

NAACL Scholarship Program to JHU Summer School 2010 edition

At their June 2009 meeting in Boulder, the NAACL Executive Committee voted to allocate \$8,500 to fund scholarships to the 2 week JHU Summer School (to take place in June 2010). \$1,500 was also allocated to fund the video taping of the summer school lectures.

A call for Scholarship Applications was issued at the end of February 2010, with an application deadline of April 2. The call went to the NAACL mailing list, corpora, and several other mailing lists. A copy of the call and the application form is included as appendices A and B.

There were a total of 23 applications in response to the call. In addition, 10 “near miss” students from the full JHU workshop were asked if they were interested in being considered, and 2 responded affirmatively. As a result there were 25 applicants in our pool, which were distributed as follows:

	Undergraduate	Master's	PhD	Total
Male	5	1	7	13
Female	3	4	5	12
Total	8	5	12	25

The applications were evaluated by a committee of three (Ted, Chris B, Chris CB) over a three week period in early to mid-April. Priority was given to students early enough in their careers to benefit and possibly have their future direction be changed by this experience. Also, higher priority was given to students who did not have NLP classes or faculty available in significant amounts at their home institutions. A copy of the evaluation instructions is included as appendix C.

After evaluating all the applications, 7 students were offered scholarships. Six of the students received travel, lodging, and registration awards, and one of the students (local in Baltimore) only requested and received registration. The names and institutions of the students who received awards is listed in appendix D. Those students were distributed as follows:

	Undergraduate	Master's	PhD	Total
Male	3	0	0	3
Female	3	1	0	4
Total	6	1	7	7

During 2010 Ted has been updating a HOWTO document about running the scholarship program that is available as a Google Doc (although we might want to figure out a more permanent way of storing and sharing documents like this). The version of this document that is current as of today (May 18) is attached as appendix E.

Overall this year went smoothly – the earlier application deadline helped, the reviewers were prompt and thorough, and the quality of applicants was really quite good. Even still, there are a few areas where we might want to consider making some adjustments:

- 1) Relatively few JHU near misses were interested in the summer school – we may not need to worry so much about synching our schedule with JHU to coordinate consideration of these students (although it is still good to do if we can).
- 2) The evaluation criteria may need some tweaking – preparedness and need may not be quite right. “Potential to be life changing experience” (credit to Chris B) seemed to become a very significant point in this year's evaluation. This ties in with need to some degree, but also reflects our sense of the degree to which a student is still open to new experiences (and is genuinely seeking them).
- 3) We may want to target the call and application process to undergraduates and Master's students. PhD students are usually somewhat advanced and have access to quite a few resources at their home institutions. More crucially, their future course is more or less set for the next few years, so the potential for this to be “life changing” is minimal.
- 4) We need to do more than rely on NAACL and NLP mailing lists to get the call distributed. Are there more general bulletin boards or mailing lists we can use to promote the scholarship program? Undergraduates at smaller schools without NLP faculty are unlikely to be tied into our usual mailing lists, even if they have a great personal interest in NLP and related areas. Do we need a Facebook presence, for example?
- 5) The use of a gmail account (naacl.jhu.2010@gmail.com) simplified handling of applications to some degree, although there is still a fair amount of administrative overhead just keeping track of applications and recommendations.
- 6) It seems like we generally need a way for NAACL to archive Executive Board materials like application forms, calls for this or that, etc. The summer school has a certain amount of material like that, most of which is included in the appendices of this document. It seems like it would be relatively easy for all of this to be lost and then reinvented another year.
- 7) Having a designated point person for the next year in place during the current year should help smooth the transition, and keep the scholarship program running efficiently (should we decide to continue it). Thanks to Chris CB for taking on that role for next year, and when he asks for volunteers to help with the reviewing, please don't be shy. :) It's a very satisfying experience, and very reassuring as you come to realize there are students at lots of different kinds of schools (some of them somewhat unexpected) who are interested in and excited about language, linguistics, human language technologies, etc.
- 8) I can safely say that doing the application evaluation over three weeks in April (as we did in 2010) is infinitely superior to doing it over the three day Memorial Day weekend (as we did in 2009). Get the call out in February, and evaluate applications in April.

