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# APHIS NBAF Scientist Training Program

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First student cohort at the program's kick-off event at Plum Island Animal Disease Center, Fall 2018

APHIS established this graduate training program to develop the next generation of scientists to support the Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory's (FADDL)

current and expanded mission objectives at the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF).

#### Background

FADDL is a national reference laboratory for APHIS Veterinary Services and the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), and an international reference laboratory for the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). FADDL is currently located at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC), the only U.S. location approved for handling high-consequence foreign animal diseases (FAD), including foot-and-mouth disease and rinderpest viruses. The majority of the U.S. FAD diagnostic expertise for livestock diseases resides at PIADC-FADDL, within approximately 20 scientists that include microbiologists, veterinarians, and veterinary scientists (DVM/PhD). It is likely that most of FADDL's subject matter experts (SMEs) will not relocate to the new National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) in Kansas, creating an FAD SME gap throughout the transition process and during stand-up of FADDL at NBAF. Furthermore, the FADDL mission will expand at NBAF to include zoonotic and emerging diseases, with a new emphasis on biosafety level (BSL)-4 pathogens. SMEs knowledgeable in these agents and with expertise in working in BSL-4 laboratories will be critical to develop BSL-4 programs at NBAF.

To minimize the anticipated SME gap and identify highly qualified candidates to fill key roles in the new NBAF facility, APHIS has developed a graduate training program, the APHIS NBAF Scientist Training Program (NSTP). Applicants for the program must be enrolled in a graduate level (MS, PhD, or DVM/PhD) program at a partner university and in a laboratory-based field of study, including microbiology, virology, molecular biology, diagnostics, and bioinformatics. APHIS will work with partner universities and laboratories to ensure the fellows' research projects address specific FADs and capability needs. Once accepted into the NSTP, the fellows will receive funding to cover tuition and fees, stipend, health benefits, materials and supplies, travel, and publication costs, for a period not to exceed 5 years. Upon successful completion of the programs, each fellow will be offered a full-time Federal position and required to fulfill a service commitment at NBAF, PIADC-FADDL, or both, depending on agency needs and timing of degree completion.

**Program Outline** 

## **Degree-Granting Programs Covered**

MS, PhD, and DVM/PhD

## Support Provided for Each Fellow

Tuition and fees, stipend, health benefits, materials and supplies, travel, and publication costs

## **Maximum Period of Support**

3 years (MS), 4 years (PhD), or 5 years (DVM/PhD)

## Expectations

In addition to specific degree requirements, fellows will maintain a minimum 3.25 GPA and support NBAF SOP development and transition related activities where appropriate.

# Eligibility

Individuals enrolled in covered degree program at selected universities, including but not limited to: Kansas State University, Iowa State University, Mississippi State University, Auburn University, North Carolina State University, University of Wisconsin, Tufts University, University of Texas Medical Branch, Louisiana State University, Colorado State University, and the University of Georgia. Students at academic institutions that offer education and experience in agriculture and microbiology related sciences are encouraged to apply.

## **Application Process**

Applications are submitted through the office of the dean or department head of the university. A separate NSTP application, including current CV and letter of intent letters of reference, is required following acceptance into an approved graduate degree program.

## **Federal Position**

At completion, fellows offered Federal positions in area of expertise and target grade

## Service Commitment

Based on the number of years of funding received, fellows will be required to fulfill a tiered service commitment following completion of the program. Four years of service at target position for 2 years of funding, 5 years for 3 years, 6 years for 4 years, and 7 years for 5 years. Failure to complete service commitment will require fellow to repay funding to the NSTP.

### **Application Procedure**

NSTP will accept applications twice annually. For the Fall 2022 enrollment, applications were due June 15.

For interested students: The application process is coordinated through your university. The university will provide application packets and additional information regarding timelines, point of contact and process for submission through your university. **Note:** NSTP will not accept applications directly from applicants.

For universities: Contact NSTP directly to obtain application packets and detailed instructions on the submission process.

Complete application packets include the NSTP application form, current resume/CV, letter of interest, and three letters of recommendation. Application packets are to be submitted though the university point of contact along with the evaluation rubric.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns regarding the application process by sending an email to <a href="mailto:nstp@usda.gov">nstp@usda.gov</a>.

- Alexa Bracht, NSTP Coordinator
- Dr. Jamie Barnabei, NSTP Program Manager

**Program Contacts** 

Contacts for all NSTP-related questions:

Alexa Bracht Program Coordinator Email: alexa.j.bracht@usda.gov

# Jamie Barnabei, DVM, MPH

Program Manager Email: jamie.l.barnabei@usda.gov

#### Press

- 1st Annual NSTP Symposium
- <u>NBAF UPDATE: Developing NBAF's Diagnostic Workforce of Tomorrow</u>
- <u>Future Defenders: NBAF Scientist Training Program Supports Student</u> Development and Biodefense Workforce
- Kortum's Dream Career in Infectious Disease Becomes Reality
- Auburn Veterinary Student Selected for USDA-APHIS Scientist Training Program
- <u>Elite National Training Program Leads Veterinary Medicine Graduate</u> <u>Researchers into Biodefense Workforce</u>
- #IAmScience: Kaitlyn Waters

Photo Gallery















Show Info

USDA National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) entrance sign

NSTP participants tour the NBAF facility.

No information

First NSTP cohort at the kick-off event at Plum Island Animal Disease Center, Fall 2018

Aerial view of Plum Island

Symposium held at NBAF

NBAF at sunset









