Geoscience NSF Graduate Fellowships Quadrupled in 2009

The NSF Graduate Fellowship program conferred an average of 927 graduate fellowships per year between 2000 and 2008, the majority (56-59%) of which were awarded to graduate students in the life sciences and engineering fields. During this period, approximately 3.5 percent of NSF graduate fellowships were awarded to geoscience students (~31 fellowships per year).

In 2009, there was a 37% increase from the previous year in the total number of graduate fellowships awarded, and the percentage of fellowships awarded to graduate students in the life sciences and engineering disciplines dropped to 50 percent as other disciplines were awarded a higher proportion of fellowships. The percentage of fellowships awarded to graduate students in the geosciences nearly quadrupled between 2008 and 2009 (from 26 to 94), and in 2009 geoscience graduate fellowships comprised 8 percent of the total number of NSF graduate fellowship awards. With the large increase in the number of fellowships awarded in 2009, the total value of the NSF graduate fellowships awarded to geoscience students jumped from just over $1 million dollars in 2008 to $3.8 million dollars in 2009.

The top seven fields of study for NSF graduate fellowships awarded to geoscience students in 2009 (e.g. Geology, Geophysics, Paleoclimate, Chemical Oceanography, Paleontology, Geochemistry, and Hydrological Sciences) accounted for 72 percent of all NSF geoscience graduate fellowships awards.


- Leila Gonzales