

SEARCHING FOR EXTERNAL, NATIONALLY COMPETITIVE SCHOLARSHIPS

From: James Duban, Director
Office for Nationally Competitive Scholarships

Dear UNT Students (undergraduate and graduate):

Many nationally competitive scholarships exist that can help fund your education and bring added distinction to you, your resumes, and UNT. Thanks to the Internet and to the sharing of websites, highly advanced search engines are at your disposal. But finding an opportunity is just the beginning.

The UNT Office for Nationally Competitive Scholarships stands ready to work with you and your faculty mentors by offering stylistic and tonal feedback on any essay (no matter how small or large) that you plan to submit for any competition. That feedback, you will learn, is an extension of either your undergraduate or graduate education. Benefits will accrue through the enhancement of your writing skills (no matter what your level of proficiency at the moment) and in the way the application process encourages you to think, several years ahead, about where you eventually want to be in your field of study or in the workforce. Moreover, undergraduates will find that national-scholarship essays help them apply to graduate school; graduate students, in turn, end up transforming their scholarship proposals into the theoretical introductions to their master's thesis or doctoral dissertation. Stated otherwise, the process of applying for a nationally competitive scholarship is a "no lose" scenario, relative to the educational value of the experience—and hopefully with respect to the outcome of the various competitions.

Here's how to proceed in a way that will let you know what's "out there," and how my office can assist you in this process. You can start by visiting the home page of the National Association of Fellowships Advisors <http://www.nafadvisors.org/scholarships.htm> to see some of the higher-profile opportunities. There are many more external scholarships and fellowships than these, however, and here's a quick way of accessing those through Internet sites that students visit throughout the country:

1. Visit my home page (www.opgf.unt.edu) for an overview of high-profile scholarships but then scroll to the bottom "links."
2. Click, for example, on the Cornell University Graduate Fellowship Notebook (you may use that or any other link, but you should not contact that university for clarification about any scholarship; instead, contact me, at jduban@unt.edu).
3. Once there, clear the deadline boxes (those will limit the number of scholarships that appear), click the box that says, "any deadline," and click "Award" in the "Sort by" field.
4. Then, enter your field of study by clicking on the down arrow and choosing a field, OR enter the key-word or words for which you wish to search.
5. After clicking on "Go," a number of possibilities will emerge, each in hypertext.
6. Click on each hypertext to summon up a description of the award, amount of award, and deadlines. Further hypertext will usually lead to the website at which you can download the application, or at least learn about an address to which you can write for an application form. If applicable, also search, in the category box, for scholarships for "International Students," "Scholarships for Women"—or "Scholarships for Minorities."
7. All students should click on the other links, as well, to see if they offer other opportunities for your consideration.
8. Note, as well, the link "UNT Scholarships and Financial Aid Resources." It will lead you to numerous hard-copy and Internet library resources that will prove helpful in searching for scholarships. This will occasion a trip to the Willis Library Reference Area. I will gladly provide feedback for any application that you generate for any external scholarship or fellowship.
9. Make sure, as well, to check out www.fastweb.com and www.Brokescholar.com

ONCE YOU HAVE AN APPLICATION FORM IN HAND:

- determine the word or "character" limit for each entry;
- fill out that response in a Word document, adhering to the word or "character" limit;
- place that response under a cut-and-paste of the essay prompt (that is, the instructions for that essay), and run that response by your faculty mentor for thematic and stylistic feedback;
- incorporate that feedback into your Word document;
- cut and paste that revised Word document into an email to jduban@unt.edu. I will provide additional feedback in the areas of style and tone.

--When you, your mentor, and I are satisfied with that Word document, you will then go through the same process for each subsequent entry or essay.

--After completing each and every entry this way, you will then cut and paste those entries into the appropriate boxes or columns of the formal application. I advise you never to work on the Internet site until you have completed the essay(s) in Word.

--Students should complete the application at least three weeks prior to the deadline and show a copy of the completed application to any person from whom they expect a letter of recommendation. The completed application will give recommenders more to say about you and will also allow them to place their recommendations in the context of the specific scholarship and its expectations. Professors will also perceive the three-week buffer as a welcome gesture of courtesy.

I look forward to working with you on these opportunities. Please let me know which scholarships you deem appropriate for you. When you send an email to me, kindly place the name of the scholarship at the front of the "subject" line, with the added words, "will apply, need feedback." For example, your subject line might read as follows: "Rotary Scholarship, will apply, need feedback."

I look forward to working with you on these opportunities.

James Duban
Director
Office for Nationally Competitive Scholarships