

Conference Travel Grant Application

Graduate School • Office of Research & Sponsored Programs

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Applicant Information

Full Name	Priya Narayanan
Department	Computer Science & Engineering
Current Position	Ph.D. Candidate, 3rd Year
Student ID	CS-2023-0147
Email	priya.n@research.sample.edu
Primary Advisor	Prof. Michael R. Thornton, Ph.D.
Degree Program	Ph.D. in Computer Science (Machine Learning)
Cumulative GPA	3.92 / 4.00

Conference Details

Conference	The 43rd International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML 2026)
Dates	July 20–26, 2026
Location	Vancouver Convention Centre, Vancouver, BC, Canada
Paper Title	<i>Convergence Guarantees for Decentralized Federated Learning with Heterogeneous Data</i>
Presentation	Oral Presentation (Acceptance Rate: 2.1%)
Co-Authors	Priya Narayanan, Michael R. Thornton, David K. Park

Budget Summary

Expense Category	Amount (USD)	Notes
Conference Registration (Early Bird)	\$425.00	Student rate; registered by May 15 deadline
Round-Trip Airfare (SFO–YVR)	\$380.00	Economy class; booked via Univ. travel portal
Accommodation (6 nights)	\$720.00	Univ.-recommended hotel; \$120/night incl. tax
Local Transportation	\$110.00	SkyTrain day passes & airport transfer
Meals & Incidentals (6 days)	\$270.00	Per diem \$45/day per University policy
Visa Processing Fee	\$100.00	Canadian visitor visa application
Total Estimated Expenses	\$2,005.00	
Departmental Matching (confirmed)	\$800.00	CS Dept. conference travel fund
Personal Contribution	\$200.00	
Net Grant Request	\$1,005.00	

Justification & Academic Merit

Conference Prestige. ICML is the premier international venue for machine learning research, ranked A* by the Computing Research and Education Association (CORE). With a 2026 acceptance rate of 21.8%, presenting at ICML represents a significant scholarly achievement. Attending will place my work before the foremost researchers in the field and enable direct engagement with cutting-edge developments.

Relevance to Dissertation. My thesis, *Theoretical Foundations of Communication-Efficient Federated Learning*, directly benefits from the technical program at ICML 2026. Over 40% of accepted papers address topics in distributed optimization, privacy-preserving ML, and non-IID data — areas central to my research. Feedback from the oral session and hallway conversations will substantially strengthen the final chapters of my dissertation.

Career Development. ICML’s Doctoral Consortium, mentoring workshops, and industry research labs exhibition provide structured opportunities for career advancement. I have been invited to participate in the Women in Machine Learning (WiML) mentoring lunch and plan to interview with several industrial research labs recruiting at the conference. Establishing these connections now is essential for my planned transition to a postdoctoral position in Fall 2027.

Expected Outcomes & Dissemination Plan

Following the conference, I commit to the following dissemination and knowledge-sharing activities:

- Submit a **post-conference report** to the Graduate School within 30 days, summarizing key takeaways, collaborations initiated, and new research directions identified.
- Deliver a **departmental seminar** presenting my ICML paper and synthesizing relevant advances from the conference for fellow graduate students and faculty.
- Prepare a **revised manuscript** incorporating reviewer and attendee feedback for submission to the *Journal*

of Machine Learning Research (JMLR).

- Share **annotated conference notes** and key references via the departmental research wiki for students unable to attend.

Advisor Endorsement

"Ms. Narayanan's work on decentralized federated learning with heterogeneous data represents a significant theoretical contribution with direct practical implications for privacy-preserving machine learning at scale. Her oral presentation at ICML 2026 is a remarkable achievement for a third-year doctoral student and reflects the caliber of research conducted in our laboratory. I strongly endorse this travel grant request and confirm that departmental matching funds of \$800 have been secured. Her attendance is critical to advancing her dissertation and establishing the professional network essential for her planned academic career."

Prof. Michael R. Thornton, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Computer Science
Director, Distributed Systems Laboratory

Required Supporting Documents

✓ Confirmation	Paper acceptance letter from ICML 2026 Program Chairs
✓ Attached	Detailed budget breakdown with supporting quotes
✓ Attached	Curriculum Vitae (updated June 2026)
✓ Attached	Advisor's signed letter of endorsement
✓ Attached	Proof of departmental matching fund commitment
⌚ Pending	Canadian visitor visa application receipt (due June 20)

Submitted: June 10, 2026

Office of Graduate Travel Grants

Ref: GTG-2026-ICML-042