Travel Fellowship Proposal Writing Workshop

To apply for a travel fellowship, a student or group of students must submit a travel fellowship proposal to Annette Wu by the February 23 deadline. Proposals should include a cover page (suggested format) and the following four sections:

1. Cover Page
2. Project Details (1000 Word Limit)
   - A detailed description of your project. Include the who, what, where, when, why as well as the desired outcomes, deliverables, and ripple effects.
3. Safety (No Word Limit)
   - Detail the risks involved in your travel fellowship and how you will mitigate them.
4. Itinerary (No Word Limit)
   - Explain the timeline for the project. What are the steps and when will each begin and be completed? A visual version of the timeline might be helpful.
5. Budget (No Word Limit)
   - Use a spreadsheet or table with budget details that explains the various expenses.

Selection Process:

Proposals are reviewed and graded by a panel with a rubric examining the following criteria:

- Fellowship Description
  - The student(s) has clearly outlined the entirety of their proposed fellowship. They have answered the questions of “Who?”, “What?”, “When?”, and “Where?”, demonstrating deep understanding of the project topic background and showing the purpose and significance of the project. They have provided a detailed itinerary and, if applicable, addressed issues of group dynamics and personal growth.
- Academic Rigour
  - The student(s) has defined strong academic rationale for their fellowship. The rationale is supported with specific (and appropriate) evidence, examples, and details.
- Location Rationale
  - There is a clearly defined and strong rationale for why the proposed fellowship location is the best possible location for the project.
- Deliverables and Ripple Effect
  - The proposed end result of the fellowship is clearly defined. Feasible deadlines for the product are set and the student(s) has outlined necessary steps to complete the deliverable(s) on time. The student(s) has detailed how they will share their experience and insights with the Yale-NUS community.
- Safety/Risks
The student(s) has submitted a comprehensive safety section that demonstrates they are aware of all of the risks inherent in their proposal and has clearly outlined how they will mitigate said risks.

- **Budget**
  - The student(s) has included a clear and comprehensive budget. They have outlined how they intend to earn the money to cover expenses past the fellowship award.

- **Updates to CIPE**
  - The safety section clearly details that the student(s) will deliver updates to CIPE. They define how frequently updates will come (at least weekly) and steps to be taken to ensure updates are not forgotten.

- **Style and Grammar**
  - The proposal is clearly and concisely written. There are no spelling or grammar mistakes.

**Important Notes to Highlight:**

- Because we aim to approve travel proposals with substantial rigour and depth in their academic question(s) and approach, we recommend that you allocate at least three weeks for the Travel Fellowship. Budget and other considerations might encourage you to pursue a shorter fellowship and that is acceptable. If you do so however, be sure that you give a strong rationale for your trip length and how you will investigate your proposed question in such a short amount of time.

- To ensure as many students have access to as many CIPE opportunities as possible, you may not participate in a Travel Fellowship and another CIPE opportunity in the same summer (with the exception of Summer LABs). This applies to all members of a Travel Fellowship group.

*All of this information, and more, is available at the Travel Fellowship webpage on the CIPE website. If you haven’t yet met Annette to talk about your idea, it is advisable to do so in advance of the February 23rd deadline. Email her for a consultation at: annette.wu@yale-nus.edu.sg.*
CASE STUDY A:  

Project Details

Our bike trip involves 4 intrepid travellers cycling from Singapore to Hanoi for 10 weeks, starting on May 15th. We have explained our route in detail in the itinerary. We will conduct an *anthropological* investigation into the South East Asian bicycle, asking questions like, how important is the bicycle to South East Asian people? Why is it important?

Though none of our participants speak languages of the places we will pass through in South East Asia, we have learned through past travel experiences that we don’t need verbal language to build bonds of empathy and understanding. Furthermore, by being on a bicycle, we will be able to share an everyday experience that is the same as that of millions in the region.

We seek to develop personally by learning to develop grit in difficult situations, building our physical and emotional strength. We seek to develop academically by understanding the status of the bicycle and being immersed in this experiential learning journey. As we are all avid photographers, we will be documenting this project and setting up an exhibition of our learnings back at Yale-NUS. We hope this will inspire others to undertake bicycle journeys too.

*Activity:* *This shortened project description ticks all the required boxes. But is it compelling? As this group’s Travel Fellowship advisor, what questions would you ask them, and what constructive advice would you give?*

*Jot your thoughts down here:*
CASE STUDY B:

(From the real proposal)

Our bike trip involves 4 intrepid travellers cycling from Singapore to Hanoi for 10 weeks beginning on May 15th. Our journey spans Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. We will elaborate on our route in the itinerary below.

We will conduct an ethnographic investigation into the status of the bicycle in Southeast Asia. We will ask questions like: Is the bicycle an archaic or an emergent technology? What place does it occupy within a modernizing world? What does the bicycle facilitate? What communities and energies surround the bicycle? What status do our bicycles have as compared to those we encounter? How does one’s access to spaces and places change if travelling by bicycle as compared to other forms of transport? Is the bicycle being replaced? Is the quintessential image of the bicycle an appropriate one for Southeast Asia?

As we are not proficient in any of the languages of the countries we will be passing through, our interactions will be primarily gestural, and our investigation will be primarily through observation. This considered, we will prioritize our impressions of places, and will use Geertz’ methods of Thick Description to record what we see, smell, hear, taste, and feel. More informally, we each hope to develop personally throughout this journey. We will have ample space and time for silence and reflection, as we pedal through unfamiliar terrains, cultures, languages, and experiences. We expect to experience the vulnerability of bicycle travel (as we are dependent on strangers, natural forces, and luck for our well-being) and to contemplate our identities as individuals and our place in Singapore and Southeast Asia.

There are several reasons that cycling is a necessary mode of travel for this trip. Firstly, by cycling we embody the subject of our own investigation. When cycling through these spaces, we will undoubtedly attract attention and curiosity that will in itself illuminate the status of cyclists and bicycles. We hope to find cycling communities and share in their love for bicycles. Secondly, whether it be cycling through quaint fishing towns along the Mekong, or cursing the undulating hills of Northern Laos, travelling by bicycle will allow us to be intimately connected and sensitized to the topographical changes we encounter. We hope to gain access to spaces and people that we might have missed if travelling by bus or train.

*This is only a section of a longer description provided by this past Travel Fellowship team. You can find their entire proposal “A Newfound Pedalgogy” under “resources” on the Travel Fellowship webpage. All proposals are different, their structure and components will mirror the highlights of your project. This is just one example of a successful proposal that demonstrates evidence of preparation, thorough planning, creativity and maturity of the proposal writers.

Activity: List out in bullet points, some of the strengths of this passage. How might you apply this list to your own proposal?