USC SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
SPECIAL SUPPORT FOR POIR STUDENTS
September 2013

In recent years the School of International Relations has been able to offer grants for special purposes in addition to year-long fellowships awarded upon admission. While none of the following is a guaranteed entitlement and the funding amount could vary based on SIR budget conditions, the School hopes to be able to continue making this special support available for the POIR students who are eligible. All awards are conditional on the candidate’s maintaining good standing according to the POIR guidelines, and having submitted the annual POIR activity report by 31 March. Technical requirements for budgets and reimbursements are given at the end of this memo. Remaining questions on how to apply may be directed to SIR Associate Director Linda Cole lcole@usc.edu and in VKC 330.

FOR ALL POIR STUDENTS

Summer grant. Deadline 1 March. [Use SIR Summer Funding Proposal Form]

The School of International Relations welcomes proposals from POIR students to help finance research, methods training, language training, or data collection during the summer. Award levels will vary up to a maximum of $2,500. One who has defended the dissertation proposal by 31 March and has not completed the dissertation can qualify for up to $5,000, which may include support for summer writing. The last summer that a student is eligible to apply for this summer funding is the one between his/her fifth to sixth year. Students beyond their sixth year are not eligible for this funding. The proposed project or training must be completed by 15 August.

These activities are eligible:
1. Methods training: attendance in a summer program designed to enhance proficiency in social science methods, qualitative or quantitative;
2. Language training in the US or abroad at a recognized institution or facility. Proof of acceptance into the methods or language training course is required.
3. Preliminary field or archival research for the PhD dissertation. If the research is conducted abroad in a student’s home country, only airfare is eligible.
5. The priority will be given to those who will travel outside of Los Angeles for these activities, but those who are taking summer courses in Los Angeles could receive some support on funding available basis.
6. Writing, for those at the ABD stage. ABD students who have defended their dissertation proposals by March 31 are eligible for summer funding. Those who receive the College or graduate school summer funding can only apply for the balance between the SIR summer funding (up to $5,000) and the amount of funding they receive from other sources for the summer.
Proposals should be sent by email to Linda Cole <lcole@usc.edu> at the School of International Relations with a copy to the POIR Director. The proposal should consist of three items: (a) SIR summer funding proposal form (available online from POIR website), (b) description of proposed activities in one single-spaced page in length, and (c) a detailed budget outlining the cost of tuition, travel expenses, and other expenses. In addition, an endorsement of the project from the student's faculty advisor is required. Decisions will be made on a competitive basis. Any application submitted late will be considered only if funds remain.

Applicants are expected to apply also to other USC and external sources and to report where they have applied. CIS does not participate in summer graduate student funding except for the Summer Grant Writing RAship. If you fail to disclose other funding including those that came with your PhD admission package (Dornsife Doctoral Funding and other top ups that provide summer funding) when you apply for this summer funding, you lose your eligibility.

If your plans change significantly, you will need to resubmit a revised proposal and budget for approval. If you do not use any portion of the summer grant for the approved project, please reimburse the School by giving Linda Cole a check payable to USC during the first week of fall classes.

Note: One reason for the March 1 deadline is to make sure we complete the process in order to deliver timely summer checks. The College does not issue summer grants until late May to early June, to avoid conflicts with financial aid and campus employment restrictions. If you will be leaving the area immediately, you may arrange for the check to be mailed to a different address or deposited into your bank account. If you expect expenses before early June, it is wise to have a plan for how you will cover your expenses until you receive the award.

By September 30, submit proof of travel and original receipts for all expenses to Linda Cole. Submit a one-page report outlining the accomplishments made possible by SIR summer funding, to Linda Cole in hard copy, to the POIR Graduate Advisor for your file, and to the professor chairing your committee. No future requests for SIR funding will be approved if such a report is not received on time.

APSA Travel Grant for Job Placement Activities.
Deadline 1 April. [Use Conference Funding Request Form]

A large share of the academic jobs are offered by political science departments, and attending the American Political Science Association annual convention in late August, with or without presenting a paper, can be a valuable part of professionalization. Most importantly, the APSA has the largest Job Placement Service Forum where candidates can arrange meetings with prospective academic employers.

