

Esmail and Mary Zirakparvar Graduate Student Fellowships

Approved on February 17, 2015

The Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology has received endowment funds from the Zirakparvar family and is investing these funds in its graduate education program by providing two competitive annual Zirakparvar Graduate Student Fellowships (ZGSF).

The two recipients of the ZGSF will be called Zirakparvar Fellows and each will be responsible for a distinct set of service activities for the department. These tasks are as follows:

Webpage-ZGSF: This recipient will serve as the webmaster for our departmental webpage. As such, this Zirakparvar Fellow will be responsible for gathering contents for the webpage and posting contents as needed but at least monthly. This individual will work under the supervision of a departmental faculty or staff person who will oversee the webpage activities.

Newsletter-ZGSF: This recipient will compile and produce short monthly news flyers and a larger departmental newsletter once per semester. The main task of this Zirakparvar Fellow will be to work with the department to develop a newsletter format and solicit input and articles from the department as a whole and to oversee the production of the newsletter in print and/or pdf format. This individual will work under the supervision of a departmental faculty or staff person who will oversee all newsletter activities.

Both Fellows will be afforded time at faculty meetings to report on progress and to lay out further plans to advance their respective charges. Both Fellows should work in close concert with each other to maximize synergies and avoid redundancies.

As part of the ZGSF agreement, the department will contribute \$2,000 towards each recipient's graduate assistantship to lower the amount that the major professor is responsible for in exchange for the time the recipients spend on their Zirakparvar Fellowship projects. Second, the department will contribute \$2,500 directly to each of the fellows as additional compensation in two half-year installments after 6 months and 12 months of the appointment. The total monetary value of each fellowship thus will be \$4,500 per year and \$9,000 per year for the total program. This amount corresponds to the current investment return of the endowment. Fellowship amounts can be adjusted by the department chair in consultation with the faculty as endowment returns change.

Decisions on who will be awarded this fellowship will be made by the departmental Awards Committee and this committee also annually will ask for applicants. The Fellowships will run on a yearly cycle starting as soon as suitable applicants are identified. Upon exceptional progress of a Zirakparvar Fellow and in order to preserve continuity, the Awards Committee may renew fellowships for subsequent years. Fellows may resign from their appointment with a one-month notice and may also be removed by a vote of the faculty at any time with their fellowship amounts prorated proportional to satisfactory performance.

Zirakparvar Fellows agree to have their picture posted on the departmental webpage and in the newsletter and will correspond with the Zirakparvar family to provide updates as needed.

The Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology considers this action a strategic investment of Zirakparvar funds and seeks to address the following outcomes:

- To provide moderate research assistantship savings for the faculty, potentially increasing student numbers.
- To provide students with a CV builder and extra income.
- To provide students with a professional development opportunity that could make them more employable.
- To add to our recruiting by increasing Department visibility through an appealing webpage.
- To increase departmental fundraising efforts by having a newsletter as an outreach tool.