

**METCALF INSTITUTE FOR MARINE AND ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING**  
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**Metcalf Institute Environmental Reporting Fellowships  
2009-2010 Program Information**

The Metcalf Institute Environmental Reporting Fellowships program is a ten-month fellowship for traditionally under-represented racial and ethnic minority journalists. From 2006 through 2009, Metcalf Institute has provided, annually, five or six minority Fellows with a one-month independent study in marine and environmental sciences at the University of Rhode Island (URI) and a nine-month environmental reporting assignment. Metcalf Institute will support two Environmental Reporting Fellows for the 2009-2010 class, including a \$30,000 (less taxes) stipend.

Metcalf Institute awards the fellowships following a competitive selection process and arranges appropriate placements for Fellows with specific news media outlets for the reporting portion of the fellowship. Eligible journalists are required to have no less than one year of journalism experience, U.S. citizenship, must self-identify as traditionally under-represented racial or ethnic minorities, and must have a demonstrated interest in and need to improve their environmental and science reporting skills. More information about the program, the Fellows and an application can be found at [www.metcalfinstitute.org/fellowships/diversity.htm](http://www.metcalfinstitute.org/fellowships/diversity.htm).

The Environmental Reporting Fellowships are funded primarily by a grant from the Geosciences Division of the National Science Foundation. A news release about the grant award can be found at [www.metcalfinstitute.org/news/091205\\_news.htm](http://www.metcalfinstitute.org/news/091205_news.htm). Additional support comes from The Providence Journal Charitable Foundation. The 2008-2009 Environmental Reporting Fellows attended the annual conference of the Society of Environmental Journalists in October 2008; support for their attendance was provided by the Chicago Tribune Foundation.

**2009-2010 Fellowship Program**

**INDEPENDENT STUDY**

September 1 - October 2, 2009

The Independent Study is a five-week session with academic mentorship at the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography. It includes an orientation, several science primers, an Environmental Justice Workshop, oral presentations by Fellows about their studies, and a wrap-up meeting at the end of the study period. Fellows' schedules, however, are largely open during this time in order for them to meet individual interests and goals.

The Independent Study is a time for the Environmental Reporting Fellows to build scientific understanding, gain field and laboratory experience, and establish contacts. It is also a time for Fellows to build environmental reporting skills through programmatic offerings. These include: science translation exercises; working with reporting mentors from the Fellows' designated newsrooms to develop story ideas based on gathered content; practicing the application of multimedia tools to complex story ideas; and pitching story ideas to mentors. The Independent Study is also a critical time for Fellows to take the initiative to gain a solid understanding of the newsrooms where they will be reporting for the duration of the fellowship.

Prior to and during the Independent Study, supervisors at the media outlets must meet or conduct conference calls with their assigned Environmental Reporting Fellows to establish thorough

assessments of Fellows' skills and goals and to develop a plan of action for the Fellows' first month "on the job." These meetings are also opportunities for the Environmental Reporting Fellows to follow up with editors on topics appropriate for reporting at the news outlet—in an effort to make best use of the study time—and to identify and discuss supervision and mentoring needs and expectations.

Environmental Reporting Fellows and reporting supervisors will work together during the Independent Study to develop at least one detailed story idea prior to the beginning of the Reporting Assignment. This will help develop a better understanding of both parties' skills, needs and goals, so that Fellows are prepared to contribute to their newsrooms from the outset. This story plan will be presented orally to Metcalf staff, Fellows and invited guests (scientists and veteran environmental journalists) near the end of the Independent Study.

#### REPORTING ASSIGNMENTS

October 13, 2009-June 25, 2010

Metcalf organizes nine-month environmental reporting assignments, with reporting mentorship, for the Environmental Reporting Fellows at designated news media outlets. The supervisors and Fellows structure the Reporting Assignment individually at each host outlet. The supervisor will establish clear expectations for the Fellow and will be available to the Fellow, to the extent needed, to provide standard on-the-job support for the Fellow's success in the assignment.

The Environmental Reporting Fellows will send links to published/aired stories for posting on the Metcalf Institute Web site. The host outlet may provide a byline or tagline for each story, identifying the reporter as a Metcalf Institute Environmental Reporting Fellow.

