UNITE PREDOCTORAL RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM
CALL FOR APPLICATIONS
Release Date: **02/01/2024**
Application Deadline: **03/15/2024**

Purpose
The UNITE Research Priority Area (RPA), in collaboration with the Office of the Vice President for Research strives to increase the pipeline of scholars underrepresented in research academic disciplines. To this end, the **UNITE Predoctoral Research Enhancement Program** (UNITE Predoctoral Fellows) mechanism seeks to implement evidence-based strategies to enhance research training for underrepresented scholars. Consistent with the mission of UNITE, the goal is to enhance the pipeline of candidates qualified to become academic leaders in their field. For more information on the UNITE RPA, see https://www.research.uky.edu/unite-research-priority-area.

The **UNITE Predoctoral Research Enhancement Program** is designed to engage and support underrepresented scholars in PhD programs and enhance belongingness at the University of Kentucky by maximizing their exposure to training and professional development important to establishing careers in research and academia. The UNITE Predoctoral Research Enhancement Program will provide a **$10,000 stipend over nine (9) months** to selected PhD students. In the 2024 cycle, UNITE expects to fund **no more than fifteen (15) scholars**. As a UNITE Predoctoral Fellow, this stipend will be in addition to existing or expected funding from the Graduate School, college, or department. UNITE will also provide each fellow with **$1,000 annually to support research related expenses** such as: research travel (e.g., presenting first-author research at an association-based research conference), research equipment needs (e.g., software), or participant payments for pilot studies.

Support from UNITE may be renewable for up to one (1) year depending on the availability of funding and research progress of the recipient. The maximum period of support is a total of two (2) years. This is a competitive application process and funds are limited. Colleges and departments are encouraged to support this program with additional contributions (e.g., lab space, student travel, or research support). Applicants that are **not funded** as research assistants on research grants or contracts will be prioritized for this mechanism.

Eligibility
The UNITE Predoctoral Research Enhancement is limited to new and existing Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) students seeking careers in the academy after degree completion. **To be eligible for this funding mechanism, applicants must be fully funded through a support package that includes tuition**. Examples include, but are not limited to, the Lyman T. Johnson Diversity Fellowship and McNair Fellowship program. The UNITE Predoctoral Research Enhancement applications must be submitted through the following link: https://uky.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9yQbLanvd7GWr0W

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Applications must include the following information:
- Letter of commitment from a UK faculty research mentor that includes an endorsement of the candidate, acknowledgment of the candidate's commitment to an academic career, and a commitment to mentor the candidate in research and ensure the fellow participates in the career development activities associated with this program
- Curriculum Vitae
- Personal statement that details the fellow's experiences as an underrepresented graduate student in their field and how participation in the program may enhance their belongingness at the University of Kentucky, their individual programs, and academic community (150 words or less)
- Research goals statement (150 words or less) that addresses the fellow's research plans and career aspirations in the academy upon completing the PhD program
- Copy of undergraduate and graduate (if applicable) transcripts (unofficial copies permitted)

Program Requirements
- Completion of annual individual development plan and an annual progress report with faculty mentor including a description of research plans and progress toward research plans
- Signed mentoring compact between faculty mentor and fellow
- Mandatory attendance at the predoctoral retreat, monthly UNITE research member engagement meetings, and UNITE-sponsored events
- Awardees must be willing to present findings upon request from the UNITE RPA and be responsive to ongoing contact for the purpose of assessing progress and outcomes from the award

Please address specific application questions to Leah Holton (Leah.Holton@uky.edu).

*Note: This is a pilot program and continuation of this mechanism is contingent on a program evaluation, dedicated funding, and overall impact.