Finally, I will do a survey of the students after the summer school to get their feedback on this year's summer school. The survey from 2009 (prepared by Hal Daume) is attached separately.

Cordially,

Ted Pedersen
May 18, 2010

Appendix A – Call for Scholarships Issued in February 2010, also posted to <http://naacl.org>

CALL FOR NAACL SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS
TO THE JHU SUMMER SCHOOL ON NLP/HLT

Monday June 7 - Friday June 18, 2010
Located at JHU/CSLP, Baltimore, Maryland

APPLICATION DEADLINE : Friday, April 1, 2010 5pm EST
NOTIFICATION : Thursday, April 22, 2010

The North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics (NAACL) is again offering an exciting summer school opportunity for a limited number of graduate and undergraduate students interested in the field of Human Language Technology.

The summer school will be held from Monday June 7th - Friday, June 18, 2010, at The Center for Language and Speech Processing (CLSP) at Johns Hopkins University in conjunction with the pre-workshop classes of the CLSP 2010 Summer Workshop on Language Engineering. Selected students will attend two weeks of lectures and hands-on laboratories that will include general introductions to the major areas of study within the field of Human Language Technology (e.g. Natural Language Processing, Automatic Speech Recognition, Machine Translation, Information Retrieval) as well as sessions on specialized research topics of current interest in the field.

The summer school schedule from last year can be found here:
<http://www.clsp.jhu.edu/workshops/ws09/summerschool.php>

Details about the 2010 summer school will be posted here shortly:
<http://www.clsp.jhu.edu/workshops/ws10/>

The APPLICATION DEADLINE is Friday, April 1, 2010, at 5pm Eastern Time.

Application form and instructions can be found here:
<http://naacl.org/summer-school/2010/>

Students must be enrolled or pre-enrolled at an institution in the Americas to qualify. Preference will be given to high-quality students at a stage in their careers during which attendance at the summer school will provide maximum benefit; in particular, graduate students in their initial years of study and undergraduates who have completed their junior or senior years of study. Postdoctoral applications will not be accepted. Students who are selected for the summer school are expected to attend both weeks.

Scholarships: In addition to providing summer school registration fees for all selected attendees, a limited number of scholarships to cover additional costs (in particular, travel expenses to the workshop venue and/or accommodation for the full duration) may be available. We intend to cover full or partial costs for these two items for at least some applicants. Funds are limited, however, so if you are a graduate student, please ask your advisor to contribute to the funding.

Frequently-asked Questions (FAQ):

Q: I am currently attending a university that is not in the Americas. Can I apply?

A: As stated above, no. Since this is a NAACL sponsored event, it is only available to students enrolled or pre-enrolled in institutions located in the Americas. This includes North, Central, and South America as well as the Caribbean.

Q: Must all materials be submitted by the deadline, including the letters of recommendation?

A: Yes, the deadline applies to the entire application package.

Q: What does the scholarship include?

A: In all cases the scholarship will include the registration fee to the summer school. Then, depending on available funds and the details of your application we may award funding for housing in the JHU residence halls, and some of your travel expenses. Please note though that travel awards are typically sufficient for air travel from major US airports to Baltimore. If you are coming from a smaller city or outside of the USA you may need to provide additional funds to cover the total cost of travel. Also note that the scholarship does not include meals, which you will need to purchase on your own at JHU or in the surrounding area.

Appendix B – NAACL Scholarship Application

2010 NAACL / JHU Summer School Scholarship Application

Please fill out the following form and submit as a pdf file to
naacl.jhu.2010@gmail.com

We must receive this form and your recommendation before 5pm EST,
Thurs. April 1, 2010.

