FSU
GRADUATE SCHOOL

2026-2027 Graduate Student Leadership Award

Award Description:

Sponsored annually by the Graduate School, this award recognizes outstanding graduate student leaders who are making a positive difference in their scholarly/creative work, campus, and wider communities. Graduate students who exhibit strong leadership skills are encouraged to apply.

All required nomination materials must be submitted as one combined PDF packet to James Beck (jpbeck@fsu.edu) via FSU Nifty no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday, January 29, 2027**.

FSU graduate students will be recognized for their outstanding contributions to leadership endeavors at the *Celebration of Graduate Student Excellence* held each spring in April. Awards of $1,000 will be made to three graduate students.

Criteria:

Applicants will be evaluated in two general categories:

1. Characteristics of Leadership
    - Does the student collaborate well with others and inspire/empower others to act?
    - Does the student manage change and transition well?
    - Does the student participate in professional association activities that are external to the university?
    - Does the student engage in student organizations and the scholarly community?

2. Level of Leadership Involvement
    - Each student's application will be reviewed for evidence of leadership participation at the national, state, regional/local, university, and departmental levels.

Requirements:

Each applicant must be an active, enrolled, FSU degree-seeking or professional graduate student in good academic standing and must provide the following to the Graduate School:

* Application materials for the Graduate Student Leadership Award should be combined and submitted as one PDF packet in the following order:

1. A personal essay that includes a rationale for receiving the Leadership Award
    - Maximum length is 2 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, Calibri, 1-inch margins.
    - No cover page is required.
    - The personal essay needs to explicitly address the evaluation criteria noted above.

2. An up-to-date Curriculum Vitae (CV) or Resume

3. A Letter of Recommendation supporting the student for the Graduate Student Leadership Award
    - Maximum length is 3 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, Calibri, 1-inch margins.
    - Only **one** (1) Letter of Recommendation can be provided by a faculty or administrator who can address the leadership skills and efforts of the student in light of the evaluation criteria. The letter can be co-written. It is strongly encouraged that the faculty or administrator sends the Letter of Recommendation to the student so that it can be combined with the PDF packet. However, if the faculty member or administrator does not feel comfortable doing this, the Letter of Recommendation can be sent via email directly to James Beck (jpbeck@fsu.edu).

4. It is very important that all application materials be saved as **one PDF packet** in the **exact order** listed above. Preparation and submission of the application materials is the responsibility of the nominee, but departments and colleges may (and are encouraged) to provide assistance.

General Nomination/Selection Process:

An academic department or college may nominate a student of their choosing. Any graduate student interested in applying for the Graduate Student Leadership Award should consult with their program/unit and faculty/staff member who will be writing their Letter of Recommendation. Program faculty/staff are encouraged to identify students within their respective units who demonstrate strong leadership skills through the general competencies noted above.

The number of nominations each department or college (if no departmental subunits) may submit for the Graduate Student Leadership Award will be based upon its number of graduate students. Departments or colleges with fewer than 100 graduate students may nominate one candidate; departments or colleges with 100-200 graduate students may nominate a maximum of two candidates; departments or colleges with over 200 graduate students may nominate a maximum of three candidates.

Submission of Materials:

Students should first confirm a nomination with their program or unit. Students should not begin the submission process until they have all of the materials listed above (e.g., Personal Essay, CV or Resume, and Letter of Recommendation). Afterwards, students can do the following:

The single PDF packet of required materials (with the letter of recommendation) must be sent via FSU Nifty and is due no later than **5:00 P.M., Friday, January 29, 2027.** No time extensions will be awarded for late submission of materials as it is the student's responsibility to be sure all required documents are accepted on time and prior to the deadline.

FSU Nifty Directions:

1. Go to the FSU Nifty here: https://dropbox.fsu.edu/ .
2. Click "Login" and log-in with your FSUID and password.
3. Click "Drop-off."
4. Enter your information and the recipient information: James Beck (jpbeck@fsu.edu)
5. Choose the file you would like to upload (one PDF document of the application materials).
6. Click "Drop-off the File."

Review Process:

An award selection committee comprised of university faculty and staff will review all nominee materials. The Dean of the Graduate School (or designee) will select the Leadership Award winners based on the final scores submitted by the award selection committee. Award notifications are sent out to all applicants in late March. All nominees for this award will be recognized at the spring *Celebration of Graduate Student Excellence* ceremony in April.

For more information, questions, or concerns regarding the Graduate Student Leadership Award, please contact James Beck (jpbeck@fsu.edu) in the Graduate School.