



EA-IRES: East African International Research Experience for Students – Fellowship Information and Application (due 7/1/16)

The Colorado State University (CSU) EA-IRES Fellowship, hosted by the Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory (NREL) in the Warner College of Natural Resources and in partnership with University of Nairobi (UoN), Kenya, will provide five qualifying Colorado State University students an opportunity to study dryland social-ecological systems in Colorado and Kenya. This one-year student-driven program begins with two semesters of training in Colorado on the basics of research, drylands and social-ecological systems and the writing of a research proposal, it culminates in a five-week field research experience in East Africa Summer 2017. Travel and modest living expenses for the field experience will be covered by the fellowship, and fellows will receive an additional \$1,400 Fellowship Award. The EA-IRES program will include professional development, as well as cultural and social activities both inside and outside the classroom both in Colorado and Africa. This program is funded by the National Science Foundation's International Research Experience for Students (IRES) program and will follow CSU's Office of International Programs' organizational, health and safety protocols.

The goal of the EA-IRES program is to give qualified undergraduate students an opportunity to build their experience and qualifications for conducting independent research. The program is geared toward students who would like to enter into scientific and research-oriented careers or to apply to graduate school once they have completed their undergraduate degrees.

Fellows will register for the SUPER program ([Skills for Undergraduate Participation in Ecological Research](#) ESS 220 - 1 credit) and a drylands seminar course (ESS 495 – 1 credit) in Fall 2016. In Spring 2017 they will register for the second semester of SUPER (ESS 221 – 1 credit) and mentored research proposal development (ESS 298 – 1 credit). In Summer 2017 students will register for at least one credit *and optionally up to 5 credits* for their field research experience in Africa (ESS 495). **ALL EA-IRES program courses are mandatory.** Together, the courses provide opportunity to engage in research, and to prepare a research proposal on a topic of social-ecological interest to be investigated in Africa.

The program in Africa will build directly on the fall and spring semesters and will take place in field locations with the assistance of three faculty partners/mentors from UoN. Students will travel as a group, and collaborative work will be encouraged. In addition, the EA-IRES program leads are working to fund up to five UoN students to join the program in Africa in Summer 2017.

Throughout the EA-IRES program, fellows will attend occasional mandatory meetings and possible weekend field trip(s) to build background knowledge and preparation for travel to Africa. It is a rigorous program of preparation that entails writing, repeatedly revising, and carrying out a fully-developed and professional research proposal and plan to meet the high standards (and timelines) of CSU and Kenya's National Commission on Science and Technology. All fellows will be formally trained in working with human subjects. Throughout the program, fellows will be expected to meet strict programmatic deadlines for writing and training and to communicate openly with the program leads. The ultimate goal

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of this program is to give students a one-of-a-kind, transformational research experience that builds professional skills in preparation for future research and graduate school.

Students will be expected to participate actively with their cohort throughout the program; complete all program academic, writing, training, permitting and research requirements in a timely manner; and follow all health and safety protocols for travel in Africa. Following the conclusion of the field experience in Africa, Students will also be expected to: 1) create a comprehensive database of their research data for archive at CSU; 2) conduct analyses to test their research hypotheses; 3) write a professional-level contribution to a research report to be returned to stakeholders and submitted to NSF; and 4) create and present a poster on their work in Fall 2017. ***Participation in the program is contingent on following University and program protocols and meeting program deadlines.*** Optional research or independent study credits may be taken in Fall 2017 if a fellow wishes to continue work in the program to write a manuscript, prepare an oral presentation of results, or conduct more extensive analyses of data.

To be eligible for consideration, applicants must demonstrate that they are: 1) US Citizens or permanent residents, 2) current students entering their sophomore or junior year at Colorado State University, and 3) in good academic standing. Completed application packages are welcome from students studying in any discipline with preference given to students in the Warner College of Natural Resources, the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Agriculture, and the College of Veterinary and Biomedical Science. **Students must demonstrate in their application package that the EA-IRES program and its focus on drylands and social-ecological systems is relevant to and will enhance their studies.**

CSU student applicants need not submit current transcripts since CSU program leads have access to student academic records. **Transfer student applicants joining CSU in Fall 2016 must include a copy of their current transcript(s) from previous colleges or universities attended.**

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STUDENT INFORMATION

First Name _____ Last Name _____

CSUID# _____ Current CSU GPA (*minimum 3.25, to be verified*) _____

CSU Department and Major: _____

Current Class Standing: _____ CSU Sophomore _____ CSU Junior

Ethnicity (check all that apply) _____ African American _____ Caucasian/White

_____ Asian American _____ Hispanic/Latino/a

_____ Native American, Tribe Name _____

Applicant Essays – Two Essays Required

Two essays, each of 400-500 words (approximately 1 single-spaced page per essay) should be submitted with your application package. Include a cover sheet with your full name, CSUID#, the name of your undergraduate advisor, current phone number, and email. Each essay should also have a title:

Essay #1 - Describe your preparation and career goals as they relate to science and research and your choice to pursue the EA-IRES: East African International Research Experience for Students to focus on social-ecological systems and drylands. Please include information on prior research and cultural experience(s) (more is not necessarily better), problem-solving abilities, and leadership. Given the rigorous and thorough research proposal-development process in this program, also discuss your reliability as a student under tight deadlines, your experience working through many revisions, and your personal drive.