FOR ALL APPLICANTS:

Name:
Email:
URL of home page:
School:

IF YOU ARE AN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT:

Major:
Expected Graduation Date:
GPA:

IF YOU ARE A GRADUATE STUDENT:

Department:
Degree Sought:
Year of Study:
Advisor:

All applicants must provide the following:

1) Letter of Recommendation. If you are a graduate student working with a thesis or dissertation advisor, this letter should come from that advisor. If you are an graduate student pursuing a course-only option, or an undergraduate student, this letter should come from a faculty member who knows your background in NLP or related areas relatively well. This letter should address the degree to which your recommender believes you are prepared for the summer school, and how they feel you would benefit from the experience. Please ask that this letter be sent directly to naacl.jhu.2010@gmail.com. There is no required form or format for this letter, although a pdf document would be preferred.

2) Travel Budget. If you wish to apply for NAACL scholarship funds beyond registration costs (\$375), please indicate the additional costs for which you are requesting a scholarship. Please note that NAACL is typically unable to cover the entire cost of your travel, particularly if you are coming from outside the USA:

____ [yes, no] Travel expenses to/from the summer school. You may include local transport (to/from airport, etc.) in your total cost estimate. You will be required to provide receipts after the summer school to be reimbursed (although you will only be reimbursed up to the amount you are awarded)

Estimated Total Travel cost: \$ _____

Mode of Transportation (air, train, car, etc.) : _____

Originating City : _____

____ [yes, no] Would you like accommodations (paid by NAACL) during the summer school in a JHU residence hall? Note that this does not include the cost of meals, which you will need to pay for yourself.

3) A short (less than one page) Statement of Interest.

The statement might describe your personal interests in the field of Human Language Technology, any relevant research or work experience in the area, career goals, relevant courses taken, etc. Please also comment on what you hope to gain by participating in the summer school.

[insert statement here]

Appendix C - Evaluation Form for Scholarship Applicants

Please evaluate each of the applicants on the following two criteria using a 5 point scale.

Degree of preparedness for the summer school. Does the student have sufficient background to understand and learn from the summer school? Pay particular attention to their ability to participate in and benefit from the afternoon labs. See

<http://www.clsp.jhu.edu/workshops/ws09/summerschool.php>

for details about the courses. In general some background in programming, math/statistics, and/or linguistics (to varying degrees) is needed for a student to be prepared or very prepared.

- 5 - very prepared
- 4 - prepared
- 3 - somewhat prepared
- 2 - not very prepared
- 1 - not prepared

Degree of need for the summer school. How much will the student benefit from the summer school? Pay particular attention that they are at an appropriate stage in their academic career to take advantage of what they learn. In general our convention has been that undergraduates and students at schools without large PhD programs are our highest need category (ie a student working with Chris Manning at Stanford may have less need than a student at East South Texas State).

- 5 - great need
- 4 - need
- 3 - some need
- 2 - little need
- 1 - no need

Then, for each category please assign it an **overall recommendation**: Fund, Fund if possible, Do not Fund.

Remember that we have 8500 in scholarship funds, and that housing and registration for each student runs 1000. In general undergraduates and/or students at schools without large PhD programs are given some preference.

Please return this form to tpederse@d.umn.edu by April 15?

If you have a conflict of interest for a candidate, please indicate that in the comments, but go ahead and provide your opinion.

All candidates have requested registration. Most have also requested housing and travel (but not all did). We need to figure out gender for JHU housing arrangements.

We should cut any travel estimates that seem unreasonable, and should expect PhD students advisor's to be willing to contribute something.

