

Knauss Fellowship Application Best Practices for 2021

Angela Archer & Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant

November 18, 2020

The purpose of this document is to describe a few best practices for successfully applying to the John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship Program. Before reading this document, you should familiarize yourself with the fellowship and application process by visiting the [Knauss Fellowship page on the National Sea Grant \(NSG\) website](#). You will find additional information on the [Prospective Fellow overview page](#) which includes application information. The NSG also has a [recorded webinar detailing this year's funding opportunity](#). On the NSG's website, you will also find information for applying to the [National Marine Fisheries Service-Sea Grant Joint Graduate Fellowship](#). Please visit these websites to see how your skills can benefit the fellowships, and how the fellowships can benefit you.

If you have any questions about applying for the Knauss or NMFS fellowship, please reach out to Angie Archer, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant's Campus Engagement Coordinator at amcbride@purdue.edu.

Best practices

When compiling your application materials, remember that you need to show why you are the best person for this fellowship, and this fellowship is a fit for you. Your application will be read by a selection panel – no phone interviews – it needs to impart a picture of who you are.

- This is your chance to toot your own horn. Don't be shy!
- Do not include personal information in your application materials (no personal addresses or emails, no web links to external resources such as LinkedIn, articles, blogs).
- Reach out to current and past Knauss fellows! They will help you better understand what the fellowship will entail and can help you write a stronger application.
- This is a very competitive fellowship with applications ranging from those completing one year of a Master's program to those are ready to graduate from their PhD program. There are 34 Sea Grant programs, each of which can submit 6 applications which could total 204 applications for 50-70 positions.

Your education and career goal statement

The best advice for the written statement is to remember that it will be read by people who are reviewing many applications at once. Your statement should be well-written, free of typos, and strike a balance between depth and concision.

- Start it with something to pull the reviewer in.
- Tell a coherent story which answers the questions "why you are right for this fellowship", "why this fellowship fits in with your career goals" and "what you will bring to the fellowship".
- Write clearly and stay on-point.

- This isn't a summary of research: they don't want graphs and data, but you need to make the ties between your research, your big picture, and how it fits in the goals of the fellowship.
- Have someone you trust, and is a good editor, look at your application. Remember, the statement is 1000 words or less!
- If there is a relevant award or honor you have received, you might highlight it in your written statement to ensure it shines through and is obvious to the reviewers.

Your resume/cv and transcripts

- Resume/CV
 - Limited to 2 pages
 - Cut stuff which is less relevant to the Knauss fellowship
 - Keep it clean, readable, and typo-free.
- Transcripts
 - Official or unofficial are acceptable.
 - Electronic copies can be picked up by Angie Archer, amcbride@purdue.edu
 - Have good grades. Almost all Knauss fellows have a 3.5 or higher GPS in graduate school with many having 3.8 or better.
 - If your grades are lower, the rest of your application must be compelling.
- Recommendation letter
 - 2 letters of recommendation, one must be from a faculty member with knowledge of your academic and research (when applicable) performance. The letter does not need to be from your major advisor.
 - Letters can be mailed or emailed directly to Angie Archer, amcbride@purdue.edu
 - Pick people who will write about YOU.
 - Letters cannot come from members of Congress, relatives or friends.

Other general advice

Knauss fellows tend to be well-rounded individuals bringing a wide-array of experiences to the fellowship. The panel looks to see that you have a life outside of the classroom whether it be sports, volunteer work, study abroad, leadership in student organizations and/or research in other areas related to your specific research.

This is a job application, not a research grant application. While fellows may do some research, it will likely be research to achieve management or policy objectives.

If you are in a 4+1 program, you need to have your bachelor's degree before you can apply for a Knauss fellowships.