



# UCLA Scholarship Resource Center STRATEGIES

FALL 2012/ VOL. 18 NO. 1

## Write *This*, Not *That*

**D**o you know how to pick an essay topic that both speaks to your strengths and does so in an original, inventive, and interesting way? You'd be surprised at what topics work, and what topics don't. Elizabeth Heaton, who worked for a number of years at the University of Pennsylvania and read thousands of essays in her time as an admissions officer there, recently published an article in *USA Today* on some of the most overused topics that she and her colleagues encountered during her tenure. We take a look at some of those topics here, and give some pointers on how to make sure that your essays are unique and successful.

### The "Big Game" Essay:

These essays usually describe a sporting event in which the writer has participated, and make one of two arguments: "there's no 'I' in 'team'", or "it's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game". At first, writing about the "big game" sounds like a great idea! You can emphasize a number of admirable qualities in this type of sports-related essay that scholarship committees like to see: maturity and leadership, for example, and the ability, literally, to be a "team player." The fact is, however, that a lot of people will write this essay, and that readers have seen this topic before.

If you're going to write an essay about an athletic or team-based experience, make sure your argument goes further than the two listed above, or looks at athletics or team-based activities from a new perspective. What did the game mean to you that it probably did not mean to other players? Did playing

on this team teach you any values that you put into practice elsewhere in your life? Giving your reader a sense of what your answers are to even one of these questions will help them see who you are as an individual, and will make your essay more memorable.



### The "List of Accomplishments" Essay, aka, the "Prose Resume":

We all want to emphasize our accomplishments in our scholarship applications, and sometimes we want to make sure that the reading committee knows that we are well rounded and have excelled in more than one area. The trouble is, though, that if we try to put too much information

into just one essay, the writing can start to sound like a list. Fortunately, many applications ask for a more formal list of accomplishments or a résumé, so there's no real need to provide duplicate information about all of your activities in your essay.

Your personal statement should be more of a story than a list. Pick one activity or experience that has meant the most to you (yes, just one, especially for shorter essays!) and tell the story of how it has changed you and what you have learned. What prompted you to get involved? What were your expectations? What was the activity like? What did you learn, and, most importantly, how are you going to apply what you have learned elsewhere in your life? Be sure to use specific details about actions you took or decisions you made, and don't be afraid to get a little creative. *(continued on page 2)*

### WELCOME BACK!

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Join our page on  
Facebook to get  
alerts on upcoming  
scholarships!

**The “One Night I Volunteered” Essay:**

This essay usually focuses on a very short-term (one- or two-day) community service engagement, and, as Heaton notes, “[comes] the following conclusion: I never realized how much I had until I met people who didn’t have anything.” This topic also seems like it will work for a number of reasons: you can emphasize your thoughtfulness, the importance you place on kindness, and even your drive to seek social change. These are wonderful qualities to emphasize, but there are a number of ways to illustrate them more convincingly.

As with the “Big Game” essay, readers will have heard the arguments made in the “One Night I Volunteered” essay before. Narrowing the focus or argument of the “Volunteer” essay, then, is one way to personalize your writing: was there something unique about your volunteer event? Did you help to fundraise for it over the internet, or gather a group of fellow volunteers on Facebook? Maybe you could write about how social media could be used for community work, and discuss the value of the internet in the context of service endeavors. Alternately, you could shift your topic to focus on a community activity that you have participated in repeatedly and over the course of a longer time period. The main problem with essays that talk about short term activities is that they don’t always address the long-term commitment to service that scholarship committees are looking for.

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***Are you an  
Engineering major?  
Don’t forget to check out the  
HSSEAS Scholarships! Online  
applications are usually avail-  
able early October and due in  
early November.  
Visit their website at  
[http://www.seasoasa.ucla.edu/  
student-opportunities/  
scholarships-for-  
undergraduates/201213HSSE-  
ASScholarshipApplication](http://www.seasoasa.ucla.edu/student-opportunities/scholarships-for-undergraduates/201213HSSE-ASScholarshipApplication)***

## **12 STEPS TO SCHOLARSHIP SUCCESS!**

By Elizabeth Raisanen, SRC Staff

**S**earch for scholarships (a good place to begin is at the SRC!).

**C**ollect and organize scholarship applications; obtain transcript(s), if necessary.

**H**ave a long-term plan for completing your applications (put deadlines on your calendar).

**O**ffice hours – use them to get to know your instructors so that you can request...

**L**etters of recommendation (give recommenders at least one month’s advance notice).

**A**pplication forms – fill them out and proofread them carefully.

**R**ésumé or CV – some applications require them, so make sure you have one that’s up-to-date.

**S**tatement of purpose or personal statement – give yourself plenty of time to write and revise it.

**H**one application documents – make an appointment at the SRC for final proofreading!

**I**nquire to make sure that all of your application materials and letters have arrived.

**P**ersist – apply for as many scholarships as you’re eligible for.

**S**tart the process over again!

# SCHOLARSHIPS FOR SCIENTISTS!

By Francesca Marx, SRC Staff

**T**hough the 2012-13 academic year has just begun, it's not too early to start thinking about next year. Whether you will be a continuing sophomore or a graduating senior, there are opportunities to take advantage of. For every field there are many scholarships and research opportunities just for you! Here are some that are geared to Engineering, Physical Science, and Life Science majors.

