Mortenson Graduate Research Assistantship Award Process
November 4, 2011

This process is managed by Robyn Sandekian, Managing Director of the Mortenson Center in Engineering for Developing Communities (MC-EDC). The graduate research assistantship is awarded by Bernard Amadei in his role as the Director of the Mortenson Center in Engineering for Developing Communities.

In accordance with the Mortenson Center in Engineering for Developing Communities Pure Endowment Fund Agreement, section 2.B., a portion of the distributions shall be used to provide student support to graduate students who are engaged in performing research on the development of sustainable technologies of relevance to the Mortenson Center. The initial allocation (as shown in section 7.B.) is twenty-one percent of the annual distribution, which currently equates to $42,000 per year. This currently allows the Mortenson Center to support one half-time assistantship per calendar year if the student enrolls in 9 credit hours in the fall and spring semesters during the year of support.

The Mortenson Graduate Research Assistantships provide one calendar year of half-time support to a new or continuing PhD-level student who is pursuing an EDC-focus within his or her research. These awards typically begin during the fall semester so that faculty members have an opportunity to nominate a student for the award at the same time as the remainder of that student’s financial package is being offered.

In conjunction with the nomination of a Mortenson GRA:

- the student’s advisor must provide a plan for additional financial support for a period of at least two years;
- the student must be willing to participate in additional activities in promoting MCEDC (for example, by offering or arranging lectures and/or providing programmatic assistance during their year of support); and
- the student will be expected to author at least one technical paper focused on the developing communities aspect(s) of his or her research for submission to a peer-reviewed journal prior to graduating.

Each nomination package should include a summary of the student’s application material, a copy of the student’s interest statement describing the student’s research interests as they relate to the mission of MCEDC, and one letter of recommendation from his/her current or prospective advisor. Nominations should be submitted to the Managing Director of the MCEDC by March 1.

The director will select the recipient and notify the student’s advisor by March 15 and the advisor will include information about the assistantship in the student’s award letter of financial support.

Additional off-cycle awards may be available as funding permits. The process for nominating a student for an off-cycle award will be similar to that described here.

Reviewed and approved by the MCEDC Executive Committee: November 2, 2011.