

## Tips and Templates/Examples of Constructive Comments

### General Tips

- Offer constructive feedback, not overly harsh criticism, to the application or the applicant
- Do not use identifying language related to the applicant's name, gender or racial/ethnic identity
- Do not re-state factual pieces of the application (e.g. Ph.D. institution, area of study)
- Do not remark on missing/incomplete application files without first confirming with panel assistant
- Confirm any eligibility questions with panel assistant before remarking in comments
- Limit personal opinions regarding institutions, departments, research fields, etc.
- Do not address quality groups or likelihood of receiving an award
- Do not specifically identify letter writers

### Basic Comments Template

#### The applicant's/application's strengths include...

- evidence of superior academic achievement.
- great promise of continuing achievement as scholars and teachers.
- a sustained personal engagement with communities that are underrepresented in the academy.
- a clear commitment to the goals of the Ford Foundation Fellowship.
- a well-written personal statement.
- a strong record of publications and presentations.
- a strong statement of Proposed Research.
- a clear timeline.
- a realistic timeline.
- strong letters of recommendation.

#### The application could be improved by...

- showing stronger academic achievement in future coursework.
- showing a stronger commitment to a career in teaching and research.
- increasing or demonstrating engagement with communities that are underrepresented.
- more clearly articulating a commitment to the goals of the Ford Foundation Fellowship.
- attention to proofreading essays.
- increasing publications and presentations.
- a more detailed statement of proposed research.
- a clearer timeline.
- a more realistic timeline.
- adding a letter writer from \_\_\_\_\_.
- sharing the application materials with letter writers.

## Examples of Constructive Comments

### Concise

Very good statement of prior research. Proposed work should be described in more detail.

More evidence of sustained outreach effort would strengthen your application.

### Detailed

The proposed plan needs more detail and refinement. Development is, as the applicant says, a complex process. Exactly what development intervention (or type of) will be targeted needs clarification and greater focus in the proposed plan. Rural development listed, mega-projects, hydroelectric dams, urban redevelopment and large scale real estate schemes. I also recommend more focused articulation of the underpinning of the processes you seek to examine in the plan. Overall a commendable beginning.

There is a lot of promise and importance in this application. The applicant has made a compelling case for support, and I have no doubt that the candidate will do great work in the field. I am especially impressed with the candidate's depth of understanding of key art figures, which displays intellect, insight, and ambition. What this application needs is a more robust sense of why the proposed department is the proper place for these concerns, in particular how the field (not just particular professors) will expand and inform the candidate's existing specialties and interests. Stay in the field! This is smart and interesting stuff, underlining real needs. Your work is immensely valuable.

### In-Depth

Your complete academic package (academic performance, research and other experiences at the undergraduate level, and letters of recommendation) shows that you are prepared for graduate school. In particular, the variety of research projects in which you were engaged in the past is quite impressive. Having exposure to research is an important indicator (more so than grades) of your being prepared for PhD studies. In terms of your background, experience, and commitment to the goals of the Ford Foundation Fellowship Programs, your application mentions your work in summer camps at your institution. This experience is a start to demonstrating your capacity to use diversity as a resource in teaching and scholarship. Your application could be strengthened by communicating how your experience with these summer camps (and other opportunities in which you may have been engaged) demonstrate a sustained personal engagement with diverse populations. It is also important to explain how you have developed the capacity, when you are a faculty member, to respond to needs of students from diverse backgrounds. For your proposed plan for graduate study and research, your goal is to focus on human-robot interaction. Your plan does a good job identifying an interesting niche. You could improve your application by presenting a more complete research plan which would include the following: a motivation for the research, clear research goals/aims, a discussion of the approach/methods which will be used in the research, and a discussion about how the results of the work relate to the larger research community and society as a whole. Regardless of the outcome, I encourage you to continue your research and education.