

August 20, 2007

Dear Goldwater Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in the Goldwater Scholarship. Please read the entire application packet *carefully*, and refer to the Goldwater website: <http://www.act.org/goldwater/>. Students who receive advising consistently outperform students who do not. Please contact Dr. Brian Thomas at bthomas@stanford.edu.

Eligibility:

Read carefully “Conditions of Eligibility” in the application materials. The Goldwater Foundation requires that each applicant have a grade-point average of at least “B” or the equivalent, and be in the upper fourth of her or his class. **This process is highly competitive and experience indicates that only students with a GPA of 3.7 and above will be nominated by Stanford.**

Deadline:

The deadline for submission of completed applications is **no later than noon on December 4, 2007. You must complete the online application at <http://www.act.org/Goldwater.html> and submit a hard copy of your of all application materials, including the essay to the Office of Advising and Research, First Floor, Sweet Hall.** A committee of Stanford faculty will review applications and select a maximum of four applicants to nominate to the Goldwater Foundation. Nominees will be notified by January 18th, 2008. All final nominees will be asked to re-submit a final version of their application online at the Goldwater website after working closely with UAR advisors to fine tune their materials by January 24th. The UAR office will submit nominees’ final essays to the Goldwater Foundation on January 29, 2008.

Letters of Recommendation:

You will need three letters of recommendation. Identify your recommenders in your online application once you’ve discussed your selections with Brian Thomas. Please ask your recommender to submit their letter via email to

Dean Eyre
deaneyre@stanford.edu.

If your recommender has any objections to online submission, please put him/her in touch with Brian Thomas. Please refer to the attached guidelines on asking for letters of recommendation. Your letters *must* be received by December 4th, 2008.

Transcripts:

Students must submit official transcripts with the application materials by the December 4th, 2008 deadline.

Resources to help you in the application process:

Your application should be your best written effort: neat, legible, and well thought-out. You should work closely with your faculty mentors in your area of study while writing your application essays. The URP also has resources to help you in the preparation of your essays and activities lists. A binder of application materials from past Stanford Goldwater winners is available for consultation in the UAR office (4th Floor, Sweet Hall).

We wish you good luck in the competition and hope you will find the application process a valuable and fulfilling experience.

Sincerely,

Renee Courey, Ph.D.
Associate Director
Undergraduate Advising and Research
(650) 736-1236

ASKING FOR LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Scholarship selection committees depend heavily on recommendation letters to gain insight into applicants' personal strengths, weaknesses and accomplishments. This kind of information cannot be readily gleaned from transcripts and test scores, so it is in your best interest to help your recommenders write the most accurate and detailed letters possible.

You should begin to cultivate close working relationships with faculty early in your undergraduate career. Once you've become acquainted with faculty members through coursework, research or other ways, consider stopping by their offices once a quarter to discuss your interests and to keep in touch. When the time comes, you need not feel shy about requesting a recommendation. All faculty members and graduate students had the same service done for them, and they regard this as a familiar process. Refer to the following guidelines for managing your letter requests:

- **Choose the people who know you best.** Many students wonder whether they should ask a “big name” professor who knows only their face and final grade or a less-known professor who knows them better. Letters by famous people or well-known scholars *only* carry more weight if the famous person knows you *well* and can write a substantial, convincing letter. The more detailed and personalized a letter is, the more likely it is to make a strong impression on a selection committee, so you should ask your instructors with the most extensive, personal knowledge of you and your work.
- **Ask early.** It is common courtesy to allow recommenders *at least* three weeks to prepare and submit their letters. We highly recommend involving them in the early stages of your application process, while you are deciding what to write about and how to present yourself in the application materials. Their insights will prove invaluable, and they will be well-informed of your interests when they write their recommendations. You should thus begin your request with a substantial conversation about your interests and goals, and then ask them if they can write a strong letter of recommendation. Most likely they will say yes. In some cases, however, the faculty member may say no or that he or she can only write a recommendation citing certain qualifiers or weaknesses. In this case, you should accept his/her judgment graciously and consider asking for more feedback about your goals and plan for study.
- **Once faculty have agreed to write your letters, provide them with copies of your application materials.** The following items will help them to write accurate and purposeful letters:
 - photocopies of key pages from the application brochure, describing the nature and purpose of the scholarship
 - a copy (or a draft) of your application essays, or a summary of your career and educational goals
 - a list of your activities (sports, organizations, leadership and volunteer positions, etc.)
 - a description of pertinent work or research experiences
 - a copy of your transcript
 - If a number of quarters have passed since you worked with a recommender, you should also provide her/him with a copy of your paper or class project.
- **Write out all submission instructions and deadlines.** There should be no question as to when and where to submit the finished letters. Provide properly addressed, typed and stamped envelopes.
- **Keep in touch with your recommenders.** After submitting your application, send recommenders a thank you note expressing your appreciation for their guidance and support. Update them on your progress throughout the stages of the competition and inform them whether you are selected for the award or not. Should you need a recommendation in the future, this kind of follow-up communication will continue to foster a close, positive relationship with your faculty sponsors.