



Leopold Leadership Program: Application Guidelines - Criteria

Target Audience

The Leopold Leadership Program seeks candidates from a broad range of disciplines including the biological, physical, and social sciences, and technical, medical, and engineering fields related to the environment. “Science,” “scientist,” and “scientific” in these guidelines refer to the full range of these disciplines.

The program serves academic environmental scientists working in public and private academic and research institutions of various sizes in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. It targets mid-career professionals (typically mid 30s to early 50s in age) whose contributions to environmental science outreach and communication of environmental science will be significantly enhanced by receiving a Fellowship.

The program does not accept applicants at the graduate or post-doctoral level. Individuals who work for government, NGOs, museums, and corporations are also ineligible. Academic scientists with fewer than five years of experience since earning a Ph.D. and more than a year until tenure review are encouraged to apply in the future, although applications from exceptional early career candidates may be considered.

Criteria

Candidates are reviewed on a range of criteria with an emphasis on scientific record, credibility, and judgment and the ability to take a leadership role in environmental outreach and knowledge transfer. Applicants must show, based on their activities to date, ability and promise in actively applying and communicating their expertise for the benefit of the environment and society.

Fellowships are awarded primarily to individuals in the middle stage of their career. Applicants from a wide range of disciplines are encouraged. All must demonstrate:

- an academic position (either tenured or tenure track);
- an active role in research and teaching in an area of environmental science at a Canadian, Mexican, or U.S.-based higher education or research institution;
- a reputation for outstanding science;
- evidence of interest in making direct connections between scientific knowledge and environmental issues;
- interest, willingness, and an appropriate professional position to synthesize, interpret, and communicate the results of their work to peers, policy makers, the media, and the general public;
- passion and capacity to exercise leadership in the environmental science arena and enthusiasm to advocate the importance of science for improved environmental policies and practices;
- commitment to participate in the entire two weeks of training and contribute to the program as well as take advantage of its benefits;
- intent to share what is learned in the training program with students and colleagues and other stakeholders through courses, workshops, and broader outreach efforts; and
- ability and desire to remain an active member of the Leopold Leadership Network after the conclusion of the Fellowship year.

Applications are initially reviewed, scored, and ranked by members of the Leopold Leadership Program Selection Jury to establish a pool of no more than 40 finalists. Fellows are reviewed and selected based on the three criteria detailed below.

Scientific record, relevance, and potential

Candidates should be outstanding scientists who are generating new knowledge that is relevant in their field and has the potential for national and/or international influence in the realms of the environment and sustainability. Participation in



interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral activities is a positive attribute. The Selection Jury takes into account the candidate's discipline and career stage and the relationship of these factors to both his or her professional experience and the mix of disciplines that will enhance the Leopold Leadership Network most significantly.

It should be noted that the program is intended to serve researchers who focus on the scientific and technological challenges related to environmental challenges, rather than those who study the modes and methods of communication of those issues.

Scientific credibility, judgment, and leadership

The program seeks candidates who convey integrity in communicating about science and are (or will be) strong, respected public representatives of science. They should have a reputation for excellent science, good judgment, and credibility in their field.

Communication, outreach, and linking knowledge to action

As noted above, the ultimate goal of the Leopold Leadership Program is to create a community of engaged scientific academic leaders to inform decision makers addressing society's most pressing environmental challenges. Successful candidates are outstanding scientists who show evidence of, or strong potential for, leadership in addressing environmental challenges in roles beyond those traditionally associated with an academic career. Such roles may be found inside or outside the academy. General guidelines to consider include the following:

External outreach. An important component of the scientific leadership envisioned by the program is outreach to external audiences. The program seeks candidates who are engaging, or have significant capacity to engage, in ways beyond those generally available within academe and want to collaborate with NGOs, connect with decision makers and the media, and communicate with the general public. Factors for consideration include interest in and commitment to addressing environmental and sustainability issues actively; outreach to broader audiences (or a strong indication of the potential and willingness to conduct such outreach); and involvement in an appropriate capacity with nonacademic stakeholders, such as scientific and technical advisory work with planning commissions, citizens' groups, and NGOs.

Another key component of scientific leadership is a candidate's approach to activities in the academic setting, including outreach, research, and the pursuit of traditional leadership roles. General guidance for each category is as follows.

Outreach. A major goal of the Leopold Leadership Program is to help spur a shift in academic culture by encouraging more and improved communication between scientists and nonscientists. Toward this end, it is crucial that Fellows be able to transfer the skills and knowledge learned in the training to peers and students and have an interest in doing so.

Research. Attention should be given to how a candidate interacts (or has the potential to interact) beyond disciplinary boundaries. Indicators might include initiative and innovation in teaching and research; coordination of interdisciplinary collaborations; and the degree to which the candidate communicates with audiences outside his or her disciplinary peer group.

Academic leadership roles. Factors for consideration include whether candidates have been named as PIs or co-PIs on grants, where and how often they publish, and whether they have been appointed to advisory bodies and editorial boards.

Candidates should have an underlying capacity as leaders and communicators: the purpose of the training is to accelerate this capacity, not to provide basic skills. The Selection Jury weighs a candidate's potential to use the training and share the skills he or she learns with new audiences in teaching, outreach, and other professional activities both internally and externally.