Please include a CV and a one page letter of application that expresses: a) your interest in social networks; b) the expected benefits of attending the conference; c) details regarding your intended conference participation; d) a statement of your financial need and your estimated costs to attend the conference.

March 31st, 2016

To the Fellowship Committee,

9th Annual Political Networks Workshops & Conference

Dear committee members,

I am a second year PhD student in the Statistics department at Pennsylvania State University, also pursuing a graduate minor in Big Data Social Science. My introduction to network analysis was through political networks when I started working with Dr. Bruce Desmarais (Political science, Pennsylvania State University) as part of the Integrated Graduate Education and Research Training at Penn State. This program brings together an interdisciplinary team of researchers and trains them to effectively work with and develop methods for big data, to address social science research problems and other social data analytic questions.

Dr. Desmarais and I are working on modeling and testing for diffusion of treatment effects through various network structures. We are using data from field experiments conducted on US State legislatures. This work has simulated my interest in methodological research in the area of causal inference on network datasets, as well as study of political networks. Furthermore, methods of evaluating spillover of treatment effects can be relevant to not just data from field experiments, but also observational or experimental data. Many social sciences use randomized social network experiments or natural experiments in order to design the data collection process. Attending this conference would help me understand methodological work conducted in aforementioned areas as well as expose me to other areas of research in the field of networks.

It would be very helpful to get feedback on our ongoing research. The methods we are studying are applicable to various types of social networks, any of which would involve a complex dependence structure basis which effect of a treatment can spread. These ideas can be used in policy research, marketing research and many other fields. I would like to take this further into my thesis research and suggestions at this point would be very constructive. I would benefit greatly from attending workshops, and presenting and discussing our research, as well as attending other sessions and interacting with experts at the Political Networks conference.

With this in mind, I would be very keen on attending and presenting at the Political Networks 2016 conference in Washington University in St. Louis. As an international graduate student, I would be grateful if I could receive travel support. I would request the committee to kindly consider my request for funding my travel cost (~$972), which includes air fare from State College, PA, accommodation and conference registration. The relevant documentation is attached to my application.

I would look forward to a positive response from you

Thanking you in anticipation

Sincerely,

Sayali Phadke

[sayalip@psu.edu](mailto:sayalip@psu.edu)