Preamble

Quality graduate students are a precious commodity. They are, by definition, exceptionally talented, highly motivated, and willing to postpone for a number of years the substantial benefits of starting a career. Without a suitable number of them, no research university can possibly fulfill one key component of its mission—that of preparing the future professors and researchers who will staff our various institutions of higher learning. We cannot expect that quality graduate students—precisely because they are exceptionally talented, and have other options available to them—will accept the ever-increasing burden of paying their way through graduate school when most will commit themselves to a lifetime of moderate wages in public service to higher education. For these reasons, the provision of significant (often full) financial support of graduate students (especially doctoral students) is the norm among quality research universities. Those universities that are unable, or unwilling, to provide substantial financial support are increasingly unable to attract quality students to their graduate programs, and their reputations suffer as a consequence.

At UH, with the shift of financial support in recent years away from graduate students and toward undergraduates, many of our graduate programs, especially in disciplines outside of the natural and applied sciences, are no longer competitive in attracting quality graduate students. The proposal presented below is meant to serve as a blueprint for correcting this situation and for rendering UH, once again, fully competitive with our peer institutions.

We note from the start that full implementation of this proposal will require a significant increase in the funds allocated to graduate education. It is unrealistic to expect that full implementation can be achieved entirely through more aggressive pursuit of external grants and donations. In addition to these sources of new money, implementation will require greater investment by the State of Hawai‘i and the University of Hawai‘i System to support a quality research university.

In the absence of an increase in commitment to and investment in graduate education at UH, full implementation of this proposal should not go forward. Doing so would cause significant disruption of many existing—and in several cases, quite fine—graduate programs. Especially dangerous would be requiring individual graduate programs without access to extramural funding to rely on current funding levels to meet the goals of this proposal or to determine the appropriate student-body size of their programs. For example, in graduate programs in which coursework plays an important role, the program will only be viable (in the sense that the necessary courses can be offered) if a critical mass of students is registered. Where current financial resources fall well short of what is necessary to support that critical mass of students, implementing this proposal without additional investment in graduate student funding will force those programs to close down, regardless of their current quality or potential for improving. Such an outcome would significantly alter the landscape of graduate education at UH to the detriment of future students and the communities we serve.

Charge and Summary

One of the goals of Achieving Our Destiny (2011-2015) is to enhance graduate education and stimulate and support individual and group research and scholarly activities. To help address this goal, the Ph.D. Funding Working Group (PFWG) began meeting in September 2012 to develop recommendations for providing 5 year funding to all eligible University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM) Ph.D. students. The goal of the PFWG is to devise and evaluate funding scenarios that would allow UHM Ph.D. programs to be more competitive when recruiting top students, increase the acceptance rate among top students, enable students to move from enrollment to
candidacy within the time horizon established by the Office of Graduate Education, and improve graduation rates as well as placement after graduation. The PFWG’s vision is to improve individual graduate program rankings, thereby increasing the overall national ranking of UHM. This has potential to increase extramural funding and further expand research infrastructure.

In order to meet the goals of funding Ph.D. education and improving graduate student retention and time to degree, the PFWG recommends: 1) a campus-wide commitment to, and plan for providing, five-years of funding; 2) development of dissertation completion fellowships; and 3) promotion of best practices in mentorship, transparency and a culture of funding.

The first recommendation is that UHM make a commitment that all eligible Ph.D. students be provided with five years of adequate funding. In order to meet the needs of various departments across campus, we recommend that each department develop its own funding model based on the basic funding template and general guidelines described below.

In addition to the primary recommendation of five-year funding, we also recommend that all units collaborate in the formulation of a Dissertation Completion Fellowship Program that would provide access to competitive, high-quality, prestigious, “no work” funding packages to all eligible Ph.D. students who are in the fifth and final year of their program to enable students to focus solely on completion of their dissertation. It is our hope that the development of this type of award will stimulate excellence and enhance timely degree completion.

Whereas stable funding is a critical element of support necessary for timely degree completion, high-impact mentoring and effective academic and career advising are equally important. In order to maximize the outcomes of these funding-based recommendations, the PFWG maintains that it is critical to promote official degree timelines, transparency and a culture of funding across campus. In order to encourage student excellence and success, reduce time-to-degree, as well as to help prepare students for post-graduate careers, every opportunity should be taken to link the funding process with student goal-setting, grant-writing, attention to progress toward degree and a “best practices” approach to mentoring of Ph.D. students that includes career pathway preparation.

