

Mon, Sep 10, 2018

BENNINGTON COLLEGE

TO: Faculty and Administrative Staff

FR: Isabel Roche, Provost and Dean of the College

Faith McClellan, Director of Field Work Term and Career Development

Heather Clifford, Director of Financial Aid

We are writing to let you know of some important news about Field Work Term, including **new Field Work Term options** and **changes to grant funding** for the upcoming year.

Expanded Options

In an effort to provide a broader array of options for Field Work Term, we have taken some important steps to expand opportunities. These include: more **paid positions** in Handshake, **fully paid fellowships**, and **new options** to fulfill the FWT requirement. In summary, here are the expanded options available. Students can:

- Apply for a [winter FWT position](#) on Handshake; over 20% of jobs offer financial compensation or free housing.
- Apply for a summer deferral for FWT; over half of [summer internships](#) are fully paid. To be approved for summer deferral, students need to demonstrate that a specific summer opportunity best meets their financial, academic, or professional goals. [See details on the summer deferral application.](#)
- Work remotely over FWT, cutting housing costs. [Remote internships](#) must demonstrate clear structures for off-site supervision and have FWT office approval.
- Apply for a specialized [fellowship](#), such as the Lucille Lortel Fellowship in Theatre, Newman Public Action Fellowship, Iftekhar Entrepreneurial Fellowship, and Arts and Technology Fellowship.
- Work at a [qualifying campus job](#) to count for FWT. In this coming year, over 20 paid campus jobs during the fall and spring terms will be eligible to count for FWT (for hours worked during term time).
- Conduct a field work [independent study](#). As in years past, this work is typically limited to juniors/seniors and requires faculty sponsorship. Independent study work can be accomplished remotely, reducing costs.
- Participate in a non-credit [professional training](#) program. Many professional certification and apprenticeship programs offer outside scholarships.

As always, students are welcome to find a FWT position on their own. More information on all of the above options can be found [here](#).

Field Work Term Funding

In addition to expanding opportunities to allow students to self-direct their field work experiences, we are doing so with awareness that financing Field Work Term can be a challenge. As you may know, the amount that the College is able to provide to students for Field Work Term grants varies each year according to funding from private sources and available College funds. We know that students need early information on how much they can anticipate in grant funds, and also to have an easy, efficient process for obtaining that funding.

For the coming cycle, we will provide an automatic \$500 FWT stipend to highest need students once they register for unpaid FWT site work in Handshake. Students will be advised promptly by email whether they fall into this “highest need” category. Students working fully paid positions, or who receive fellowships or other

funding, will not be eligible for this stipend.

Students who are not in the highest need category but still have high need will be invited to *apply* for modest, need-based FWT grants (up to \$500) via a simple grant application due November 19 (following their registration of an unpaid internship by November 9). Students should be aware that a smaller number of grants will be awarded than in the past and award sizes may be limited.

Summary

Overall, the substantially increased flexibility offered this year via summer, campus work, and fellowship options for FWT will provide quality, fully-paid learning opportunities which were not available before. FWT stipends continue to be modest due to funding limitations, but the new process will be easier, more efficient, and more equitable. Taken together, we feel that these changes will serve our campus well.

Students with questions about these changes are encouraged to [book an appointment](#) with a FWT career advisor on Handshake or email fwt@bennington.edu. If students have broader questions about financing their Bennington education, they can email financialaid@bennington.edu.

Many of these changes are in response to feedback from students about their needs and challenges as related to Field Work Term. Knowing that it will take some time for us all to understand how these changes will work for our campus, we will be reaching out at the end of the 2019 Field Work Term cycle with a survey to help us understand how the outlined changes have impacted the student experience.