Appendix D : 2010 Scholarship Recipients

The following six students received scholarships to cover their registration, accommodations, and travel (to the specified limits):

Shoshana Berleant <berleant.1@osu.edu>
Ohio State, Columbus, OH
Linguistics and Computer & Information Sciences, undergraduate
female, travel 200

Katie Froiland <froi0019@morris.umn.edu>
University of Minnesota, Morris, MN
Computer Science, undergraduate
female, travel 350

Matthew Gardner <mjg82@byu.edu>
Brigham Young University, Provo, UT
Computer Science, undergraduate
male, travel 500

Catherine Grady <catherineagrady@yahoo.com>
University of Texas, Austin, TX
1st year MS Information Systems
female, travel 400

Skatje Myers <myers300@morris.umn.edu>
University of Minnesota, Morris, MN
Computer Science, undergraduate
female, travel 350

Elliot Saba <sabae@u.washington.edu> a
Univ of Washington, Seattle, WA
Electrical Engineering, undergraduate
male, travel 500

There is one student who will have his registration paid by NAACL. He is "local" so does not need accommodations or travel support.

Adrian Rosenbrock <jrosebr1@umbc.edu>
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Computer Science, undergraduate
male, registration only

Appendix E – JHU HOWTO, work in progress shared as Google Doc

HOW TO Administer the NAACL JHU summer school scholarship program

Date of last update : May 19, 2010

The JHU summer school is typically the two weeks right after NAACL, which is usually in late May or early June of Year X. This is the first two weeks of the longer 8 week summer workshop that JHU typically offers each summer.

The following is a suggested time line for administering the NAACL JHU scholarship program.

Board meeting at NAACL year X-1 :

- Summarize outcome of support for summer school in year X-1. How many students were funded, what kind of funding did they receive, where did those students come from (level and location)? Review any administrative problems that might have come up with students or JHU. Note that the board meeting will occur before the summer school in year X-1.
- What feedback did we get informally and from our survey for year X-2?
- Decide on allocation of funding for NAACL JHU summer school scholarship program in year X. Funding has typically been 10k for scholarships and 1.5k for video taping of lectures.

January Year X:

- Contact Jason Eisner and/or Sanjeev Khudanpur (JHU Faculty, jason@jhu.edu khudanpur@jhu.edu) and Monique Folk and/or Desiree Cleves (JHU CSLP Center Administrator and Administrative Coordinator, mfolk@jhu.edu, admin@clsp.jhu.edu) at JHU to make sure summer school is happening, and find out when their call for applications to their 8 week summer workshop will be issued, and what their acceptance deadline for that will be.
 - Sanjeev and Monique were the primary contacts in 2009
 - Jason and Desiree were the primary contacts in 2010
- Set the deadline for scholarship applications for the 2 week summer school after the JHU notification date, since there may be some students who are refused for the workshop who might be very qualified and interested in the summer school. However, do not bend over backwards to do this, since in general it turns out that relatively few of the JHU near misses are interested in the summer school.
- Try to have the NAACL application and notification deadlines in April **at the latest**, otherwise students don't have time to make summer plans or book travel.
- Form committee to help evaluating applications. Should be at least 2 other board members in addition to point person. Try and find a successor if this is your last year on the board. Update this HOW TO as you figure things out.

February Year X:

- Estimate number of students that will be supported. This depends on the amount for scholarships allocated by NAACL, and also the cost of the JHU administrative fee and JHU housing. Housing costs are fixed, administrative fee can possibly be negotiated downward.
 - In 2009 the administrative fee was 375 and the housing costs were 585 for 13 nights.
 - In 2010 the administrative fee was 375 and the housing costs were 611 for 13 nights.

- Issue call for scholarship applications and make sure NAACL web site is updated with this info. Update application form as needed. Make sure to send to popular mailing lists like corpora and also have Priscilla send to ACL mailing list.
- Consider contacting students who were near misses last year, and also schools you are familiar with that might not receive these kinds of announcements normally (i.e., good undergraduate-only schools, etc.)