In December 2009, Metcalf Institute staff will conduct site visits and/or conference calls with the media outlets. In February 2010, the Fellows will attend a meeting in Rhode Island. Hosting news outlets are responsible for the Fellows' travel and lodging costs to attend this meeting. In March 2010, Metcalf will organize a meeting/conference call with mentors and/or supervisors in Rhode Island. In June 2010, the final fellowship meeting/conference call will take place, concluding the 2009-2010 program.

As part of the required program monitoring and evaluation, Metcalf's Program Evaluator will make monthly calls to Fellows and Supervisors. Fellows and supervisors are expected to return these calls within two days. Fellows will also respond to three formal fellowship surveys: one in August, one at the end of September, and one in late May. The supervisors and/or mentors will be asked to respond to an exit survey in June.

#### **Metcalf Fellows**

The Metcalf Environmental Reporting Fellows are expected to work fulltime throughout the fellowship to fulfill the expectations of their mentors at URI, their news media outlets, and Metcalf Institute. Fellows are expected to complete the ten-month program.

During the Independent Study, the Fellows will pursue topics of interest, meet with scientists, participate in research, visit labs, attend lectures, and set up contacts for use throughout the fellowship. Fellows shall use this time to develop story ideas for their reporting assignments. Fellows may also produce a multimedia story during the Independent Study, which may be completed as a

collaborative effort. Fellows are encouraged to develop additional story outlines in communication with the reporting mentors.

During the Reporting Assignment, Fellows will work primarily on environment- and/or science-based stories, producing a body of work that meets the standards set for the Fellows at the news media outlets and by the reporting mentors, supervisors and the Fellows themselves.

Metcalf Institute and the University of Rhode Island require that a set of release and permission forms be filled out; these forms will be furnished by Metcalf Institute throughout the summer and in September 2009. Fellows must sign and date the Fellowship Agreement, accepting the terms of the program; completed Agreements are due in the Metcalf Institute office by July 31, 2009.

### **Academic Mentoring**

Metcalf Institute will identify scientific mentors at the University of Rhode Island who will meet with the Fellows, generally by appointment, during the five-week Independent Study and assist the Fellows in making contacts and discussing topics of interest. These scientists will not initiate communications but are prepared to respond to contacts from the Fellows throughout the Independent Study and Reporting Assignment periods.

Fellows are strongly encouraged to maintain contact with the URI academic mentors throughout the entire fellowship.

### **Media Outlets**

Participating news media outlets agree to identify both a reporting mentor and a supervisor with whom the Metcalf Fellow will work throughout the Reporting Assignment. The reporting mentor and supervisor will facilitate any initial technical training necessary, provide guidance on story development, help identify and resolve problems, and communicate promptly with the Metcalf Program Evaluator each month.

Host media outlets must provide travel to Rhode Island and two nights' lodging for the Environmental Reporting Fellow to attend the midterm meeting in February 2010. Host outlets will work with Fellows to arrange for reimbursement for travel relating to reporting work during the fellowship.

The media outlets are encouraged, although not required, to arrange for their assigned Environmental Reporting Fellows to be placed on internal payroll and receive reimbursement from Metcalf Institute via University of Rhode Island Accounting Office (see Fellowship Stipends below for more information), not to exceed \$27,000. Payment arrangements must be determined by the time the Fellowship Agreement is signed. The host media outlet is not required by Metcalf Institute to provide benefits or health insurance coverage for the Fellow.

Reporting supervisors and mentors must sign and date the Fellowship Agreement, accepting the terms of the program, and return it to the Metcalf Institute to confirm their participation by July 31, 2009.

### **Metcalf Institute**

Metcalf Institute will be responsible for paying the stipends to the Fellows through University of Rhode Island payroll or, where Fellows are paid on host outlet internal payroll, for reimbursing the host outlets (see Fellowship Stipends below). Metcalf Institute will oversee the Fellows' academic and reporting experiences, including monthly consultations with the Program Evaluator, site visits, other regular communications, and program evaluation.

The Program Evaluator will communicate monthly with all the Fellows and supervisors or mentors by telephone, email and in person, over the course of the reporting assignment, and will collect surveys at the beginning and end of the fellowship.

Metcalf will provide press releases announcing the fellowship awards. Metcalf will provide a full orientation, an Environmental Justice Workshop, a database of science contacts, and work space with access to telephone and internet during the Independent Study. Metcalf will organize the Reporting Assignment placements and ensure that a reporting mentor is functioning throughout the program, as agreed by the media outlet. Metcalf Institute will provide general administrative support, such as addressing logistical and program-related concerns and conflicts, to the extent that it is able, and sign, date, and return copies of the Fellowship Agreements by August 7, 2009.