In summary, implementation of these recommendations to provide better support for graduate students will allow Mānoa graduate programs to improve national rankings and enable departments to recruit the highest possible caliber of student. Better support will allow students to focus on their research and academic program requirements, leading to higher quality work, and improved retention and time-to-degree.

**The Five-Year Funding Commitment**

*The PFWG recommends that UH Mānoa make a commitment to enact policies and put in place the administrative structures necessary to ensure that all eligible Ph.D. students receive a minimum of five years of adequate funding.*

Although this commitment should be campus-wide, units may have different levels of ownership to this commitment. Campus administrators will assume primary responsibility for developing the resources and funding structures necessary to support these goals, and departments and/or graduate degree programs are encouraged to invest the expertise and intellectual capital to strategize about how the implementation of these goals can be beneficial and not detrimental to their graduate students or programs. Departments should communicate concerns and monetary shortfalls to administration and collaborate in developing solutions. Graduate students are encouraged to meet increased funding and support with increased focus and drive for timely completion of degree programs and overall commitment to excellence in achieving their goals, and to participate actively in efforts to fund their own graduate education.

The PFWG encourages all constituents to approach the implementation of this goal with the spirit of innovation,
communication and willingness to collaborate to find solutions to overcome any challenges that may hinder the realization of these commitments.

To ensure that implementation of this commitment presents minimal disruption and that adequate funding resources are developed to support institutional changes, the PFWG recommends that this commitment be rolled out over a six-year period. This rollout period may have to be adjusted if adequate funding is not secured at the campus level. (See Appendix I for a proposed timeline for implementation.)

**Basic Five-Year Funding Template**

This five-year funding template is designed to provide general guidelines for funding that can be tailored to meet the needs of different degree programs while maintaining a consistent standard of Ph.D. funding across the entire university. Based on the criteria laid out in this document, departments will develop program-specific funding templates and individualized funding packages for their Ph.D. students.

**Eligible: Full-time Ph.D. Students:**

**Year 1-5:** Students shall receive graduate assistantships (GAs) funded extramurally or by the department/college as appropriate for each discipline.

**Year 5:** Students who are ABD and expect to complete their dissertations within the year may apply for a competitive Dissertation Completion Fellowship equivalent to (0.50 FTE) GA stipend at a level commensurate with campus/department norms, basic medical insurance and tuition waiver/recapture

**Ineligible: Part-time, distance-learning, professional degree students as well as students with full-time, off-campus employment:**

**Year 1-7:** No financial commitment.

**Eligibility & Stipulations**

- Students must be enrolled full-time in a Ph.D. program at UH-Mānoa.
- Continuation of funding must be contingent upon satisfactory progress to degree, as defined by Graduate Education guidelines and department-specific benchmarks.
- GAs and Dissertation Completion Fellowships may not be combined with external sources of funding and cannot be received concurrently with other types of major grants or awards (over $2,000/semester).
- Additional employment of any type that exceeds 10 hours per/week during the student’s on-duty period is prohibited.
- The intent of this commitment is to provide eligible Ph.D. students a total of five years of funding, regardless of source. For students who secure extramural funding for all or part of their first five years of education, the UHM funding commitment would cover only the remainder of the initial five-year period of education.
- This commitment is not intended to guarantee UHM funding beyond five (5) years or ten (10) semesters of Ph.D. education (excluding official leaves of absence) except as noted below. In rare and exceptional cases, continued funding beyond five years may be granted at the discretion of the department; however, under no circumstances will UHM funding exceed 7 years or 14 semesters total (excluding official leaves of absence).

**Implementation Strategies**

Each department will develop its own program-specific funding model based on this template making the necessary adjustments to address departmental and field-specific concerns which will form the basic guidelines
for funding Ph.D. students in that program in conjunction with a “Timeline to Degree” which will form the criteria for judging progress towards the degree.

- **Full Funding** – Once this plan is fully implemented, all qualified, full-time students must be fully funded for the minimum five years. Full funding means support equivalent to (.5 FTE) GA stipend at a level commensurate with campus and department norms, plus health insurance and tuition waiver. For students granted awards below this minimum or partial (less than .5 FTE) GA, the difference between partial award and “full funding” must be covered by some other type of award. For students who receive major awards from non-university sources, and the amount of award is less than “full funding” the difference must be covered by some other type of award.