Each candidate who is planning to be on the job market during the academic year immediately following the APSA meeting and has signed up for the POIR Placement Support Group is eligible to receive this grant, but only once during his/her time in the POIR PhD program. Presenting a paper is not required. Those students who have filed their dissertations
over the summer are not eligible for this funding. The SIR will reimburse reasonable travel expenses including the convention registration fee up to a maximum of $750. Please see below for guidelines on reasonable travel expenses.

Procedure: Submit your request using Conference Funding Request Form sent to Linda Cole with a copy to the POIR director and with a note from you outlining your planned activities at the conference as well as a note from your chair in support of this request. SIR plans to fund as many awards in a given year as funds allow, but it is possible that not all applications will be funded in a given year. Applicants are expected to apply also to other USC and external sources of funds and to report where they have applied. Other USC funding and outside funding relevant to the conference funding proposal must be disclosed. If you receive another grant for travel to the same convention, this award would cover only reasonable costs that exceed the other grant. Finally, you must deliver to the POIR director and Linda Cole (lcole@usc.edu) a short report describing concretely what you did to take advantage of the opportunity: what panels you attended, who you met privately, what you learned that you did not already know, and recommendations for later students. This report is due two weeks after the convention ends. The School prefers to continue this offer as long as it has good evidence that the candidates are taking professional advantage of it.

**FOR STUDENTS SPECIALIZING IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS***

*A POIR candidate who has not yet passed the qualifying exam is considered an IR student if he or she is preparing two of the following fields: International Political Economy, International Security and Foreign Policy, or Comparative Politics as an examination field. After passing the qualifying exam, a candidate is considered an IR specialist if the dissertation committee includes at least one professor appointed primarily in the School of IR. The IR professor need not be chair of the committee.

**External Fellowships Top-up**

Most candidates were offered two years of fellowship as part of the admission package. If you apply for and win an external dissertation fellowship or grant and agree to decline the promised second-year of USC fellowship, the SIR will provide you a supplementary fellowship that increases your income by $5,000. For example, if the external award were $20,000 and the USC rate were $25,000, SIR would provide a matching fellowship of $10,000, making your total income $30,000 for that year. If the external award were $28,000, the latter plus the $5,000 supplement would make your total income $33,000. In addition to the financial advantage, each doctoral candidate should apply for external grants while under faculty guidance in order to develop the valuable professional skill of writing successful proposals.

Procedure: Ask the POIR office for tips on how to identify competitions and deadlines. Many deadlines are once a year in the fall, for disbursement the following academic year. Winning proposals often have resulted from six months of work, comments, and refinements. Start early in and ask your faculty for help. Attend USC workshops on proposal writing. As
soon as you receive notice of winning a competition, contact the POIR director and Linda Cole
lcole@usc.edu to arrange the supplement.

SIR Conference Funding [Use Conference Funding Request Form]

Candidates are encouraged to consider submitting advanced dissertation chapters or papers at professional conferences such as the ISA and APSA annual conventions. Funding from this source is available only for the presentation of a paper. All papers that deal with a subject in international relations or with a global issue studied outside the USA are eligible. For this purpose, work is considered advanced if equivalent in quality to that normally presented by assistant professors. In most cases preparation will not be advanced enough until the fourth or fifth year of the PhD program. The committee has, however, approved papers by students earlier in the program, for instance written by a candidate who already had an MA. Students should ask their professors whether their papers are of sufficient quality. If they have not reached that level yet, the student can collect comments on drafts from local faculty and fellow candidates and then improve and submit them for publication without attending a conference, or apply the next time.

For a paper at a major conference outside North America the maximum is $1,000; for a major Canadian, US, or Mexican conference, $750; for a regional US conference, $200. For a meeting held less than 75 miles from USC, SIR will reimburse registration fees but not travel expenses. These maxima apply per paper, even if more than one student co-authors the paper. A student who co-authors a paper with a professor is eligible to apply as long as the student himself or herself presents the paper at the conference, either with or without the co-author in attendance. No student is eligible for more than one conference per academic year.

