

Fellowships Program Information Sheet – What Makes a Strong Fellowships Prospect

Updated: September 3, 2019

As faculty members and staff meet with students to talk about academic and co-curricular plans, please consider if the students include strong candidates for fellowships this year or in the future. Students' likelihood of success in national and international competitions for prestigious fellowships, scholarships, and internships can be enhanced greatly if they start discussions early with their mentors and begin working with a fellowships adviser well before applications are due. Strong applications require students to have well-grounded plans, practice in presenting themselves, and relevant knowledge of the competitions and opportunities they represent. Fellowships advisers can help students and their mentors with this process.

How to identify potential candidates?

1. A high GPA is necessary for competitive awards. For virtually all awards, this means at least 3.4; for the very most competitive fellowship and scholarship awards, a very high GPA - at least a 3.8 - is required.
2. Evidence of research (STRIDE, Kahn, Picker, SURF, AEMES, contribution to undergraduate journal or other publication, research poster presentation, etc.) or comparable accomplishment in creative work (performance, writing, production, etc.) is usually required to demonstrate high achievement and future potential in a relevant field.
3. Evidence of leadership (broadly defined) is usually required to indicate the student's effectiveness and potential when engaging in work - intellectual and practical - with or on behalf of others.
4. Enthusiastic and articulate commitment to academic studies plus some substantial engagement with community, sports, politics, and/or public issues are usually required as indications of intellectual liveliness, creativity, resilience, and maturity.
5. A track record of successful applications made for competitive scholarships, awards, and internships can help by providing external and internal recognition of excellence and potential.

If you have strong students with some or all of these attributes, please encourage them to start planning now. An email from you to the student would be a good way to start the process; please cc both Don Andrew (dandrew@smith.edu), director of Smith's Fulbright Program, and Margaret Lamb (mlamb@smith.edu), director of the Fellowships Program at the Lazarus Center for Career Development (Margaret is responsible for working with students on all non-Fulbright applications).

Sophomores and juniors may apply for some prestigious fellowships – like Beinecke, Goldwater, Truman, and Udall. These early applications can be strong preparation for the most competitive of graduate fellowships – including Gates Cambridge, Knight-Hennessy, Marshall, Mitchell, and Rhodes.

- **Fellowships - A Quick Summary of Principal Competitive Fellowships**
[https://www.smith.edu/fellowships/docs/fellowships_quick_summary.pdf]
- **Fellowships, Scholarships, and Other Competitive Awards - By Class Year**
[https://www.smith.edu/fellowships/docs/1.ALL.2.003.Quick_Summary_By_Class_Year.pdf]

Thank you for taking the time to include fellowships, scholarships, and other competitive awards in conversations with your advisees and other students for whom you are a teacher or mentor.