GUIDELINES
LAFFAN RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS 2017
CLOSING DATE: 8 May 2016

Background
The University of Sydney Laffan Fellowship is named in memory of Mr Matt Laffan a well known lawyer and disability activist who passed away in March 2009 aged 38. Matt was born with a rare genetic disease that caused significant physical disabilities and he used a wheelchair from 10 years of age when an operation rendered him paraplegic. Mr Laffan moved into St John’s College and studied Arts and Laws degrees at Sydney University, graduating in 1994. Mr Laffan pursued a career in law, and appeared in court for the New South Wales Director of Public Prosecutions, was a board member of the Disability Council of NSW and a member of the state’s rugby Disciplinary Tribunal. An inspiring motivational speaker, a tireless disability activist, and a devoted supporter of the Australian Rugby Union, Mr Laffan treasured life.

The aim of the Laffan Fellowships is to assist university researchers who have a significant disability, or have experienced a significant disability. These fellowships provide academic staff with up to two semesters of relief from routine teaching and administrative responsibilities, and research only staff with funding to hire technical assistance for up to two semesters, to allow them to focus on their research while re-establishing or enhancing their academic research careers.

Eligibility

• be living with a disability (see “Definition of Disability” below), or have experienced a significant period of time when they were living with a disability, to the extent that it adversely and substantially affected their research productivity;
• be academic or research only staff employed either within a faculty of the University or within an entity which is affiliated with the University (including but not limited to medical research institutes) and which has contributed to the funding of the DVCR programs through payment of the DVCR levy, and have an on-going appointment with a termination date after the end of the proposed fellowship;
• have completed a PhD or equivalent qualification or experience in their field at least one year prior to application; and
• be Australian citizens or permanent residents.

Fellowships may be hosted by any of the University’s faculties, schools or departments. Equity Fellows are not campus-bound during their fellowship, except to the extent required to participate in the dedicated support and feedback activities scheduled for fellows, and to fulfill commitments to duties agreed in writing with the Head of School (or equivalent), and may travel and work on or off-campus.

Prospective applicants must discuss their application with their Head of School or equivalent, and with (if different) the designate “host” Head of School or equivalent. Applications will only be considered where there is clear evidence of strong support from the Head of School or equivalent.

Please note that Special Studies Program (SSP) leave cannot be taken concurrently with a Laffan fellowship.

Selection Criteria

• the track record of the applicant, relative to opportunity;
• the demonstrable character and/or extent of the disability, in the context of the objectives of this fellowship program (see “confidential applications” below);
• the likelihood that the Fellowship would enable the applicant to enhance their career and improve their research track record in order to more confidently progress their academic employment, particularly at higher levels;
• the level of support for the application from the Head of School or equivalent;
• the applicant’s account of how the Fellowship will facilitate their contribution to the academic life of the host department, the faculty and their research field/area.

Period of Fellowship

The Laffan Fellows are expected to commence their fellowships at the beginning of Semester 1 of the year of candidature. In exceptional cases the panel may approve a variation to a fellow’s starting date. Requests
for variations, giving the starting date and the reasons for the variation, should be provided with the
application for consideration by the panel.

Funding:
The Laffan Fellowships provides up to $60,000, at up to $30,000 per semester ($25,000 in teaching
relief/technical assistance and $5,000 in research support). Pro rata support may be available for part-time
fellows. The exact amount of funding will depend on the extent of the teaching and administrative load being
relieved/technical assistance awarded.

Funding will be transferred by the Research Portfolio at the beginning of each semester for the duration of
the fellowship. Unless otherwise agreed, funding must be used as follows:

Academic Staff:
(i) the teaching relief component is provided to the Head of School for the purpose of hiring
    teaching relief.
(ii) the research support component is provided to the Fellow as a contribution toward costs directly
    related to the project specified in the application.

Research Only Staff
(i) the full amount is provided to the Fellow as a contribution toward costs directly related to, and for
    personnel support and other equipment that enable the Fellow to achieve the project specified in
    the application.

