



DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

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Interdepartmental Correspondence

Date: July 2, 2019

To: Graduate Students in BSCI Laboratories

From: Heather Caldwell, Graduate Coordinator

Subject: BSCI Travel Funds for 2019-2020

For the 2019-2020 fiscal year (July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020) the Department of Biological Sciences (BSCI) will continue to offer travel funds, once a year, to PhD and MS students working in BSCI laboratories who are *presenting their work at a scientific conference* (domestic or international). It is expected that you will apply for funding from Graduate Student Senate (GSS) first. After that, the Department will pay a maximum of \$800 for your remaining expenses. Please note that this represents a reduction in travel support compared to previous years.

Please note the following contingencies on access to these funds:

- It is our expectation that you will do all that you can to keep your expenses as low as possible. This means flying at less favorable times, with connections, and having multiple roommates, or walking rather than taking taxis.

- Car rentals must be pre-approved and the justification for the request provided on your Request for Travel Funds form; essentially, if you are not in a rural setting or transporting a large number of people car rentals will not be approved.
- All food expenses must be justified. You will need to submit an envelope with your food receipts.
- Any and all housing receipts must include your name on them (this is non-negotiable).
- Submission of incomplete or incorrect paperwork may result in your request for support being denied.

Please keep in mind that it is seldom the case that travel is “free”. Thus, unusual expenses will not be reimbursed. For instance, if you attend a conference that provides food, but you do not care for the options then any food purchases will be at your expense. Likewise, any personal items that you purchase while you are traveling will not be paid for by the Department.

Please remember, these travel funds are a perk of being a graduate student in a BSCI laboratory. As such, it is important that you follow the instructions outlined below.

**Faculty members with travel funds for students budgeted on extramural awards should use such funds prior to requesting funds from the Department.*

The following steps will ensure reimbursement through Graduate Student Senate for your conference presentation and BSCI Travel Funds:

PRIOR TO TRAVELING

It is **REQUIRED** that funding be requested from Graduate Student Senate first. Requests for funding from Graduate Student Senate must be submitted before the start of each semester, the deadlines can be found at <http://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/gss-awards>. Failure to apply for GSS without a justification may result in a \$300 reduction in the amount that will be reimbursed by the department

a. GSS Money

i. For domestic travel (DTA), GSS has been awarding \$500 (this number is however, known to change), which will be deposited directly into your Bursar account. <http://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/gss-domestic-travel>.

ii. For international travel (ITA) a maximum reimbursement of \$1,500 may be approved.

<http://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/gss-international-travel>

iii. Students may receive up to one DTA per semester and one ITA per calendar year.

2. Complete the attached [Request for BSCI Travel Funds](#) request form- obtain your advisor's signature and *submit the form to the graduate office*- signatures from the Graduate Coordinator and Chair will be obtained. **This form needs to be turned in after you submit your form to GSS and a minimum of two weeks prior to your planned travel.** If your projected expenses seem high you will be asked to provide a written justification for the cost. If you are requesting a rental car, you will need to provide a justification on the form.

***Students that submit forms too late for the Graduate Coordinator and Chair to sign prior to travel, or forms which are submitted after travel, will not receive a BSCI Travel Funds. ***

3. As the conference approaches, submit the [Absence Authorization form](#). This form is attached to this email or can be found in the office, or on the BSCI website, and confirms that arrangements have been made if you will be absent from your lab teaching assignment and also provides contact information if you need to be reached. Turn this form in to the graduate office.

AFTER YOU HAVE RETURNED FROM TRAVELING

4. The final step **must be completed within 14 days after your travel has concluded**. A **GSS Funding Form**, an official award letter, and proof of attendance to the conference (a copy of the front page of the program and the page your abstract is printed on, for example) must be submitted to GSS- details are available on the website indicated above.

For your Departmental reimbursement you will need an **Expense Statement** (Example attached-can be found in the forms library under “Faculty Forms”), your original receipts (including food receipts), proof of attendance, as well as a copy of the confirmation email from either the Domestic Travel Committee or the International Travel Committee. After completing the forms and attaching all receipts, have your advisor and the graduate coordinator sign your expense statement and then submit the package to the Department’s Business Manager, Robin Wise; she will make the check request. If this form is not submitted within 14 days the Department will not reimburse your travel expenses.

**For any expenses that are shared, the individual requesting a reimbursement will need to provide proof of their contribution- this is best achieved by their credit card being charged their % and this being indicated on the submitted receipt.

**Students are permitted to use per diem rates (<https://www.kent.edu/bas/forms-guidelines-policies-and-procedures>) for food purchases- though, you must also submit your food receipts so your requested amounts can be verified.

TRAVEL CHECKLIST:

□	Timeline	Task
	At the start of the semester	Request funding from GSS- go to their website to verify the dates.
	Several weeks prior to your travel and preferably after you have submitted your request for GSS funding	Fill out the "Request for BSCI Funds" form that details your expected cost and turn it in to the graduate office after your advisor has signed.
	At least one week prior to travel	Fill out an "Absence Authorization" form, have your advisor sign it, and turn it into the graduate office.
	Within 14 days of your return	<p>Submit your "GSS Funding form" form with the required materials to GSS.</p> <p>For the Department, fill out an Expense Statement, sign it, and have your <u>advisor</u> sign it as well as the <u>graduate coordinator</u>. You then need to turn in this form along with your receipts (including food), proof of attendance, and confirmation of GSS funding to the <u>BSCI Business Manager</u> for the check request to be made.</p>

cc: BSCI Graduate Faculty