



UCLA Scholarship Resource Center STRATEGIES

WINTER 2012 VOL. 17 NO. 2

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Scholarship Applicants

By Malcolm Harris
SRC Staff

Habit 1: Be Proactive.

No matter who you are and no matter what your background, there are scholarships out there waiting for you to win them. The trick is taking the initiative to find those scholarships. The most effective students we encounter at the Scholarship Resource Center frequently use our library of scholarship books to search for new scholarship listings.

Habit 2: Stick to a Schedule.

The most successful scholarship applicants treat the process like a class or a research project: they set particular days and times each week to work on scholarships, whether searching for new ones or polishing an existing application. Even if that means only 1-2 hours per week, sticking to a scholarship schedule keeps you on top of deadlines and ensures a higher quality for your application than a last-minute binge strategy would.

Habit 3: Get Organized.

Keep a list of the scholarships that most interest you, whether as an Excel document or on a piece of paper. Be sure to record the key information about each one—the deadline and the requirements (essay, letter of recommendation, transcript, etc.). Keep your scholarship materials, especially your essays, together with that list, so that you will have them when needed.



Habit 4: Know Your Teachers.

When the time comes to request a letter of recommendation for a scholarship, the most effective applicants do not need to squirm about whether or not they should ask their TA or professor to write one, because they have already established relationships with TAs and professors by occasionally attending office hours to ask questions or advice (no need to stalk). They also give their recommenders plenty of time in advance of the deadline since they know how busy those TAs and professors are.

WELCOME BACK!

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CHOOSING A THEME FOR YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

By Elizabeth Raisanen
SRC Staff

Have you ever found yourself struggling with writer's block while trying to compose your personal statement for a scholarship application essay? If you're having trouble figuring out what to write about, you may want to think more about how to present yourself to the selection committee for each scholarship you are applying for.

The scholarship personal statement should not merely list your activities, interests, and accomplishments (that's what your résumé is for!). Rather, the personal statement should give scholarship committees a sense of who you are, what you've done, and what you hope to do. Because you will not be able to discuss every activity you've ever participated in and every goal you've achieved or set for yourself, it pays to be strategic about the activities, accomplishments, and goals that you do share in your essay.

The strongest personal statements often employ one or two themes that provide a focus for the essay (as well as for the other components of the scholarship application). These themes also emphasize the subject area(s) that determine a student's scholarship eligibility, and demonstrate some of the personal qualities that scholarship committees wish to see in their applicants.

Consider one of the following options when developing a theme for your personal statement, or visit the UCLA Scholarship Resource Center to discuss additional essay themes with a counselor. Keep in mind that these themes are merely suggestions. You should feel free to combine or modify them, or even create your own!

Sample Theme #1: The Creative Talent

Are you exceptionally skilled in a creative discipline such as the visual arts, music, dance, drama, creative writing, or photography? Have you spent a lot of time practicing your art and honing your skills? If so, you may wish to consider this essay topic, as it could help you demonstrate your hard work, focus, and determination to scholarship committee members. **Remember:** Committee members also value well-roundedness in their applicants, so you shouldn't appear one-dimensional in your essay. You could consider demonstrating

your proficiency in several creative disciplines, or bal-

ance your creative work with other kinds of activities. You may also want to consider explaining how the character traits that made you successful in your creative discipline will help you with other life or career goals.

Sample Theme #2: The Entrepreneur

Have you started your own business? Do you constantly have great ideas for products, services, or other entrepreneurial projects? Might you even have a patent pending? If so, you might be a budding entrepreneur, and a scholarship essay focused on this theme could help to demonstrate your self-initiative, creativity, versatility, and business acumen (particularly if you ran a successful business while you were still a student!). **Remember:** You don't want to come across as greedy or as someone who is out to make a quick profit (or that you view the acquisition of scholarships in this light). You should also make it clear that your business ventures have not interfered with your education. Ideally, you should be able to tie your past or current business ventures to future life or career goals.



