

Report to the Provost on the President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

Jennifer Linderman, Director of UM ADVANCE Program

06/09/2017

The UM President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program is administered by the Provost's office, in collaboration with the ADVANCE Program. A faculty advisory committee provides overall assessment of the applications, as well as suggestions about improvements in the application process. Over time we have refined directions to candidates so that we receive better-targeted and more complete applications (e.g., only in specified fields—STEM, Economics and Political Science at the moment—and only in fields in which undergraduate teaching is a routine demand on faculty). We require that candidates identify a mentor on campus, that the mentor support the application, and that the department or school provide a supporting letter. Thus, all complete and reviewed applications are now in fields open to awards, and come to the committee having full screening and support by an on-campus tenured faculty member and a unit that provides a supporting letter.

During each academic year beginning in 2011-12, the University of Michigan's President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, in partnership with the University of California, has conducted a multi-staged application and selection process. It begins with an online application that is shared between UC and UM, continues with a triage process conducted by the Director of ADVANCE and the Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs, and is followed by a review of retained applications by one Advisory Board Member and one expert in a related field (not the applicant's field so as to avoid conflict of interest). The Advisory Board then meets to discuss all of the reviewed applications, and to provide their recommendations to the Director of ADVANCE and the Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs, who then take their proposed candidates to the Provost. The Provost makes the final selection. A table is attached summarizing the selected applicants to date, who are also described below.

Round One (2011-12): In our first year we received 114 applications because the application process was open to all fields, as it is at UC. After the initial review process, the board was presented with 47 applications to review. Four Presidential Postdoctoral Fellows were appointed:

- Tawanna Dillahunt: School of Information, mentor Paul Resnick, Female, African American, now a tenure-track assistant professor at UM
- Jessica Welburn: Sociology, mentor Karyn Lacy, Female, African American, now a tenure-track assistant professor at University of Iowa
- Carlos Silvera Batista (deferred start date): Chemical Engineering, mentor Michael Solomon, Male, Latino, has accepted a tenure track offer to begin in 2017 at Vanderbilt
- Keren Sharon: Astronomy, mentor Eric Bell, Female, White, now a tenure-track assistant professor at UM

In addition to these four, Jakana Thomas (Political Science) was selected, but had already accepted a faculty position at Michigan State. Christine Hartzell (AOSS) was also selected, but did not accept the position. Five alternates were identified; none of them were offered positions.

Round Two (2012-13): In the second year we received 48 applications. After the initial review process, the board was presented with 16 applications to review. The three selected applicants were:

- Aaron Frank: Chemistry, mentor Charles Brooks, Male, African-American, now a tenure-track assistant professor at UM
- Ginger Shultz: Chemistry, mentor Tim McKay (Physics), Female, White, now a tenure-track assistant professor at UM
- Daniel Romero: School of Information (which also provided a bridging post-doc appointment), mentor Eytan Adar, Male, Latino, now a tenure-track assistant professor at UM

Round Three (2013-14): In the third year we received 25 applications. After the initial review process, the board was presented with 10 applications to review. The three selected applicants were:

- Catherine Fromen: Chemical Engineering, mentor Lola Eniola-Adefeso, Female, White, has accepted a tenure track offer to begin in 2017 at University of Delaware
- Mai Hassan: Political Science, mentor Anna Grzymala-Busse, Female, African-American, now a tenure-track assistant professor at UM
- Emily Rauscher: Astronomy, mentor Edwin Bergin, Female, White, now a tenure-track assistant professor at UM

Round Four (2014-15): In our fourth year we received 45 applications. After the initial review process, the board was presented with 14 applications to review. The two appointed positions were:

- Stephen Oney: School of Information, mentor Eytan Adar, Male, African American, now a tenure-track assistant professor at UM
- Gabriel Zayas-Caban: Industrial and Operations Engineering, mentor Amy Cohn, Male, Puerto Rican, has accepted a tenure track offer to begin in 2017 at University of Wisconsin

Kelsey Hatzell (Chemical Engineering) was also selected, but did not accept the position. Two other alternates were identified, but were not offered positions.

NB: In addition, Estuardo Robles was identified as an appropriate candidate for an appointment to MCDB as an assistant research scientist.

Round Five (2015-16): In our fifth year we received 51 applications. After the initial review process, the board was presented with 14 applications to review. The two appointed positions were:

- Ashley Payne: Climate and Space Sciences, mentor Christiane Jablonowski, Female, White, currently in first year of post-doc
- Patricia Schuster: Nuclear Engineering and Radiological Sciences, mentor Sara Pozzi, Female, White, currently in first year of post-doc

Eder Izaguirre (Physics) was also selected, but did not accept the position.

Round Six (2016-17): In our sixth year we received 70 applications. After the initial review process, the board was presented with 12 applications to review. The three appointed positions were:

- Brian Beckford: Physics, mentor Myron Campbell, Male, African American, beginning first year of post-doc in 2017
- Robin Brewer: School of Information, mentor Nicole Ellison, Female, African American, beginning first year of post-doc in 2017
- Delbert (André) Green: Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, mentor Patricia Wittkopp, Male, African American, beginning first year of post-doc in January of 2018

One alternate was selected, but was not offered a position.

