹ The program is limited to U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or citizens of the Freely Associated States.

Beginning in FY2000, the appropriations language specified that funding for the Javits Fellowship Program was to be provided a year in advance.¹⁰ FY2004 appropriated funds supported fellowships in the 2004-2005 academic year. Each fellowship consists of an institutional payment covering tuition and fees and a student stipend for living expenses. The amount of the stipend is based on either the student’s financial need or the level of support provided by the National Science Foundation’s Graduate Research Fellowship program, whichever is less.

Preliminary data from a study of educational and employment outcomes for three Javits fellow cohorts from 1997 to 1999 indicates that 56% are men, 87% are white, 8% are Asian, 3% are African American and 5% are Hispanic. Within the three cohorts, two-thirds had completed their degree, 20% were still enrolled, and 11% had stopped working on their degree.¹¹

The \$9.7 million appropriated for Javits Fellowships in FY2007 (see **Table 2**) supported 226 fellows. The average institutional award per student was \$13,000 and the student stipend was \$30,000 in FY2006.¹²

Table 2. Javits Appropriations: FY2003-FY2008

Fiscal Year	Appropriations
2003	\$9,935,000
2004	\$ 9,876,000
2005	\$ 9,797,000
2006	\$ 9,699,000

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ U.S. Department of Education, Javits Fellowship Program Field of Study website, available at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/jacobjavits/javits-fieldsofstudy.html>.

⁹ HEA, §701 (a).

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Education, *Fiscal Year 2001 Justifications of Appropriation Estimates to the Congress*, (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 2000), vol.2, p. S-92, 93. (From FY1997 through FY2000, the Javits Fellowships were funded under GAANN; separate funding was restored in FY2001.)

¹¹ ED, *FY2008 Justifications of Appropriation Estimates to Congress*, p. R-96.

¹² ED, *FY2008 Justifications of Appropriation Estimates to Congress*, p. R-93.

Fiscal Year	Appropriations
2007	\$ 9,699,000
2008 (President's request)	\$ 9,797,000

Source: CRS prepared table using ED Budget Justifications and ED FY2008 President's Budget Table (3/28/07).

Thurgood Marshall Legal Educational Opportunity Program

The purpose of the Thurgood Marshall Legal Educational Opportunity Program (HEA, Title VII, Subpart 3) is to help low income, minority, or disadvantaged college students to gain access to and successfully complete law school. Thurgood Marshall fellows receive appropriate counseling, law school preparation, and financial assistance.

The Secretary is authorized to award a single grant to the Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO) to administer the Thurgood Marshall program for a period of not less than five years.¹³ CLEO, a nonprofit project of the American Bar Association Fund for Justice and Education, began assisting disadvantaged students in 1968. The goal of this project is to diversify “the legal profession by expanding legal education opportunities for members of under represented groups.”¹⁴

Through the grant provided by the Thurgood Marshall Legal Opportunity Program, CLEO prepares students for study at accredited law schools, advises them on selecting and applying to an appropriate law school, and provides financial assistance for the students. In addition, a number of services are provided to improve their retention and success in law school. A six-week pre-law summer institute for Thurgood Marshall fellows at law schools throughout the country prepares students for legal studies. Other services include pre-law mentoring programs with law school faculty, bar association members, and judges. Tutoring, academic counseling, mid-year seminars, and preparation for bar examinations are also provided. Thurgood Marshall fellows may also receive a stipend for participation in summer institutes and mid-year seminars.

Appropriations of \$2.9 million in FY2007 (see **Table 3**) supported 150 Thurgood Marshall fellows.¹⁵ The Administration is not requesting funding for the program in FY2008, maintaining that “assistance would continue to be available to disadvantaged individuals through the [Education] Department’s student financial assistance programs.”¹⁶

Table 3. Thurgood Marshall Appropriations: FY2002-FY2007

Fiscal Year	Appropriations
2003	\$4,968,000
2004	\$ 0

¹³ Beginning in 1974, funding for the single grant to CLEO was made under the Legal Training for the Disadvantaged and Assistance for Training in the Legal Profession programs, precursors to the Thurgood Marshall Educational Opportunity Program.

¹⁴ American Bar Association network website at <http://www.abanet.org/cleo/whatis.html>.

¹⁵ ED, *FY2008 Justifications of Appropriations Estimates to Congress*, p. R-106.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Fiscal Year	Appropriations
2005	\$2,976,000
2006	\$2,946,000
2007	\$2,946,000
2008 (President's Request)	\$ 0

Source: CRS prepared table using ED Budget Justifications and ED FY2008 President's Budget Table (3/28/07).

HEA Reauthorization

The HEA, which includes the three graduate fellowship programs, is expected to be considered for reauthorization during the 110th Congress. The HEA was last fully reauthorized by the Higher Education Amendments of 1998 (P.L. 105-244). This authorization expired in 2003, but was extended three times by P.L. 108-366, P.L. 109-81, and P.L. 109-238. Congress had proposed some revisions to the graduate fellowship programs in the 109th Congress in H.R. 609, the College Access and Opportunity Act of 2005, and S. 1614, the Higher Education Amendments of 2005.

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