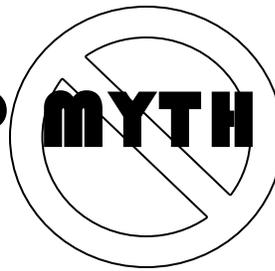
Sample Theme #3: The Survivor

If you have overcome significant obstacles in your life (including, but not limited to, economic hardships, family problems, medical conditions, or other kinds of personal issues), *and you feel comfortable* discussing how overcoming those obstacles has shaped the person you are today, this essay theme might be for you. **Remember:** Merely describing a difficult situation you've been in isn't enough. Committee members will want to know *how* you responded to your situation. In addition, if the obstacles you have overcome have influenced your life or career goals in any way, you should make that clear in your essay, too.

Remember to attend one of the SRC's Winter Quarter workshops on *How to Write Personal Statements* (see schedule on the back page of this newsletter), as well as to make an appointment for a writing consultation with an SRC counselor!

Themes in this article were adapted from Ben Kaplan's How to Go to College Almost for Free (Harper Collins, 2002).

SCHOLARSHIP MYTH BUSTERS



By Hannah Nahm
SRC Staff

Myth #1: *“I don’t qualify for scholarships because I’m a non-traditional student.”*

Fact: Being a non-traditional student (typically age 25 or above) should not discourage you from searching for scholarships. For one, undergraduate scholarships typically do not have age limits; and two, there are many scholarship organizations and resources that are tailored just for this group! Here is a short list of such scholarship opportunities:

Adult Students in Scholastic Transition Scholarship (ASIST)—13 scholarships ranging from \$2k to \$10k

<http://www.executivewomen.org/scriptcontent/aboutus/scholarship.cfm>

Kazimour Scholarship—two scholarships available at \$500 annually, awarded by Association of Nontraditional Students in Higher Education (ANTSHE)

<http://antshe.org/kazimour.htm>

Jeannette Rankin Foundation—grants for women over age 35

<http://www.rankingfoundation.org>

UCLA Bernard Osher Re-entry Scholarship for students ages 25-50 \$5,000 for two years

<http://www.scholarshipcenter.ucla.edu/DUE/Transfer.html>

Myth #2: *“I don’t apply for scholarships because doing so takes too much time and effort.”*

Fact: While it is true that winning scholarship materials cannot be created overnight and genuine effort is needed on your part, the scholarship application process is wholly manageable and less time-consuming than you think. It’s all about steering clear of the need to re-invent the wheel and building instead on what you already have. Once you invest the necessary time and energy into submitting a strong scholarship application, you can then recall, reuse, and revise the material from this document for other scholarships you apply to in the future. In short, the more you apply, the easier it gets! And here’s a fun statistic: If you have two completed scholarship applications, you are 60% on your way to completing ten more!

Myth #3: *“Scholarships are for those students with a long list of extracurricular activities.”*

Fact: When it comes to scholarships, quality outweighs quantity. What scholarship committees look for is not so much the WHAT (a laundry list of extracurricular work or services), but the HOW (the significance that the extracurricular work has for you and what that says about your character, interest, or passion). Do not let the lack of extensive volunteer, leadership, or other social activities get in the way of applying for scholarships. It’s likely that you already have an extracurricular background or experiences that set you apart from the scholarship application pool and don’t realize it. Come by the SRC, and we can brainstorm together to mine your extracurricular gold!

Sources: Ben Kaplan’s *How to Go to College Almost for Free*; www.fastweb.com/college-scholarships/articles/49-five-scholarship-myths

Join our fan page on Facebook/uclasrc to get alerts
on upcoming scholarships!

Also, follow us on Twitter @UCLASRC

INTERVIEW WITH SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

ANGELA SANCHEZ

By Francesca Marx
SRC Staff

What is your major? What is your year in school?

History major, English and Education minors. I'm a third-year.

What scholarship(s) did you win?

