WHAT IS IT?
The National Science Foundation (NSF) offers a grant-funding program for 1st and 2nd year predoctoral students. If successful, they receive a three-year stipend as well as paid tuition and fees. The stipend is lucrative ($32k per year) relative to other sources of funding available to graduate students. Information is available at http://www.nsfgrfp.org/

WHY ARE YOU RECEIVING THIS MEMO?
Our goal is for EVERY eligible first year student to apply. To be eligible you must be a U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or permanent resident and have completed no more than 12 months of full-time graduate study. We have had many successful applications in the past within the department. The application process is quite reasonable and provides students with a good entry-level grant-writing experience. A two-page proposal plus letters of recommendation must be submitted to NSF by November 3, 2014. using NSF’s Fastlane electronic system. The department is not involved in the submission process, and we are not otherwise informed when you submit a proposal using Fastlane. Please begin to discuss the application process with your adviser as soon as possible.

INCENTIVES FOR YOU TO APPLY
Of course, a successful application is an incentive in and of itself. As an additional incentive, eligible 1st year students who apply will receive $750 in research or travel support from the department after submitting a copy of their submitted proposal. This amount is above and beyond the travel/research award program available for all graduate students. (Thus, students who apply for NSF awards would be eligible for $1250 in research/travel support during their 1st year as opposed to $500). This award ($750) must be spent by August 24, 2015. Last year, 92% of the eligible 1st year students submitted a proposal to NSF.

HOW WE WILL HELP
Your advisers will be encouraged to mentor you toward a successful application. We will make examples of past successful applications available to you. You will receive an email communication about this in the near future. Dr. Scott Lanyon, head of Ecology, Evolution & Behavior, teaches an NSF proposal writing seminar that we encourage you all to attend. Dr. Lanyon has served on the national review panel and has great insight on how to write a competitive proposal. Students who completed the seminar last year found it extremely useful. He is offering two sections:

EEB 8550 – Graduate Research Fellowship Proposal Writing Seminar
Section 001 12:20 – 1:10 p.m., Mondays, Science Teaching & Student Services (STSS) 530B
Section 002 11:45 – 12:35 p.m., Tuesdays, Peters Hall 145 (ITV room, so students on other campuses may enroll)

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) Grants team is also available to assist. They will hold an information session about the application process for us in September. You will be notified shortly about the date. We encourage all of you to attend. If you have questions, please contact the department’s Associate Chair for Research, Pat Frazier, at pfraz@umn.edu.

STEPS IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS
1. Register for EEB 8550: Graduate Research Fellowship Proposal Writing Seminar,
2. Review the NSF website for information about the application process
3. Schedule a meeting with your adviser to discuss your application.
4. Arrange for letters of recommendation and begin to work on your proposal.
5. The Department of Psychology will email you in late October (prior to the submission of your proposal) to ask you for the title of your application and for information about who is mentoring your submission.
6. When your application is complete, submit an electronic copy to Pat Frazier (pfraz@umn.edu). You will need to submit the application yourself to NSF via their Fastlane system.
7. We will track receipt of completed applications. When you wish to access your research/travel funds, please use the Student Research/Travel form on the department intranet page (http://online.psych.umn.edu/grads/funding.html#gough) and indicate in the body of the form that you are requesting your NSF application funds to support professional travel to a research conference or for research-related expenses. Decisions from NSF are typically conveyed in late March or April.