The UCLA Undergraduate Research Center for Life and Physical Sciences offers many programs to help researchers get started. The CARE Fellows Program provides students with little or no previous research experience the opportunity to receive financial support while participating in a research project with a faculty mentor. See <http://www.ugeducation.ucla.edu/urc-care/ScholFellows.htm> for further information. The CARE Scholars Program provides students who do have previous research experience the opportunity to receive financial support while participating in upper-division independent research with a faculty mentor. See <http://www.ugeducation.ucla.edu/urc-care/scholars.htm> for details. Another opportunity to be aware of is the MARC (Minority Access to Research Careers) honors program. This program helps to prepare highly able minority students for graduate programs at outstanding universities throughout the United States.

Departments also provide many great opportunities for research and funding. One example is the Engineering program, which offers numerous scholarships. There are awards for students studying a wide variety of engineering topics. These scholarships are open to students early in their academic career as well as to students with several years of research experience. For further information, go to <http://www.engineer.ucla.edu/giving/scholarships>. Also, watch for scholarship workshops designed specifically for engineering students later this fall.

Outside of UCLA, scholarship and research opportunities abound. AES Engineering offers scholarships that are based on character rather than GPA. You do not need to be an engi-

neering major to apply. Their website is: <http://www.aesengineers.com/scholarships.htm>. The Gates Millennium Scholars Program offers African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Pacific Islander American, and Hispanic American students with an opportunity to complete an undergraduate college education in any area of interest. Continuing Gates Millennium Scholars may request funding for a graduate degree program in one of the following disciplines: computer science, education, engineering, library science, mathematics, public health or science. Their website is: [https://nominations.gmsp.org/GMSP\\_App](https://nominations.gmsp.org/GMSP_App). The Society of Women Engineers offers 188 (!) different scholarships for women studying engineering, engineering technology and computer science. Their website is <http://societyofwomenengineers.swe.org/index.php/scholarships#activePanels>. The ExxonMobil Bernard Harris Math and Science Scholarship gives preference to underrepresented students pursuing careers in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Go to <http://www.theharrisfoundation.org/sitecontent/568/exxonmobil-bernard-harris-math-and-science-sc/category/457/education.aspx> for their application and for more information.



Be sure to come to the UCLA Scholarship Resource Center to learn about more opportunities. We have bulletin boards focused on different areas of study, including two that are just for life and physical sciences. We also have numerous resources for students interested in health sciences, including information specifically for pre-med, nursing, and dental students. In addition, we can show you how to search for scholarships on your own and find those tailored specifically for your area of interest, whether that is neuroscience or aerospace. Finally, we will work with you on your application, from helping you assemble materials to giving you feedback on essays. Both at UCLA and beyond, there are many opportunities waiting to be discovered, and we can help you find them!

***Are You a Non-Traditional Student: a veteran, a parent, a transfer, a former foster youth, or an AB 540 student?***

***There is an office on campus that is here to help you network with other students like you and succeed at UCLA! Check out the Bruin Resource Center, located in B-44 Student Activities Center.***

[www.brc.ucla.edu](http://www.brc.ucla.edu)



# I Got into Graduate School!—Now What?

By: Elizabeth Raisanen, SRC staff

**C**ongratulations! You've been accepted into a graduate degree program at UCLA! Whether or not you are new to UCLA, you undoubtedly have a lot of questions about how to fund your graduate education, as well as about the various support services that are available to you on campus. Here are answers to a few of those questions.

## ***How can I find scholarships and fellowships?***

Most graduate students enter their academic programs with departmental fellowships in hand, and/or the ability to apply for department-based funding (including teaching and research assistantships) at a later date. While it is likely that the largest part of your graduate funding package will be offered through your academic department, you should also look into extra-departmental funding options, both at UCLA and beyond. UCLA's Graduate Division website ([www.grad.ucla.edu](http://www.grad.ucla.edu)) can help you locate other sources of graduate funding at UCLA and elsewhere with their Graduate and Postdoctoral External Support (GRAPES) Database. You can also visit the Graduate Division Fellowships Services Office in 1252 Murphy Hall to browse their funding books and flyers. We also recommend that you pay a visit to the UCLA Scholarship Resource Center (SRC), which houses an extensive library of scholarship books, a Graduate Student binder filled with fellowship listings for a variety of disciplines, a website that links to a number of scholarship search databases ([www.scholarshipcenter.ucla.edu](http://www.scholarshipcenter.ucla.edu)), and other resources. Finally, you should also research various interdisciplinary UCLA "Centers" that offer research and travel funding for graduate students. A comprehensive list of these centers, labs, and research institutes can be found at the following website: <http://www.research.ucla.edu/labs/index.htm>.