For my third year, I continue to rely on scholarships I earned in my freshman year: the Alumni Scholars Club Scholarship and the Americana Spirit of American Youth Scholarship. I've also reapplied annually to the AAP Scholarship, College Honors Scholarship, Financial Aid Office Scholarship (open for multiple scholarships), and Hispanic Scholarship Fund Scholarship.

What motivated you to apply for the scholarship(s)?

Financial difficulty at home and therefore no ability to make a substantial contribution to my academic fees. Also, a strong desire to graduate with minimal loans.

When did you begin to prepare for the scholarship process?

Initially, at the same time I applied for college in my senior year of high school. The scholarships I earned then continued to help me out at UCLA. Thereafter, I learned of other scholarships through on-campus programs I was already involved with (AAP and Honors Collegium). When I learned of the SRC in January of my freshman year, I quickly encompassed that in my itinerary of doors to knock on for scholarship leads.

How much time would you estimate that you spent looking for scholarships?

Looking for scholarships: About less than 5 hours a quarter. Actually working on the scholarship process: No less than 10 hours a quarter. Essay writing and modification were the most time-consuming.

What were the most difficult and easiest aspects of applying for scholarships?

The most difficult aspect is the essay writing. The easiest is hitting "send" or stapling the application and handing it in. The overall "leg-work" of the process (running around and getting transcripts, enroll-

ment verification, etc.) falls somewhere in the middle. The most enjoyable part is the follow-up with the donor.

How did you prepare your recommenders to write letters on your behalf?

I went to office hours! I also participated in class. I was no stranger to the professors or counselors I approached for letters of recommendation. When I asked them for letters of recommendation, they had no qualms about saying yes and I provided them with my résumé and a list with descriptions of my on-going activities. I always made an effort to give my correspondents 2-3 weeks' advance notice; however, on the off-occasion when I found a scholarship only one week before the deadline, they knew me well enough to still agree to write a letter.

What role did the SRC have on you finding out about and/or winning this scholarship?

Walking into the SRC, the first thing that hits anyone is the order. Binders row the shelves providing a wealth of information on scholarships tailored to students. The SRC is a fantastic resource in not only finding scholarships but also having a kind and patient staff. It was always easy to schedule an appointment and reschedule when necessary. The SRC staff, especially Valerie Shepard and Francesca Marx, were instrumental in reviewing and proof-reading my essays. I have no doubt that because of their attention my success has been possible.

What benefits do you anticipate from winning?

Scholarships aren't just financial-aid, they're connections. I still keep in touch with my previous donors and those who have tipped me off to scholarship sources in the first place. When you apply for a scholarship, it's not about seeing dollar signs but seeing the people who provide the support. There are valuable opportunities for internships, mentor-relationships, and general networking with truly considerate people.

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What advice do you have for other UCLA students who apply for scholarships?

There's this myth that only minorities or the financially needy receive scholarships. The reality is that the diligent earn scholarships. A great deal of personal effort goes into the scholarship process, not just in terms of essay writing, but in personal grooming throughout the school year (i.e. meeting professors, community service, grade maintenance). That first step to earning a scholarship, taking the initiative to at least put one's effort forward, is entirely in the hands of the applicant. There's also the self-defeating mentality of "why try?" if the student hasn't previously won any scholarships. Why try? What is there to lose? You don't know until you try.

Also, it's important to remember that applying for scholarships isn't a singular event that mounts into one mad scramble a year. It's a culmination of the year's efforts – maintaining a strong GPA, participating in community service, getting involved – that goes into one mad scramble at key times of the year.

The SRC would like to thank Angela for sharing her story. Congratulations, Angela!

Angela's Tips for Winning College Cash:

- ✓ Apply for as many scholarships as you can.
- ✓ Fight the self-defeating mentality of "why try" because you have nothing to lose and much to gain.
- ✓ Stay organized! Keep a record of all the scholarships that are due by month and try to submit applications a couple of days before they are due.
- ✓ Although there's a myth that only the financially needy receive scholarships, the reality is that it's the diligent students who earn scholarships.
- ✓ Attend office hours and participate in class.
- ✓ Give your recommenders at least 2-3 weeks advance notice before a letter is due.
- ✓ Consider scholarships not just as financial aid but as connections, and keep in touch with your donors.



