

Preparing for Political Science Careers:

Prestigious Scholarships for Study, Research, or the Pursuit of an Independent Project

I. Scholarship Descriptions

There are a number of nationally-competitive awards which pay you to travel, to further study political science, or to conduct political science research. While there are many opportunities, some of the most famous include:

For Study or Research in the United States

- Javits Fellowship: for graduate study in the social sciences.
- Soros New Americans Fellowship: for naturalized US citizens to pursue graduate study.
- Truman Scholarship: This scholarship covers upper-level undergraduate or graduate tuition for students planning a career in public service.
- James Madison Scholarship pays for graduate study for students planning on becoming American government teachers.
- Udall Scholarship is for sophomores and juniors interested in the environment, or for Alaska Natives / Native Americans interested in healthcare or tribal policy.
- Pickering Fellowship will pay for the undergraduate or graduate study of a student going into the US Foreign Service. After graduate school graduation the recipient is guaranteed a job in the US Department of State..
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Junior Fellows offers awardees a position in Washington DC doing international relations related research for the Carnegie Endowment.

For Study or Research Abroad

- Boren, Department of State, Flagship Critical Language and Gilman Scholarships: These grants provide money for study abroad and language training in areas related to US national security and/or competitiveness. The Flagship scholarship can also be used to study language in the US.
- Gilman Scholarships cover the cost of study abroad for students underrepresented among study abroad participants (such as racial and ethnic minorities and students with disabilities)
- Fulbright Grants: These grants allow you to travel to almost any country in the world and spend a year studying, pursuing an independent research project of your design, and (in some countries) teaching English.
- Rotary Scholarships: These scholarships fund nine months of overseas study.
- Marshall Scholarship is for graduate study in the UK
- Rhodes Scholarship is for graduate study at the University of Oxford in the UK.
- The Gates Cambridge Scholarship is for students pursuing graduate study at Cambridge University in the UK.
- The Mitchell Scholarship is for students pursuing graduate studies in Ireland.
- American – Scandinavian Foundation Award This grant allows you to travel to a Scandinavian country to pursue study or research on a topic of your choosing.
- German Chancellor Scholarship This generous award pays for you to spend a year in Germany after graduation learning German and pursuing a research project of your choice.
- DAAD Scholarship This award allows you to pursue graduate education in Germany.

Other Opportunities

- Humanity in Action Fellowship: allows students to meet human rights leaders at workshops either in the United States or in Europe.
- Simon Fellowship for Noble Purpose This is a large cash award to carry out a project you've designed that will improve civil society.

II. Preparation

In order to be competitive for the above opportunities, you need to begin preparing as soon as possible in your undergraduate career. Here are some steps to follow:

- **Get good grades.** All of these opportunities are based on merit to award excellence. Most recipients have at least a 3.7 GPA.
- **Pursue and document leadership opportunities.** To earn many of the above awards you must demonstrate leadership capabilities. Get involved outside the classroom, not just as a member of an organization but as an officer or founder. Be sure to record your accomplishments so you can tell selection committees about them.
- **Develop relationships with tenure-track faculty.** For all of these awards you will need to have a detailed letter of recommendation from a scholar who knows you well. Cultivate close relationships with faculty and discuss your post-graduate plans. Professors can also help you with your application.
- **Develop and maintain relationships with employers and off campus organizations.** For many of these grants you will need to develop your own project to pursue, sometimes in a foreign country. If you've studied abroad or developed ties to an off campus organization, be sure to keep those contacts in the loop about your plans. These individuals can serve as references, host institutions, or assist you in preparing your application.
- **Plan ahead and allot considerable time to the application process.** In order to develop the competitive application you will need for these awards, as well as to get the good references which are essential, you will need a lot of lead time. The time to start thinking about getting a grant is months or years before (not the week before) the deadline.

III. More Information

- To **read more** about the above-mentioned scholarships – and others - -see the Office of Academic Enhancement's website and their brochure: www.miami.edu/awards
- If you find a scholarship of interest to you, **contact the Office of Academic Enhancement** immediately for help in developing your application. The appropriate person to contact is: Ms. Kefryn Reese, Director, Prestigious Awards and Fellowships; 5600 Merrick Drive, Building 21-Y; Ph: (305) 284-5384; prestigiousawards@miami.edu.
- Once you have the information about how to apply from the Honors Office you should **contact at least one professor from the appropriate area of study** about your plans, and begin working with him/her on your application. If you are planning to pursue a program for which you require a host institution you should also begin the appropriate application procedures.