Procedures:
1. Ask your chief faculty advisers whether the dissertation chapter or paper meets the standard for presentation at a top professional conference. Professors should give honest answers and assistance if needed, bearing in mind the harm to reputations that has come from premature appearances.
2. To qualify, the student must write the paper prior to the SIR deadline, which is four months after applying to attend the conference. E.g. if the conference deadline is 1 June, the SIR deadline is 1 October.
3. The student should be a member of the association and register early to save on the registration fee.
4. Apply in writing to the SIR Director’s Advisory Committee c/o lcole@usc.edu with a copy to the POIR Director. The application should include the following five items: (a) Conference Funding Request Form (downloadable from the POIR website), (b) a note on the specific nature of the conference and whether it has accepted your paper; (c) a copy of your invitation if the organization has accepted the paper; (d) a copy of your paper; (e) a travel budget (details below). Email submission is fine as long as all necessary documentation is attached.
5. The student’s faculty adviser should read your paper prior to signing off. He/she has to write the committee confidentially evaluating the quality of your paper and specify whether or not the paper meets the professional standard, and the student is ready to present at a prominent academic conference.
6. If the SIR committee approves and the conference accepts the paper, the student must notify the adviser and the POIR Director that he or she plans to attend the conference. Then the student must present the paper at a USC seminar, normally hosted by the CIS, at least one month prior to the conference. The paper should be circulated 2 weeks before the presentation.

7. Regional conferences like ISA West are an alternative for papers that are not yet ready for a top-level convention. In such cases, the student must submit the request, accompanied by the paper and request a letter from the chief adviser evaluating the paper, 30 days before the conference.

8. The deadline for major conferences may be relaxed and the presentation requirement exempted for “seasoned” students who have presented a paper successfully in previous years. A “seasoned” student is a student who qualifies all the following four conditions: (a) an ABD, (b) has presented his/her paper at APSA or ISA before, (c) has participated at least once in the practice presentation organized by POIR/SIR/CIS/POSC on USC campus, and (d) has approval from his/her chair to be exempt from the presentation requirement. A qualified student should write to the POIR director requesting the “seasoned student” exemption at the time of the SIR deadline with support from his/her chair. Once approved, the student should send in the conference funding request with all five required items outlined under point 4 30 days prior to the conference to process funding request.

9. After the conference, seek reimbursement of approved expenses by presenting receipts to Linda Cole in VKC 330. Also provide the SIR and POIR Directors with a brief report on the use of the grant, including how the paper was received at the conference. No requests for further support will be considered until reports on prior grants have been filed.

**Technical requirements**

A travel budget may include the categories listed below. If actual expenses exceed the approved budget, some expenses may not be reimbursed.

**Incidentals**, such as conference registration

**Round trip coach air fare.** Online ticket receipts are accepted. Make sure that you are submitting a receipt and not just a confirmation of a travel booking. The receipt includes payment details, whether paid by credit card (usually the last 4 account digits) or cash (in which case the receipt shows a zero balance).

Ticketing options: Use a USC travel vendor and we can prepay the travel with an internal requisition. But the USC vendor is not the cheapest way to fly. When dealing with a tight budget, you may prefer to charge a ticket on your credit card and seek reimbursement once you have completed the trip.

**Local Transportation.** Ask taxi and bus drivers for a receipt with amount, date and type of payment.
**Hotel.** If you share a hotel room, ask for a separate invoice for your share. If the hotel cannot produce separate invoices, process the request only for your share. The hotel cost includes the room plus local taxes. It should not include meals charged to your room or any minibar charges.

**Meals.**

**Claiming a reimbursement.** Print the USC travel expense report form, found on the Disbursement Control website along with the University's procedures: http://fbs.usc.edu/depts/dc/. The Disbursement Control Office insists that each item and receipt be listed separately on the form. If, for example, you have more than three entries to list in the transportation section, do not combine items into a single line. Instead submit more than one form. Please note: The USC form says you do not have to provide a receipt for items less than $25, but USC Dornsife College requires them. Please submit a receipt to support every item you claim. The School does not use the per diem reimbursement option; we ask for receipts for all meals and lodging. Attach all receipts to 8 1/2 x 11 sheets of paper using clear tape, not staples, with no overlaps. They will be scanned. Ideally, organize the receipts into the main budget categories above with meal receipts in date order. If your signature is difficult to read, please print your name too. Paying attention to these details can reduce delays in processing.