Don't forget to file your FAFSA by March 2nd! For information and the online application, go to <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>

**COME JOIN OUR SPECIAL EVENT SPONSORED BY ORL ON TUESDAY
JANUARY 17th, 7 PM @ NORTHWEST CAMPUS AUDITORIUM!**

Double-Tasking: Time and Energy– Saving Ways to Fit Scholarship Applications into Your Schedule

By Katherine Webster
SRC Staff

There's a lot to think about as a college student: you have classes to attend, papers to write, labs and problem sets to finish, clubs to participate in, internships or jobs to work, and sometimes you even have to think about preparing for post-graduate study (like med school, law school, or graduate school) while you are still a full time undergraduate student. How are you going to find time to apply for scholarships in the midst of all of that? One thing that we recommend is “double-tasking”-- or working on projects and activities that can help you work toward at least two goals at once. Here are a few ideas about how to get started.

Revisit Your UC Application: This tip is especially for students in their first year at UCLA. If you are a freshmen or a junior transfer, you probably have a recent personal statement at your fingertips already because you were required to submit one along with your UC application.

You can also make this essay work as part of your scholarship portfolio. Take it out, dust it off, and think about ways that you can update it now that you've been in school for a quarter or two. Chances are that you have a lot of work done on a very good scholarship essay already.

Work on Standardized Personal Statements and Statements of Purpose: If there are any lulls in your academic schedule (early in the quarter or just after midterms, for instance), you might want to use these times to work on a standard personal statement and a statement of purpose. These are the two most common types of essays that scholarship applications require. While it's not always possible to use the exact same essay for multiple scholarship applications, if you spend time when you can developing a few strong core samples of writing, you can quickly and easily modify your essays and keep submitting applications even when it's crunch time. And remember, the SRC gives helpful workshops each quarter on writing personal statements!

Make Course Assignments Work Double-Time:

Many scholarships and awards out there are project-based or essay-based-- and sometimes you can use assignments that you've completed for your UCLA courses as the basis for your applications. Many departments on campus offer scholarships for academic work completed in the course of the school year: the English department, for example, offers an award for the best essay written by a student in the 10-series. If you are asked to develop your own topic or project for a class, you might also use this as an opportunity to add to your scholarship application portfolio. The ASAE (American Society of Agricultural Engineers, asae.org) runs a contest with monetary prizes every year for the best submissions of engineering projects that are related to agriculture-- you might be able to work on a project for an Engineering class that would satisfy requirements for both the course and the contest.



UCLA Campus Programs: There are lots of programs on campus that allow you to do two things at once, so to speak. Interested in getting involved in the community, but don't have the time to fit extra-curricular service into your academic schedule? Check out the Center for Community Learning (www.ugeducation.ucla.edu/communitylearning/), an office on campus that can help you get academic units for internships and volunteer work. The Undergraduate Research Centers (there's one for Humanities and Social Sciences and another for Life and Physical Sciences, <http://www.ugeducation.ucla.edu/ugresearch/>) also offer great opportunities. If you are accepted into one of their programs, you get the chance to work with a professor on a project or in a lab, and you get some funding, too! These are also great ways to make connections with potential future letter-writers and to gain experience in a field that you could pursue in post-graduate study or in your post-grad professional life.

Search the scholarship databases listed under the ‘Scholarship Search’ tab on our website (www.scholarshipcenter.ucla.edu).

Counseling about scholarship strategies is available in our office anytime we are open (M-F 11-6). Our staff of scholarship experts is friendly and always eager to help.

Half-hour appointments are offered for one-on-one help with planning your applications to specific scholarships and for editing your scholarship essays.

Our website offers a list of UCLA scholarships with a wide array of links to important resources and information about scholarships, financial aid and internet tools.