Responsibilities:
Laffan Fellows report to the Head of Department (or nominee). The fellows are expected to participate in the
academic life of the host department and faculty. The fellows are expected to conduct research diligently,
and to the best of their ability, in the field proposed in their application and as approved by the Fellowships
Panel.

The Laffan Fellows will participate in the University’s Academic Planning and Development (AP&D) process
and in career development, networking and other activities required by the Equity Fellowships program.

Fellows are also requested to participate in the Fellowship’s evaluation process to assist the University to
develop the Laffan Research Fellowships.

Responsibilities to other Equity Fellows:
The Research Portfolio and Equity and Diversity Strategy (EDS) intend to establish an ongoing body of past
and present Equity Fellows as a network offering advice, support and mentoring, and as a mechanism to
consolidate and build upon the advances made during the fellowship period and continue research
momentum into the future.

Equity Fellows will be encouraged to promote the network and expected to share their experience with future
cohorts of Equity Fellows, and to participate in networking and mentoring activities with past and present
fellows.

Reporting:
At the end of their term Brown Fellows are required to provide a one page final report of no more than two
pages on activities, research outcomes and achievements to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and
copied to Equity and Diversity Strategy.

Heads of School are required to provide the following reporting to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research): (i)
financial statement verifying that funding was used for teaching relief and (ii) a brief evaluative comment on
the Fellow’s final report and the benefit or otherwise of the Fellowship.

HOW TO APPLY:
Applications must be submitted through our Online Application System. Please visit sydney.edu.au/positions
and search for Laffan Fellowships. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Applicants are required to:
• Contact the Head of the School/Department ASAP to establish support for the application in this
  round. Please be aware that it is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain a signed letter of
  support, e signature is acceptable. Unsigned letters of support will not be considered.
• Complete the Online Application and attach required supporting documents. Attachments should
  be clearly typed on A4 pages with a 2cm margin on all sides in 12 point font.

Confidential Applications:
Applicants for Laffan Fellowships may select an option on the application form to indicate that the section of their application detailing personal circumstances be made available only to the Chair and the EDS member of the fellowships panel for the purpose of establishing the fellow’s eligibility for the scheme.

**Advice to applicants:**

Applicants are advised to read the document, “What makes a strong Laffan Fellowship application”, which is available on the Brown Fellowships homepage [http://sydney.edu.au/research_support/funding/sydney/laffan.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/research_support/funding/sydney/laffan.shtml)

**Further Information:**

If applicants require support in completing their application or for general advice about the fellowship program or the application process, please contact:

**For strategic advice**

Dr Maree Murray  
Director Wingara Mura Leadership Program, Indigenous Strategy and Services  
Direct phone: +61 2 9114 0818  
email: maree.murray@sydney.edu.au

**For matters relating to process and procedures:**

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Level 6, Jane Foss Russell (G02)  
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**DEFINITION OF DISABILITY**

The following definition of “disability”, originally from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, applies to eligibility for the Laffan fellowships:

**Disability**

A disability is defined as ‘one or more of 17 limitations, restrictions or impairments which have lasted or are likely to last, for a period of six months or more, and which restrict a person’s everyday activities’. They include:

- loss of sight (not corrected by glasses or contact lenses)
- loss of hearing where communication is restricted, or an aid to assist with, or substitute for, hearing is used
- speech difficulties
- chronic or recurrent pain or discomfort causing restriction
- shortness or breath or breathing difficulties causing restriction
- blackout, fits, or loss of consciousness
- difficulty learning or understanding
- incomplete use of arms or fingers
- incomplete use of feet or legs
- nervous or emotional condition causing restriction
- restriction in physical activities or in doing physical work
- disfigurement or deformity
- mental illness or condition requiring help or supervision
- long-term effects of head injury, stroke or other brain damage causing restriction
- receiving treatment or medication for any other long-term condition or ailment, and still restricted
- any other long-term condition resulting in a restriction.