Presidential Critical Research Funds: Critical Research Funds would provide funding for necessary thesis research expenses up to $5000 for advanced doctoral or MFA students who have experienced a delay in their degree progress due to circumstances or challenges beyond their control. To be eligible, students must establish that they do not have another source of funding for the requested expenses. Allowable expenses include travel, equipment or supplies necessary for a student to complete their dissertation or thesis work. Successful applications will demonstrate solid achievement and steady pre-pandemic progress to degree, compelling need and justification for requested funds, and a viable plan and potential for degree completion if awarded the funds.

Awards: Awards will be made only for actual expenses incurred that are consistent with the awarded application budget up to a maximum of $5000. Funds will be disbursed by combination of purchase order, post to student account and/or reimbursement depending on the nature of the expense upon submission of appropriate documentation.

We anticipate up to 20 awards will be made in this first round (see timeline below).

Eligibility: Eligible applicants:

- Are doctoral (PhD and DMA) students in good standing who have advanced to candidacy and advanced MFA students in good standing;
- Have experienced a delay in their progress to degree due to circumstances or challenges beyond their control. Degree progress may look different depending upon the discipline or degree program and therefore it is the responsibility of the applicant to justify delays and progress in a way that a multi-disciplinary faculty review committee can understand;
- Do not have another source of funding support for the budgeted items;
- Are enrolled full- or part-time at the time of application. If selected, awardees will be expected to maintain enrollment in good standing during the funding period; and
- May apply for both a Presidential Completion Fellowship and Critical Research Funds, but in the unlikely situation that a student is selected for both, awardees may have to choose one award so we can ensure the broadest dispersion of support.

Eligible Expenses: Applicants may request critical research funds to cover necessary thesis-related expenses for which the applicant lacks funding. Some examples are:

- Purchase of equipment, software, or consumable or non-consumable supplies needed to complete thesis work.
- Expenses for travel to locations necessary for completion of thesis work, such as travel to field sites, archives, performances, experiment sites, or other research locations. Conference travel for dissemination, network building or career/professional development is not eligible.
All expenses must be allowable by SBU Procurement policy, including any COVID19-related limitations, and may not include salaries, stipends, or income to compensate the applicant or any other person. Funds awarded will be contingent upon the applicant’s ability to obtain any necessary pre-approvals on travel and any purchase over $2500. For more information on allowable costs, see COVID19 travel guidance and reimbursement guidelines.

How to Apply: Applications will be submitted through an online application form found here:

grad.stonybrook.edu/cost-funding/Presidential-Dissertation

The form will ask applicants to upload their application materials (listed below) as PDF files, except for the advisor letter of support, which should be emailed directly to fellowships@stonybrook.edu and must include the student’s name in the subject line.

Applications will be submitted by the student in collaboration with the student’s thesis advisor. The advisor must attest that they have reviewed the application and support it.

Application Deadline: March 31, 2021

Application Materials: Documents should be single spaced with Times New Roman 11 point font.

- Abstract or summary of the dissertation or thesis (no more than two pages)
  - Summary should include an outline of each chapter or equivalent unit of progress
- History of student’s past and current funding for their dissertation/thesis work (one page)
  - Please include source of funding, amount, and duration
- Budget and justification for requested funding (no page limit, but be brief)
  - Justification must justify the need for each budgeted expense and include documentation of all cited costs (e.g., proposed travel should include an estimate of possible flight costs from an airline/travel agent; equipment or consumables should include a PDF of stated costs from the vendor/source).
  - The budget justification should explain what the student needs, how much it costs, and why they need it for their thesis work.
  - Only actual expenses will be awarded.
- Statement of need describing the circumstances or challenges beyond the student’s control that have led to a delay in progress and a need for funding (one page)
  - Delays in progress may look different depending upon the discipline or degree program and therefore it is the responsibility of the applicant to justify delays and progress in a way that a multi-disciplinary faculty review committee can understand.
  - In contrast to the budget justification, the statement of need should explain why the student’s progress is delayed and why the funding is needed for degree completion.
- A work plan describing goals and milestones for the use of the research funds (one page)
  - The plan should also address how these research funds will hasten the student’s degree completion.
  - Work plan should include estimated defense date (if applicable) and expected date of degree completion
- Student’s CV (no more than five pages)
Letter of support from the thesis advisor that includes an overview of the student’s achievements and progress to date, and the importance of the budgeted items to the student’s dissertation/thesis progress and timely degree completion (no more than 3 pages)

- The advisor must affirm that no other funding is available to support the budgeted expenses.
- The letter should emphasize the critical role this award would play in the student’s degree completion, in contrast to typical letters of reference that may emphasize the merits of the thesis work itself.
- Since degree progress may look different depending upon the discipline or degree program, the letter of support should justify delays and progress in a way that a multi-disciplinary faculty review committee can understand it.
- The advisor must attest in the letter that they have reviewed and support the submitted application.
- The letter of support should be sent directly to fellowships@stonybrook.edu by the advisor.

Awardee Selection: Applications will be evaluated by a multi-disciplinary faculty review committee for the following equally weighted criteria:

- Solid record of achievement and steady, pre-pandemic progress;
- Compelling need for additional support based on circumstances or challenges beyond the student’s control; and
- Viable work plan, with goals and milestones, that shows strong potential for reaching those goals and hastening degree completion.

Considerations will be made to ensure disciplinary equity and program balance.

Timeline: There will be two calls for applications for these awards. The current Spring 2021 call, and a subsequent call released in Fall 2021. Awarded funds will need to be spent within one calendar year of award (although ideally much sooner). The results of the current competition should be announced by the end of April 2021.

Reporting: Awardees will be expected to submit a final report within six months of the expiration of awarded funds. The report should describe progress toward stated goals, including major results, conclusions, publications or other resulting products, and summarize subsequent career steps following the award, if applicable.

Questions: Please address questions to fellowships@stonybrook.edu.