- **Funding types** – The GA may be replaced with other types of funding. Departments may use multiple sources for funding a single student during the same semester or change the funding source from semester to semester.

- **Timeline to degree** – Duration of degree program and duration of funding should match. If a department sets a timeline to degree that takes six years instead of the standard five, it should also account for this extra time in its funding model.

- **Extending time to degree** – Departments may extend funding beyond five years (up to a total of 14 semesters) at their own discretion; however, if possible, they are encouraged to adjust their program in line with the institutional goal of five years for completion of a Ph.D.

- **Reducing time to degree** – Departments may not reduce the duration of funding to less than five years (10 semesters excluding leave of absence); however, they may wish to encourage students to complete their degrees sooner through degree program design, best practices in mentorship, goal setting and other kinds of support.

- **Extramural / non-departmental funding** – Departments may not promise extramural / non-departmental funds to a student unless these funds are earmarked for their students or otherwise under their control. Departments should encourage their students to seek extramural / non-departmental funds by making them aware of such opportunities and providing training in grant writing and other support. Departments may require their students to apply for extramural / non-departmental funding, either as a benchmark toward their degree or on an annual basis.

- **Funding “ineligible” students** – Departments may choose to fund students who are not automatically included in this plan at their discretion including: MA and graduate certificate students, part-time, distance-learning and professional degree program students.

- **Dissertation Completion Fellowship** – All departments are required to participate in developing at least one (1) Dissertation Completion Fellowship unless they are granted an exemption from the Graduate Dean. Departments may convert funding that is already offered (such as department merit awards, fellowships or GAs) into Dissertation Completion Fellowships.

Departments that have not already done so will create a timeline to degree for each of their graduate degree programs (including MA/MS & graduate certificates) that articulates departmental expectations for time to degree, progress benchmarks and types of funding linked to each phase of program. This document will provide the basis for assessing “adequate progress toward degree” and should also be published on the department website. Timelines must be approved by the Office of Graduate Education prior to implementation.

**Dissertation Completion Fellowship Program**

The Dissertation Completion Fellowship is envisioned as a competitive full-year award for excellent Ph.D. students who have reached the status of all-but-dissertation (ABD; typically 5th year students), and demonstrate that they are prepared and able to complete their degree program within the year. During the Dissertation Completion Fellowship, no additional work will be required for the student. While it is our goal to eventually provide all eligible Ph.D. students with the option of a Dissertation Completion Fellowship in the final year of their degree program at UHM, we also recognize that this may not be the best option for every student and
recommend that departments and deans collaborate to determine the proper number of fellowships for each degree program.

- **Eligibility** – All course requirements must be completed prior to application. Students must have successfully completed all written and oral exams. The dissertation proposal must be formally approved prior to application. This means that Form II – Advance to Candidacy- must be approved by Office of Graduate Education prior to application.

- **Amount of Award** – The Dissertation Completion Fellowship award should be equivalent to a (.5 FTE) GA stipend at a level commensurate with campus/department norms, plus health insurance and tuition waiver/recapture.

- **Health Insurance** – Should a unit be unable to provide health insurance with an award, a health insurance differential equivalent to one full step on the GA stipend scale should be added to the base award.

- **Tuition Waiver** – Recipients of dissertation completion funding should be enrolled in at least one (1) credit of 800 per semester. All Dissertation Completion Fellowships will include a tuition waiver.

- **Fellowship and GA formats** – In order to make it possible to fund individual awards from a wider range of funding sources (including federal grants) Dissertation Completion Fellowships may be implemented as either a competitive full year fellowship + tuition waiver + health insurance differential or as a competitive GA-ship with no additional work requirement beyond completion of student dissertation that includes tuition waiver and health insurance.

- **Student Requirements** – Recipients of Dissertation Completion Fellowships will work with their advisor/committee chair to develop a “completion contract” that includes explicit project goals, benchmarks, completion deadlines and a list of “project deliverables” for student work (such as regular progress reports, meetings and/or drafts.) The purpose of the completion contract is to clarify departmental expectations and requirements for continued funding. Departments may add requirements to this document as long as they are designed to support student success (such as requiring that the student remain in residence and/or requiring monthly meetings with an advisor.) Student failure to comply with the criteria of this document may serve as the basis for loss of the remainder of an award.