Library resources for scholarships are just as important as internet resources, and our office contains an updated library of quality scholarship books.

Announcements of specific scholarships go out frequently to every student who signs up for the SRC Group under the ‘Groups’ tab of my.ucla.edu.

Read scholarship criteria carefully so that you understand the eligibility requirements and don’t waste time applying for scholarships for which you don’t qualify.

Security from scholarship fraud requires careful attention to the details of what a particular scholarship requires—if you are ever uncertain or uncomfortable about a sketchy scholarship offer, come see our staff for advice.

Handwritten applications look unprofessional—if you apply for a scholarship that does not allow an online application, make an appointment to use our typewriter.

Indices in our scholarship books organize the scholarships into many different categories that help make your scholarship search far more efficient.

Proofreading services are available for the final drafts of your scholarship applications—be sure to give our staff at least 24 hours before the deadline!

Scholarship bulletin board listings can be found in the hallway outside our office—listings are organized by academic division, date, and other categories.

(7 Habits continued from page 1)

Habit 5: Read Applications Carefully.

Most scholarship applications yield important insights into the kind of student the scholarship organizations want to award, if you read them carefully. Some will even describe the basis on which they will evaluate your essay(s). It is also a great idea to go beyond the application and do some research on the people and/or organization offering the scholarship. What are their backgrounds and interests? What is their mission? They are probably looking to award a student who complements these.

Habit 6: Seek Help.

Highly effective scholarship applicants are not islands unto themselves. They ask other people to read and critique their scholarship essays. At UCLA, they especially take advantage of the writing support on scholarship essays offered by the Scholarship Resource Center, and make appointments with staff members to help brainstorm for their essays and review drafts.

Habit 7: Keep Tinkering.

You can always improve your application and your profile. While it is a good idea to recycle scholarship essays to cut down on your workload, keep looking for improvements you can make to those old essays. If your community service record seems too minimal to apply for many scholarships, consider joining a community service-oriented student group that appeals to you.

Have you won a scholarship with the help of the SRC? If so, we’d love to hear from you! Send us an email at src@college.ucla.edu or give us a call at 310.206.2875.



Take advantage of these FREE
resources and more!

Wide-Ranging Library
Workshops Every Quarter
Extensive Scholarship Website
One-on-one Counseling
Writing Assistance
Even a Typewriter!

It's all waiting for you at the

UCLASRC

Scholarship Resource Center

*guiding UCLA students through
the scholarship process*

233 Covell Commons
(310) 206-2875

Open Monday to Friday
11 am—6 pm

src@college.ucla.edu

www.scholarshipcenter.ucla.edu

**Join our fanpage
on Facebook to get
alerts on upcoming
scholarships!**

Scholarship Resource Center Winter 2012 Workshop Schedule

*All workshops are held in Covell 229 and include a
personalized follow-up counseling session.
Sign up for a workshop through MY.UCLA.EDU.*

Secrets to Winning College Cash

TUES	Jan 10	5-5:30 PM
THUR	Jan 19	5-5:30 PM
MON	Jan 30	5:30-6 PM
WED	Feb 15	5-5:30 PM
THUR	Feb 23	5:30-6 PM
THUR	March 1	5-5:30 PM

How to Win Scholarships

WED	Jan 11	5-5:30 PM
FRI	Feb 10	5-5:30 PM

How to Find Scholarships

THUR	Jan 12	5-5:30 PM
THUR	Feb 16	5:30-6 PM

How to Write Personal Statements

FRI	Jan 20	5-6 PM
WED	Feb 8	5-6 PM

How to Get Letters of Recommendation

FRI	Jan 27	5-5:30 PM
TUES	Feb 21	5-5:30 PM

SCHOLARSHIP EVENT WITH ORL

WHEN: Tuesday, Jan 17, 7:00 pm

WHERE: Northwest Campus Auditorium

WHAT: Secrets for Winning College Cash
& How to Win Scholarships

*** bring your laptop!**