The Balsells Graduate Fellowship Program at the University of Colorado

Description updated 15 April 2015 by Robert H. Davis, Dean
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The Balsells Graduate Fellowship Program at the University of Colorado Boulder provides graduate fellowships and assistantships to allow outstanding students from Catalonia to pursue master’s and doctorate degrees in various fields of engineering and computer science at the University of Colorado Boulder. Funding is provided by a partnership of the Balsells Foundation, the University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder, or UCB), and the Catalan government.

1. Introduction
Peter J. Balsells was born in Barcelona. He moved to the United States as a teenager and graduated from the University of Colorado Boulder in 1952 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering. In 1958, he and his wife founded Bal Seal Engineering, Inc., which has its primary facility near Irvine, California and a secondary facility near Colorado Springs, Colorado and makes devices and components for a wide range of engineering and medical applications. Pete received a Distinguished Engineering Alumni Award from CU-Boulder in 2005 and an Honorary Doctorate in 2015.

In 1996, a Balsells Fellowship Program was established by Pete Balsells in the School of Engineering at the University of California, Irvine (UCI). Matching support is provided by the Generalitat de Catalunya and by UCI. Since that time, similar programs have been added at CU-Boulder, the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) and the University of California, Davis (UCD). Over 71 mobility students, 139 graduate fellows and 11 postdoctoral fellows have been supported by the programs.

In 2010, a Balsells Fellowship Program was established at the University of Colorado Boulder, Pete’s alma mater. The College of Engineering and Applied Science at CU-Boulder is the top-ranked engineering college in the greater Rocky Mountain region and is known for hands-on learning, as exemplified by its award-winning Integrated Teaching and Learning Laboratory (opened in 1997) and Discovery Learning Center (opened in 2002). Its vision for excellence in education and research revolves around the paradigm of Engineering for Global Society, including grand challenges in areas such as energy, the environment, and health care. A particular strength of CU is biological science and engineering, through a partnership of science and engineering departments on the Boulder campus and the medical, pharmacy and dental schools on the Denver campus.

2. Program Description
The Balsells Fellowship Program at the University of Colorado Boulder is administered by the College of Engineering and Applied Science, with Robert Davis (Dean of the College) as the director for the program. Eligible fellows are recruited from universities in Catalonia for graduate study at the University of Colorado Boulder.

The program includes fellows who pursue M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in the College of Engineering and Applied Science. Available degree programs include Aerospace Engineering, Architectural Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, Environmental
Engineering, Materials Science and Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Technology, Media and Society, and Telecommunications. To assure that the program intent is met, each student must choose an M.S. thesis or Ph.D. dissertation topic in one of these disciplines.

A Master of Science (M.S.) degree at the University of Colorado requires 30 semester credits and may be completed with a thesis option or with coursework only. Balsells Fellows stopping with the M.S. degree are expected to complete the thesis option, so that they obtain practical experience with a research project. The thesis option includes 24 course credits and six thesis credits, typically requiring two years or less to complete the M.S. degree. Balsells Fellows must first complete an M.S. degree but are then encouraged to continue for a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree, which typically requires 30 course credits (including the course credits for the M.S. degree) and 30 credits for the Ph.D. dissertation. The Ph.D. degree typically requires three years beyond the M.S. degree. Each student supported by the program is expected to contribute up to eight hours per month in promoting Catalan culture in the United States.

3. Financial Support
Balsells Fellows receive a cost-of-living stipend of approximately $2,000 per month, plus payment of tuition, fees, and most of health insurance. The combined value of support for each student is over $55,000 per year. Funding is provided by the Balsells Foundation, the University of Colorado Boulder, and the Generalitat de Catalunya. The fellows may have part-time duties in teaching or research, since the support available from the University of Colorado for graduate students is primarily in the form of teaching and research assistantships. This combined support for Balsells Fellows is available for the first two years of graduate study, subject to satisfactory progress. After the second year, Balsells Fellows making satisfactory progress are expected to receive continuing support from their host departments, primarily in the form of Research Assistantships. Fellows must renew their fellowship for their second year by reapplying when the Generalitat announces its call for fellowships in the spring.

4. Contact Information

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