Metcalf Institute does not require that Fellows receive health or other benefits, nor does it provide these benefits through the fellowship payments, nor does it ask that news media outlets provide these benefits.

### **Compensation and Time Off**

Fellows will receive a total stipend of \$30,000, less taxes, over the ten months of the fellowship program (unless the host outlet is obligated to provide additional compensation due to union rules). Fellows may be paid either through University of Rhode Island payroll or through payroll at the host media outlet from October through June. Metcalf Institute encourages but does not require direct payroll payment to the Fellow through the host outlet during the Reporting Assignment. In the case of host outlet payroll payment, Metcalf will provide reimbursement (maximum \$27,000) to the news media outlet. Payment arrangements will be made on an individual basis and must be determined by the time Fellowship Agreements are signed. Fellows must submit payroll forms to Metcalf Institute by August 3, 2009.

The Metcalf program provides for Fellows to take five paid vacation days during their nine-month reporting assignment to be arranged with media outlets and with notification to Metcalf. Metcalf Fellows may also take off the following eight federal holidays: Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Presidents Day, and Memorial Day. Each Metcalf Institute Fellow is allowed up to three sick days, with notification to the reporting supervisor, throughout the reporting assignment. Should the Fellow request additional sick leave due to extenuating circumstances, this request will be considered in consultation with Metcalf Institute, the reporting supervisor, and the Fellow.

The Environmental Reporting Fellowships require a full-time commitment by each Fellow. Should a Fellow wish to pursue external freelancing projects during the fellowship, however, the Fellow must obtain approval from his/her reporting supervisor and Metcalf Institute prior to initiating the project. If the Fellow receives these approvals, any freelance effort must occur after the Fellow has satisfied his/her fellowship reporting obligations. Freelancing bylines should not indicate that the

author is a Metcalf Environmental Reporting Fellow unless this notation has been approved by Metcalf staff.

### **Travel, Housing, and Other Expenses**

The Metcalf Institute will reimburse up to \$500 per Fellow for initial travel costs to Rhode Island for the September 2009 trip only. Fellows are required to provide complete estimates of their travel expenses in advance of travel and to follow travel arrangement procedures in compliance with the University of Rhode Island, as directed by Metcalf Institute staff.

All cost-of-living expenses, including additional travel, housing, and health insurance, are the responsibility of the Fellow for the entire ten-month fellowship period. Neither Metcalf Institute nor the designated news media outlets are obligated to provide coverage for these costs, other than the initial travel stipend and February meeting travel support referred to above.

Fellows are responsible for making their own arrangements for housing for the entire fellowship, including both the Independent Study and Reporting Assignment. Metcalf Institute will provide contact information for realtors local to the URI Kingston and Narragansett Bay Campuses, where the Independent Study will be conducted.

Public transportation is limited in southern Rhode Island. Past Fellows have found that it is very helpful to have access to a car or at least a bicycle to most efficiently use their time at the University of Rhode Island. Fellows are responsible for arranging their own transportation, except during group events organized by Metcalf Institute.

### **Contact**

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**2009-2010 Environmental Reporting Fellowships Program Calendar**

Fellowship placements finalized	July 2, 2009
Conference calls	Week of July 13, 2009
Fellowship Agreements due to Metcalf office	July 31, 2009
Payroll forms due to Metcalf office	August 3, 2009
Fellows travel to Rhode Island	August 29-31, 2009
Fellowship begins	September 1, 2009
Independent Study	September 1 - October 2, 2009
Mentor reception	TBA
Environmental Justice Workshop	TBA
Fellows move to host locations	October 3-5, 2009
Fellows attend SEJ Annual Conference*	October 8-11, 2009
Reporting Assignments	October 13, 2009 - June 25, 2010
Site visits	Weeks of December 1-11, 2009
Environmental Reporting Fellows midterm meeting	February 2010 (TBD)
Mentors meeting/conference call	March 2010 (TBD)
Final Fellowship meeting/Fellowship ends	June 25, 2010

\*Metcalf Institute is currently seeking funds to support the Fellows' attendance at the 2009 annual conference of the Society of Environmental Journalists. In the case that Metcalf Institute cannot support this trip, Fellows will begin their reporting assignments on October 6, 2009.