Essay #2 - Discuss your thoughts and goals of traveling to Africa to learn from CSU and University of Nairobi faculty, as well as from local people who live in the communities in which we will be staying.

Résumé

A résumé of no more than two pages should be submitted, detailing your education, work experience, volunteer work, and other experiences relevant to your participation in EA-IRES.

Letters of Recommendation

Professional Recommendations – Submit one (1) letter (sophomores) or two (2) letters (juniors) from current CSU faculty, scientists or counselors on your academic background, interest in dryland social-ecological systems and/or African development, choice to pursue research in Africa, and your responsibility as a student (timeliness, reliability, communication, initiative, creativity, etc.). Recommenders should share their knowledge of your career goals, their impressions of your preparedness/suitability for this rigorous program and travel to Africa.

Personal Recommendation – Submit one (1) letter from a current or former employer (non-CSU), family member, teacher, mentor or individual who can speak to your suitability for this program.

Note: Each Letter of Recommendation must be submitted directly from the recommender by email (Subject line: EA-IRES [YOUR NAME] Recommendation) OR sealed in separate envelope and sent via mail, and **MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5pm FRIDAY, 7/1/2016.**

Transcripts

Unofficial transcripts are required only for students who are transferring to CSU in Fall 2016.

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APPLICATION PACKAGE CHECKLIST – ALL MATERIALS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE DEADLINE!

Note: Digital applications are preferred but not required. A single PDF file including this Fellowship Application, essays, résumé and transcripts (if necessary) may be sent by email - label files clearly with your name & EA-IRES.

- _____ Completed, signed and scanned EA-IRES Fellowship Application (pages 3 & 4 of this document)
- _____ Two Applicant Essays
- _____ Resume
- _____ Unofficial Transcripts (for recent transfer students only)
- _____ One sealed Letter of Professional Recommendation for sophomores, two letters for juniors
- _____ One sealed Letter of Personal Recommendation
- _____ Submit or have on file a FAFSA listing CSU-Fort Collins for 2016-2017 <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>
- _____ Current U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident
- _____ Current CSU student with sophomore or junior class standing at the beginning of Fall 2016

SELECTION CRITERIA

Fellows will be selected based on their academic qualifications and suitability for the program, as determined from their essays, letters of recommendation, and other application materials. **Finalists may be requested to conduct a phone or in-person interview during the review week July 25 – August 3.**

We encourage applications from members of groups underrepresented in scientific fields and from those seeking culturally immersive experiences in the sciences. Selection criteria include:

- ✓ Benefit of the program for students given their skills and career goals
- ✓ Research/science background and prior cultural experiences/placements
- ✓ Ability to complete the 5-week field experience in Africa
- ✓ Evidence of independent, creative thinking and problem-solving
- ✓ Academic success, intellectual and personal leadership, communication skills, and enthusiasm
- ✓ Life skills, resourcefulness, reliability, timeliness, emotional maturity and self-driven nature

CERTIFICATION OF EA-IRES PROGRAM PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

I certify that all information for the EA-IRES Fellowship Application is correct and complete, and if found to be otherwise I will be removed from consideration. Further, if accepted as an EA-IRES Fellow, I understand that I will be required to:

- ✓ Complete all required Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 courses and proposal activities on schedule;
- ✓ Attend cohort meetings, and all pre-trip health and safety meetings, in Fall 2016 and Spring 2017;
- ✓ Meet all travel requirements, including but not necessarily limited to: health insurance, immunizations, completion of Institutional Review Board requirements, registration with Study Abroad, and a passport valid through January 2018 (per Kenyan requirements);
- ✓ Travel to East Africa for five (5) weeks in Summer 2017 (location and dates TBD);
- ✓ Be culturally sensitive and thoughtful in behavior and dress while in Africa; and
- ✓ Present my work in the form of a stakeholder report and a poster presentation at CSU in Fall 2017

Signature: _____ Date: _____

COMPLETE APPLICATION PACKAGE MUST BE RECEIVED BY JULY 1, 2016
PLEASE EMAIL, SEND OR HAND-DELIVER TO:

EA-IRES Program
B-205 Natural and Environmental Sciences Building
Natural Resource Ecology Lab
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1499

by fax: 970-491-1965, or by Email: WCNR_ESS_info@Mail.ColoState.EDU