- **Competitive Application Process** – Dissertation Completion Fellowships will be awarded on the basis of a competitive application process. All departments will use a standardized application form through the STAR Website that minimally includes a brief description of the dissertation project, the current status of work, and a statement of intent to complete within one year. Graduate programs will rank and nominate their students and submit the applications to the Office of Graduate Education by the posted due date. In addition to program-level awards made by departments, these applications are automatically included in a general pool for consideration for non-departmental (such as area studies), college-wide, and University-wide awards.

- **Number of Fellowships** – Beginning in the first year after adoption of these recommendations, each department shall offer a minimum of one (1) Dissertation Completion Fellowship on a yearly basis. Departments and Deans will work together to establish target goals for the number of annual fellowships on a program-specific basis. The number of fellowships offered per year should be increased according to the implementation timeline included in Appendix I of this document until each department is able to provide 100% of their target goal. The target number of fellowships should be reviewed and adjusted every 3-5 years to reflect changes in department size, typical number of applicants and other factors including the availability of funding at the college and campus levels to support full implementation of this proposal.

- **Program Waiver** - Departments and units may obtain a waiver from participation in the Dissertation Completion Fellowships program from the Graduate Dean in the event that they are able to establish that no students in a particular degree program would benefit from this option and as long as they provide full funding for 5th year students.

- **Student Participation** – In the event that there is no qualified applicant for a department’s Dissertation Completion Fellowship in a given year, or in the event that the number of available awards exceeds the
number of applicants, the funds earmarked for the unused award may be re-purposed to fund non-Dissertation Completion graduate students in the department, or held in reserve for students expected to come to eligibility the following year.

- **Non-Departmental Fellowships** – Non-departmental units are invited to participate in the development of Dissertation Completion Fellowship Program. Efforts should be made to court alumni and external sponsors for individual, named awards.
- **Official Title** – The Dissertation Completion Fellowship Program should be given an official title that reflects the competitive and merit-based nature of the award.

**Transparency**

As an aid in recruitment and to assist students already within Ph.D. programs, departmental and university websites will include information about the Dissertation Completion Fellowships, grant-writing workshops and best practices in mentorship. Similarly, departments and programs that grant Ph.D.s must include explicit information about degree requirements and projected timeline to degree on their websites.

As part of the admission / recruitment process, students should be informed about the various sources of funding in their recruitment package and requirements to receive each type of funding. Stipend levels and cost of living data as well as departmental and university expectations about progress to degree should also be provided.

Continuation / renewal of all Ph.D. funding, regardless of source, is contingent upon adequate academic performance and timely progress to degree. Degree-specific timelines and progress indicators should be determined within the department, clearly communicated to students and consistently applied to all students within the same program.

Students who are not eligible for institutional funding according to the criteria of this document must be informed of their status of ineligibility in a timely manner so that they can make arrangements for alternative funding.

**Promoting a “Culture of Funding”**

In order to engender a culture of funding, especially in departments that historically have had fewer sources for external funds, workshops about grant writing, research funding, interfacing with Research Corporation of the University of Hawai‘i (RCUH) & UH Foundation and federal funding should be offered for faculty, staff & students across the entire campus.

Departments are encouraged to include a grant-writing requirement in their degree programs and, whenever possible, the development of professional skills and knowledge necessary to obtain funding in one’s particular field should be integrated into graduate student curriculum as a critical element of professional development.

Colleges, Departments, faculty, staff and students are encouraged to advertise current innovative research projects on their department web pages, newsletters and on social media in order to provide Deans, UH Foundation and others engaged in fundraising with material to demonstrate the excellence, importance and social relevance of graduate education and research to potential donors and/or the legislature and other stakeholders.

**Best Practices in Mentoring**

In order to encourage student excellence and success, reduce time-to-degree as well as to help prepare students for post-graduate careers, every opportunity should be taken to link the funding process with student goal-setting, grant writing, attention to progress toward degree, professional development and career pathway preparation. Funding efforts should always be informed by “best practices” mentoring of Ph.D. students. (For more information on mentoring please visit the Graduate Education website here.)
**Metrics and Assessment**

Each step of the implementation process should be monitored by the Dean of Graduate Education with careful metrics and subjected to review and critical assessment for effectiveness and feasibility in relation to funding.

