

## **The Application Process – General Guidelines**

### **July 2015**

You will gain a deeper understanding of yourself and your academic/career goals through the scholarship/fellowship application process. You will become more comfortable writing a variety of documents, including resumes, personal statements and project proposals, which will serve you well when applying for graduate school, professional school or employment.

### **Develop a List of Scholarships and Fellowships and a Calendar of Timelines**

Using the Scholarships and Fellowships Database, identify appropriate funding sources for yourself, paying careful attention to the qualifications. Make sure you are eligible for the award before you invest too much of your time.

Contact the PLU Scholarships and Fellowships coordinator to discuss your scholarship and fellowship options. Speak with faculty who know you well as soon as you have determined that you are eligible for a particular award, letting them know of your plans, and getting their advice.

Successful applications for competitive awards take months to develop. You should start writing your application several months before the due date. [For many scholarships that you apply for as a senior, you must begin the application process as a junior. In most cases, students begin working on their application months in advance of the campus deadline.]

Each application is different – read the criteria carefully. Pay attention to what is offered through the scholarship or fellowship. What is the funding level? Does the funding come to you through PLU or are you paid directly by the sponsor?

### **Application Materials**

Most applications require a personal essay or statement. Additional items may also be required:

- Letters of recommendation. Recommenders must know you to write a good reference. Faculty members are best, but in certain circumstances others could serve as good references. For faculty, a good reference will follow only after you have some one-on-one conversations about your course work, your professional goals and your scholarship/fellowship application.
- A project proposal
- A resume or curriculum vitae
- Your transcripts
- An interview

Refer to the specific scholarship/fellowship instructions for all required application materials.

Identify trusted faculty mentors and friends who will critique drafts of your personal essay and application materials; share the scholarship criteria and directions along with your written documents with them. Ask for serious, demanding criticism on the substance, organization, and correctness of your writing.

Your final application materials should be error-free. Give yourself a week (optimally) to review your materials before the submission deadline. The only way you can prevent and identify errors is by planning to have enough time for you, your mentors and your friends to review your application materials.