Our program's results to date can be summarized in this way:

- (1) We have brought, in six years, 17 underrepresented minority and female scientists to campus as Presidential Postdoctoral Fellows, in Astronomy, Chemistry (and Physics), Chemical Engineering, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Industrial and Operations Engineering, School of Information, Nuclear Engineering and Radiological Sciences, Physics, and the Department of Climate and Space Sciences. Eight of these 17 have already accepted positions as tenure-track faculty at UM. Only 4 of the 17 have left UM to accept tenure-track positions at other institutions. (The remaining 5 are current or new Fellows.)
- (2) We have developed a successful procedure for assessing departmental, mentor and fellow qualifications.
- (3) The acceptance rate over the 6 years is 17/21 or 81%.
- (4) The ADVANCE Program provides support to the Fellows in a few ways:
 - a. We cohost a welcoming dinner with the Provost's office.

- b. We provide staff support for monthly lunches of the Fellows with each other. These are much appreciated and well-attended, including by former Fellows (now UM faculty) who help provide a strong sense of community.
- c. The Director of ADVANCE has 1:1 meetings with each Fellow (and some former Fellows) every semester, providing advice about issues that may need attention (mentoring, climate, work-life issues, etc.).
- d. The President had a dinner with the Fellows in February of 2015.
- e. We offer the opportunity for the Fellows to give practice job talks to the cohort.

The Fellows have expressed very positive views of their reception in their units, as well as on campus more generally.

Overall, we believe that this program, though still fairly new, is providing a successful recruitment strategy that enables some units to recruit outstanding young scholars from underrepresented groups into the tenure-track faculty via a prestigious early career postdoctoral fellowship. We also believe that at the present rate of award, this program will make only a very modest contribution to diversifying our faculty. The ADVANCE staff could support a larger program. Assuming that there are not resources for a dramatic increase in numbers (which we could support), we propose that the University double or triple the current size (3 new Fellows/year), and open the program to a wider range of fields (even with the current stipulation of fields that educate undergraduates). We recognize that this would require not only additional funding for the postdoctoral fellowships but for the tenure-track faculty lines. Therefore we can imagine that it would be reasonable to “grow” the program gradually, perhaps doubling it for three years (to six awards/year), and then tripling it (to nine awards/year), to ensure that we continue to have good success in creating welcoming environments for each Fellow, and success in recruiting and retaining them on the tenure track.

Round One

Name	Department	Mentor	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Current Status
Tawanna Dillahunt	School of Information	Paul Resnick	Female	African American	TT Asst. Professor (UM)
Jessica Welburn	Sociology	Karyn Lacy	Female	African American	TT Asst. Professor (University of Iowa)
Carlos Silvera Batista	Chemical Engineering	Nicholas Kotov	Male	Latino	TT Asst. Professor (Vanderbilt, begins 2017)
Keren Sharon	Astronomy	Eric Bell	Female	White	TT Asst. Professor (UM)

Round Two

Name	Department	Mentor	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Current Status
Aaron Frank	Chemistry	Charles Brooks	Male	African American	TT Asst. Professor (UM)
Ginger Shultz	Chemistry	Tim Mckay, Physics	Female	White	TT Asst. Professor (UM)
Daniel Romero	School of Information	Eytan Adar	Male	Latino	TT Asst. Professor (UM)

Round Three

Name	Department	Mentor	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Current Status
Catherine Fromen	Chemical Engineering	Lola Eniola-Adefeso	Female	White	TT Asst. Professor (University of Delaware, begins 2017)
Mai Hassan	Political science	Anna Grzymala-Busse	Female	African American	TT Asst. Professor (UM)
Emily Rauscher	Astronomy	Edwin Bergin	Female	White	TT Asst. Professor (UM)

Round Four

Name	Department	Mentor	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Current Status
Stephen Oney	School of Information	Eytan Adar	Male	African American	TT Asst. Professor (UM)
Gabriel Zayas-Caban	IO Engineering	Amy Cohn	Male	Puerto Rican	TT Asst. Professor (University of Wisconsin, begins 2017)

Round Five

Name	Department	Mentor	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Current Status
Ashley Payne	Climate and Space Sciences	Christiane Jablonowski	Female	White	1st year of post-doc
Patricia Schuster	Nuclear Engineering and Radiological Sciences	Sara Pozzi	Female	White	1st year of post-doc

Round Six

Name	Department	Mentor	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Current Status
Brian Beckford	Physics	Myron Campbell	Male	African American	1st year of post-doc (begins 2017)
Robin Brewer	School of Information	Nicole Ellison	Female	African American	1st year of post-doc (begins 2017)
Patricia Schuster	Ecology and Evolutionary Biology	Patricia Wittkopp	Male	African American	1st year of post-doc (begins 2017)

Totals

Department	
Astronomy	2
Chemical Engineering	2
Chemistry	2
Climate and Space Sciences	1
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology	1
IO Engineering	1
Nuclear Engineering and Radiological Sciences	1
Physics	1
Political science	1
School of Information	4
Sociology	1

Gender	
Female	10
Male	17

Ethnicity	
African American	8
Latino	2
Puerto Rican	1
White	6