This process should include but is not be limited to:

- The ongoing collection of graduate student “life cycle” metrics for all departments (number of applicants, number of students accepted, number of students enrolled, incoming student qualifications, time to ABD, time to degree, locus of employment after graduation)
- An initial baseline assessment of Ph.D. funding within departments (including amounts and funding sources) and estimate of projected shortfalls in meeting the ultimate goals of Ph.D. funding.
- Gathering department-specific funding models and degree timelines together into a format conducive to the transmission of innovative funding solutions across disciplines.
- Surveys and/or assessments that could identify non-funding related changes that could improve the quality of graduate education and/or time to degree.
- A comprehensive review-assessment of Ph.D. funding after the implementation deadline to see if the goals have been achieved and if the funding policies have had the expected impacts on graduate education.
- Students who receive the Dissertation Completion Fellowship may be required to participate in an exit survey to assist in assessing effectiveness.

**Developing Funding Sources**

1. Dissertation Completion Fellowship Fund through UHF: Fifty-six (56) dissertation completion fellowships/year (1 per Ph.D. program at $33K total cost each) will cost $1.848M annually. The Fund will require an endowment of roughly $47M assuming an average pay-out of 4–4.5%. (Note: There are currently two (2) dissertation completion fellowships funded through UHF.)

2. Tuition Recovery: PI’s at UHM do not generally include tuition in proposals to NIH, NSF, DoD and other extramural funding entities that will provide graduate student tuition funds. In Fall 2012 the total tuition waived for GAs on federal money was $3.6M. UHM PI’s should, whenever possible, include tuition in their extramural funding proposals.

3. RTRF: Analysis of current allocation patterns (G and RTRF) is necessary to determine the feasibility/amount of RTRF that could potentially be redirected.

4. Summer Session/Outreach: Some departments already use these monies to fund dissertation completion fellowships. Units should be encouraged to allocate a portion of summer session/outreach monies to dissertation completion fellowships as a way to incentivize faculty to increase the number of courses taught during summer and through outreach. We recognize that such allocations may not be feasible for every unit.

5. In the event that the distribution of tuition money is modified so that some portion of tuition dollars goes to the department that offered the class / department of the instructor – graduate students who teach classes will be generating tuition revenue that will contribute to funding their positions.

6. Creating a Development Officer Position dedicated to funding graduate education and supporting campus-wide efforts to promote graduate-level extramural grants and award opportunities would be an important step toward developing the resources necessary to fully fund graduate education.
7. Future capital campaigns will include graduate funding.

8. Supporting faculty and student efforts to apply for and successfully secure extramural grants, fellowships and awards should be supported through grant writing workshops on a campus wide, college and/or departmental level. Incorporating a requirement that students apply to at least one grant/fellowship during the course of their degree program may be appropriate for some departments and developing online resources (such as searchable databases and links to resources gathered together on the Graduate Education website) to help members of the UH community find funding opportunities that relate to their research interests would help facilitate student application efforts.

9. Named Dissertation fellowships – UHF, Colleges and Departments should all seek donations / endowments for individual completion fellowships and name them after the donors.

10. Assess and adjust graduate student employment practices to balance benefit to students and the institution.

11. Increase on-campus graduate student housing.

12. Developing additional GA positions by cultivating relationships with community business and non-profit partners, seeking GA teaching positions at other UH System Campuses and exploring ways in which Graduate Student labor could be utilized to meet UHM campus needs (such as administrative graduate assistantships, undergraduate mentoring, or teaching-support positions for faculty who teach “W” focus courses and/or other high-impact engaged learning courses.)
### Appendix I

