

Dear Prospective Mentor,

Thank you for your interest in the Hudson River Foundation's Polgar Fellowship Program and especially for considering taking on the role of a mentor. This program has been an integral part of the Foundation's grant giving activities for over 30 years, giving undergraduates and graduate students from colleges and universities throughout the region the opportunity to study the Hudson River. For some, this was their initial exposure to a genuine research experience, one that has played a role in shaping their education moving forward. Many have gone on to successful careers in research, policy, and management.

We have been thinking deeply about all of our student programs. Regarding the Polgar, we have considered how we can build on the exceptional legacy of the Fellowship to increase its impact and meet the needs of new communities of students moving forward. Our continuing goal is to provide students with research opportunities directed to understanding the Hudson River and the people that depend on it. Each Fellowship should inspire critical thought, broaden awareness of how science in its many forms is conducted, and build confidence that a science-focused career is a valuable and viable choice — especially for students who have not traditionally seen themselves pursuing that outcome.

This year we are making some important changes to the Polgar Fellowship. These include:

- Focusing specifically on undergraduate students, in particular prioritizing rising juniors and seniors, with exceptions made for students who show special promise after their freshman year;
- Encouraging BIPOC students as well as first generation science (including natural and social sciences and public policy) undergraduates to apply; no prior research experience is required;
- Welcoming projects that facilitate interactions with research mentors who come from communities that are historically underrepresented in the environmental sciences.

The Foundation has long recognized that a mentor often plays the essential role in building the confidence and skills that help students choose an education and career path. In the best sense, mentors are both guides and role models. For many of you, mentoring is integral to your academic work and is as rewarding for you as it is for the students with whom you work. We are committed to fostering that strong mentoring relationship as part of the Polgar Program. Please consider the following as you work with a student in the application process:

- Can you devote enough time this summer to fully support the intellectual development and skill building that is needed in an undergraduate research project?
- Are you able to develop a consistent approach for communication and planning that fully engages the student in the research activity and provides you both with opportunities for feedback, project modification, and analysis?
- Will your research group be able to accommodate a new researcher, and will they be fully involved in the activities that occur?

- Can you commit to assisting the student in the preparation of the final project report in early Fall, including relevant analysis, writing, editing, and formatting?

We hope that your initial reaction to these questions are all positive. This year we are asking all prospective mentors to complete [a short survey](#) and strongly encourage you to contact the Foundation prior to the submission of an application to discuss our goals for the Fellowship and our vision of a mentor's responsibilities.

We look forward to speaking with you and to working with you to advance deserving students through this year's Polgar Fellowship Program

Sincerely,



Jonathan G. Kramer, Ph.D.  
Executive Director



Helena Andreyko  
Administrator