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The USDA CSREES Higher Education Program: Doctoral Fellowships in the National Need Area of Management and Marketing

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to summarize the HEP graduate fellowship program in the national need area of management and marketing. The fellowships are the most prestigious in the agricultural sciences in the United States and the monetary amount of the fellowship is the highest in the agricultural sciences at \$22,000 per year. Almost 40 percent of all graduated fellows are currently employed in academic positions in the United States and are represented on the faculty of 27 universities. This program could serve as a model for other countries that seek to develop similar fellowships for the purpose of creating a cadre of leaders within agribusiness management. It is important that qualified fellows be recruited, trained, and graduated from doctoral programs that have demonstrated success in training students in the national need of management and marketing.

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The mission of USDA's Cooperative, State, Research, Extension Education Service (CSREES) Higher Education Programs (HEP) is to promote excellence in higher education throughout the food and agricultural sciences. Higher Education Programs administers several high-priority programs and initiatives to enhance the quality of education and to develop outstanding scientific and professional expertise at colleges and universities across the Nation. One program is the graduate fellowship program, which awards fellowships in six areas that have been identified as a national need. One such area is management and marketing. The objective of this study is to summarize the HEP graduate fellowship program in the national need area of management and marketing.

Universities submit grant applications that state how the program will educate and train the fellows if they are awarded funding. Successful universities are required to recruit high-quality applicants and award three-year fellowships to successful applicants. The fellowships are the most prestigious in the agricultural sciences in the United States and the monetary amount of the fellowship is the highest in the agricultural sciences at \$22,000 per year. In addition, fellows can apply for \$5,000 travel grants to pursue international research. The goal of the program is to create a cadre of leaders in the national needs subject area for positions within academia, government, and industry.

Since its inception in 1984, HEP has awarded 192 fellowships in the national need area of management and marketing (one-third of these were awarded in 1984). Forty fellowships have been awarded to women. University Microfilms International in Ann Arbor, Michigan, collects copies of completed dissertations and makes them available for a fee. This database was used to search for the names of every fellow provided by HEP to determine if a dissertation was completed. Next, the on-line libraries for each university were searched to see if a dissertation had been deposited, but not reported to University Microfilms International. Of the 165 granted awards through 1998, we found dissertations on 109 fellows. A summary of the universities that were granted awards and their current occupation is presented in Table 1.¹ Almost 40 percent of all graduated fellows are currently employed in academic positions in the United States and are represented on the faculty of 27 universities.

By any measure, the USDA HEP graduate fellowship program in the national need of management and marketing has been a success and it should be continued. Almost 60 doctoral students have been placed in academic and government positions within the national need of management and marketing. Some recommendations for the USDA HEP graduate fellowship program include increased funding for fellowships in the national need of management and marketing. More than 80 positions that required graduate students with skills in

¹ The author would like to thank Siva Sureshwaran of USDA for assisting us with the list of awarded fellowships.

management and marketing have been listed during the past four years. Clearly, management and marketing remains a national need.

A 61 percent graduation rate may be an issue. Many different factors help determine the graduation rate of doctoral students including personal decisions, lack of success with qualifying exams, lifestyle changes, motivation, or difficulty in completing a dissertation. The National Science Foundation operates its fellowships differently than HEP in that individual students apply for fellowships rather than awarding fellowships to universities who then seek out potential fellows. The U.S. Community Forestry Research Fellowship program uses a similar process, as do the Goldwater, Truman, and Rhodes Scholars. If HEP adopted a similar process whereby individual students apply for a fellowship by submitting an application and provide an indication of potential research objectives, this might help increase graduation rates.

Clearly, HEP has helped establish successful graduate programs in the national need of marketing and management. Several universities have developed niche programs in these subjects. Management and marketing positions in food and agribusiness management continue to be a top priority for future faculty positions in agricultural economics departments. Thus, it is important that qualified fellows be recruited, trained, and graduated from doctoral programs that have demonstrated success in training students in the national need of management and marketing.

Table 1: Institutions Awarded Fellowships, Number of Fellowships Awarded, and Number of Fellows in Academic and Government Positions in 2002

	1984	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	Number of Fellows	
										Academia	Government
Auburn University	1									0	1
Iowa State University				3		2				0	0
Kansas State University			2	2		2	2		2	5	0
Michigan State University	3	2			2					3	0
North Carolina State University	6	1			1	1	3	2	4	2	4
Ohio State University	6	1		3						2	0
Oklahoma State University	5	1			1					0	0
Oregon State University		1	2							1	0
Pennsylvania State University					3					0	0
Purdue University		6	2	3	3	2	2	3	4	8	3
Texas A&M University		2				2				0	0
Texas Tech University	4									2	0
University of California, Berkeley	4									1	1
University of California, Davis	4	1			1		2	3		2	0
University of Florida	4	1		3		1	2	2		2	1
University of Illinois	4	2		2	2					7	0
University of Maryland	4									1	0
University of Minnesota	5		1	1	2	3	2	3		1	2
University of Missouri						1	3		4	0	0
University of Nebraska, Lincoln					2	2				4	0
University of Rhode Island	3									0	0
University of Wisconsin	6									0	1
Virginia Tech		2	5	2	1	4	2			5	0
Washington State University	4				2	2				1	0
Total	63	20	12	19	20	22	18	13	14	47	13