#### Implementation Timeline

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Five-year funding commitment</th>
<th>Dissertation Completion Fellowship</th>
<th>Non-funding Goals (time to degree, best practices in mentorship, culture of funding, transparency)</th>
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| Year 1 (Articulation of challenges) | 1) assess current PhD funding levels & sources and estimate shortfall for goal of 5 years funding (as well as barriers to increasing funding / possible solutions)  
2) departments drafts and dean approves department specific funding templates  
3) create degree-specific timeline to degree for each graduate degree programs => graduate div. approval  
4) create a funding plan for all current eligible students who have not exceeded five years in their program | 1) Each department will create one (1) dissertation fellowship or secure permission to opt-out from dean & chancellor  
2) departments work with deans to establish target number of fellowships  
3) each department a set standardized student requirements for awardees / template for “social contract” & award procedure | 1) colleges conduct a survey of both graduate students and faculty identifying non-funding related issues that may hinder timely progress toward completion of PhD programs  
2) Timelines to degree and department-specific funding models should be added to department websites upon approval. |
| Year 2 (25%) | 1) Beginning in year 2, at least 25% of eligible PhD students in a program must be fully funded and all others must be at least 25% funded  
2) based on year 1 assessment of current funding / estimated short falls planning and implementation of strategies to address shortfall | 1) Departments to provide DCF not less than 25% of their target goal  
2) implement exit survey for DCF recipients – did they finish? What did they accomplish? Job placement? => track effectiveness of program & generate narratives for seeking donor support | 1) based on year 1 survey of non-funding degree delays, measures should be taken to rectify any existing issues  
2) identify “best practices” in mentorship and formulate strategies for implementation  
3) develop campus wide grant-writing / culture of funding campaign |
| Year 3 (50%) | 1) Beginning in year 3, at least 50% of eligible PhD students in a program must be fully funded and all others must be at least 50% funded | 1) departments to provide DCF not less than 50% of their target goal  
2) beginning in year three, every three years departments & deans recalculate the target number of DCF | 1) roll-out best practices in mentorship campaign  
2) roll-out grant writing / culture of funding campaign |
| Year 4 (75%) | 1) Beginning in year 4, at least 75% of eligible PhD students in a program must be fully funded and all others must be at least 75% funded | 1) departments to provide DCF not less than 75% of their target number | |
| Year 5 (100%) | 1) 100% of eligible PhD students must be fully funded | 1) Departments to provide DCF not less than 100% of target goal | |
| Year 6 (Assessment) | 1) Perform campus-wide assessment of implementation of five year funding, dissertation completion fellowship and non-funding goals. | | |
Appendix II

Dissertation Completion Fellowship Program
Application Components

1. **Research Description** (as outlined below – not to exceed 5 pages, including abstract)

   Briefly describe your dissertation research project and progress toward completion. Address your narrative to an audience of intelligent, academic reviewers, who may not be very familiar with your specific field or discipline. Clearly explain the importance/significance of your research to a general (lay) audience without using jargon or technical, field specific language. All parts, including abstract and any citations, may not exceed the 5 page limitation.

   - **Abstract:** summary of your research (no more than 300 words, double spaced)
   - **Background:** Depending upon your discipline or field of study, your dissertation description may include a summary of key literature, general concepts, frame of reference for your study, your research questions, and the significance of your research. Citations for important references may be included, within page limitations.
   - **Methodology/Research Design:** Depending upon your discipline or field of study, you may include a description of the data or other materials which will be/have been collected and analyzed, methods of collection and analysis, design considerations, etc. A full description of any necessary approvals, such as Human Subjects Review, should be included.
   - **Research Progress, Work Plan, and Timetable:** Include a description of research progress made to date, and planned sequence of tasks to be completed, with estimated timetable. Please note that after the excellence criterion, priority will be given to students who are most likely to complete their dissertation within the award period.

2. **Curriculum Vita** and other sources of funding (not to exceed 2 pages)

   Include recent professional activities, awards, honors and courses you have taught. Please list external funds for which you have applied, including funding source, and if funding was received or is pending. Because University funding is limited, application for external funding is encouraged and such efforts will be viewed positively by the reviewers.

3. **Two Letters of Recommendation**

   - One from your dissertation advisor
   - One from another faculty member who is familiar with your research

   Only electronic letters of recommendations will be accepted. The online application will prompt you to submit the email addresses for your recommenders. Once you submit your application via the online system, an email will be sent to your chosen recommenders asking them to submit a letter of recommendation on your behalf.

   Each letter of recommendation is limited to 4,000 characters (spaces included) which is approximately 600 words or one single-spaced page.

   Letters of recommendation should be written “To the Fellowship Committee” and include the following:

   - the quality of the student's research and,
   - a rating of the applicant's overall ability and potential for a successful career based on the recommender's knowledge of other students in the same field, and
   - the recommender's assessment of the likelihood that the student will complete the dissertation during the award period