April Year X:

- Deadline for scholarship applications should likely occur in early April, with notifications later in the month. This will give students the chance to make plans and find good deals for travel. In general waiting until May to review or decide on applications is a problem, since many students have made their summer plans by then, and it also leaves little time for them to book travel.
- As NAACL scholarship application deadline approaches, Check with Sanjeev or Jason E. at JHU as to whether or not there were any "near miss" undergraduates for the summer workshop that might merit consideration for the summer school.
 - Make sure to remind them that NAACL funding is limited to students studying at schools in the Americas.
 - Keep in mind that the near misses at JHU are typically interested in summer-length experiences and are often students already working with faculty connected to NLP and Speech, and are at schools with good REU and RA programs available. As a result the near misses often end up having other opportunities, and may be somewhat less "needy" than other students in the scholarship pool.
 - You probably want to establish some informal limits on the number of students you will consider and fund from the JHU pool, just to keep the process somewhat orderly, and also to maintain a certain separation between the JHU workshop decision process and the NAACL scholarship decision process.
 - In 2009 we considered approximately 6 JHU near misses and funded 2. In 2010 of the 10 near misses we asked, only 2 wanted to be considered, and 1 was funded.
- Decide on students to fund. Criteria have typically been 1) preparedness of student to do well in lectures and labs of summer school and 2) degree of need. A student from a PhD granting institution with various NLP faculty and courses is considered to have low need. A student at a school with few or no NLP faculty and few or no courses is considered to have high need. Undergraduate students are given a high priority generally. Students who are attending universities outside of the Americas are not eligible for funding. Give some consideration to how likely this experience is to change the direction of the student's education or career. If there is some likelihood of change, consider giving that significant weight.
- Priority for funding has traditionally been for undergraduates and (to a lesser extent) MS students at non-PhD granting programs. PhD students are less likely to be significantly changed by the summer school program (since their direction is largely set). If they are early in their PhD careers they may be suitable applicants, although even then they are presumed to have access to other sources of funding so should probably only be given partial awards.
- Notify students of decisions. For those accepted, make sure they understand travel funding is limited to the amount given, and they will be reimbursed only to that amount. Local transport (shuttle to / from airport) can be included in reimbursement. They will send receipts after the summer school to the NAACL treasurer and should expect reimbursement about a month after

the summer school has ended. JHU does not reimburse.

- Give Monique and/or Desiree? names, emails and genders of students, as well as info on what they are being funded for. Some students will need to pay JHU for their housing (depending on the amount of support they get). JHU needs to know the gender of students to assign housing.
- Once students have accepted the scholarship, give them Jason and Desiree as contact people at JHU, and also a NAACL contact person (in the event of questions about the scholarship or funding). The NAACL contact may want to be the chair of this committee.

May Year X:

- Remind students to book travel early, keep receipts, and make sure they understand local arrangements. In particular they should understand that meals are not paid for by NAACL or JHU. There is food in the residence halls they can buy, and also local restaurants. JHU should handle those details with the students. In general try to turn over local arrangement communications to JHU by now. Double check with the students in about mid-May to make sure they have received all the local info from JHU, and that they have made their travel arrangements.
- Also in mid-May, contact students with info about reimbursement process. They will need to keep receipts and mail to NAACL treasurer after the event. There is also a spreadsheet they should fill out and send in with their receipts.

June Year X:

- Wish students good luck, remind them that JHU will not reimburse anything, and that they will send receipts for travel to NAACL treasurer once they get home. They do not give receipts to JHU. The NAACL contact person should be available to answer email questions during the summer school from the students.

July Year X:

- Conduct survey (using surveymonkey or something similar) to find out what students liked and didn't like about summer school. Pay particular attention to the issue of how much of the material they were able to understand, and if the content of the courses was arranged in a way that made sense to them. Also, find out if there were any problems with local arrangements so those can be avoided next year (getting to JHU from airport, food, etc. etc.) Send summary of findings to NAACL board and plan to re-summarize at the year X+1 meeting.
- Make sure all students have submitted their receipts by now.