## ***Do I have to fill out a FAFSA as a graduate student?***

If you are a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, you must fill out a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) by the March 2 state deadline. This will ensure that you will get the best possible financial-aid package, and it will also help to establish what your amount of financial need might be—a big help if you plan to apply for need-based scholarships or if you wish to apply for UCLA's Graduate Work Study Program. The FAFSA can be accessed online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Any questions about your FAFSA or financial need should be directed to the UCLA Financial Aid Office (310.206.0400). If you are an AB540 student, get in touch with the Financial Aid Office to find out how to access the California DREAM Application for the 2013-14 and subsequent academic years.

## ***Is career counseling available to graduate students?***

Yes! The UCLA Career Center, located on the second floor of the Strathmore Building, provides a range of services that specifically address the career needs of Master's and Ph.D. students. As you prepare for your career path, the UCLA Career Center will work with you to help you identify career options, create curriculum vitae or résumés, and prepare for interviews. The Career Center also offers workshops and career-focused events, online job listings, a comprehensive career library, and a reference file service. The Graduate Student Resource Center (GSRC), located in room B11 of the Student Activities Center, also offers free drop-in career counseling for graduate students on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

## ***Where can I go to get help with my writing?***

You can visit the Graduate Writing Center (GWC) in room B11 of the Student Activities Center for 50-minute writing appointments with peer tutors who can offer writing assistance with academic papers, articles, conference papers, and fellowship funding applications. They also offer specialized help with NSF applications and numerous writing workshops and "bootcamps" throughout the calendar year. Please note, however, that the GWC is **not** a proofreading or editing service. If you are working on a scholarship or fellowship application, you can also visit the SRC for writing assistance, although with most fellowships applications, the SRC will be most useful to you at the proofreading stage of the writing process.

## ***Are there any support services for students with dependents?***

Yes! Visit the Bruin Resource Center (BRC) in room B44 of the Student Activities Center ([www.brc.ucla.edu](http://www.brc.ucla.edu)). The BRC provides assistance and support for students with dependents at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels, providing access to information about resources ranging from adjusting to the quarter system to accessing childcare, as well as finding fair and affordable housing. See their website for students with dependents ([http://www.swd.ucla.edu/resources\\_campus.html](http://www.swd.ucla.edu/resources_campus.html)) for a link to the Parenting Students Guide.

## ***Are there any support services for veterans?***

Yes! The Veterans Resource Office (VRO) at the BRC (B44 Student Activities Center) provides support to UCLA undergraduate and graduate student veterans in the transition from military service to civilian and college life. They help veterans navigate UCLA and provide a welcoming space, mentoring from student veterans, guidance on educational benefits, and tools to succeed academically and personally. ([www.veterans.ucla.edu](http://www.veterans.ucla.edu))



# UCLA Resources for Scholarship Seekers

*If you want...*

*You should go to...*

➔ Proof of enrollment to send to a scholarship organization or outside agency	➔ The Registrar's Office to get a free Verification Transcript. The Registrar's Office is in 1113 Murphy Hall.
➔ Assistance interpreting the E-Fan or other Financial Aid documents	➔ The UCLA Financial Aid Office at A-129 Murphy Hall ( <a href="http://www.fao.ucla.edu">www.fao.ucla.edu</a> ) or 310.206.0400.
➔ Help with your medical/law school personal statement	➔ The Career Center, to learn about their Pre-Professional advising services ( <a href="http://www.career.ucla.edu">www.career.ucla.edu</a> ).
➔ To find out about scholarships for student research	➔ The Undergraduate Research Center in your discipline (either Life/Physical Science or Humanities/Social Science). ( <a href="http://www.ugeducation.ucla.edu/ugresearch">www.ugeducation.ucla.edu/ugresearch</a> )
➔ To find resources for study abroad	➔ The EAP office ( <a href="http://www.ieo.ucla.edu/eap/">http://www.ieo.ucla.edu/eap/</a> ). The SRC also offers a number of study abroad resources, including books.
➔ To learn about scholarships for AB-540 students	➔ The IDEAS student group: <a href="mailto:ideas@ucla.edu">ideas@ucla.edu</a> . The SRC also has a file of resources for AB-540 students. The Bruin Resource Center is also an excellent resource. ( <a href="http://www.brc.ucla.edu/">http://www.brc.ucla.edu/</a> )
➔ Help with your scholarship essay	➔ The Scholarship Resource Center office in 233 Covell Commons. The SRC offers individualized counseling and writing assistance. ( <a href="http://scholarshipcenter.ucla.edu">scholarshipcenter.ucla.edu</a> ) or 310.206.2875
➔ To learn about departmental scholarships for students in your major	➔ Consult departmental counselors and look at postings on departmental bulletin boards and email listservs. Also, visit the SRC website and find information about UCLA departmental scholarships on the homepage.
➔ To get motivated and learn tools for starting your scholarship search	➔ A <b>Secrets for Winning College Cash</b> workshop at the SRC. In a quick introductory workshop plus a follow-up counseling session, you'll jump-start your scholarship search and start working on some applications!
➔ To know where to send your outside scholarship checks	➔ The Financial Aid website ( <a href="http://fao.ucla.edu">fao.ucla.edu</a> ), and make note of the fact that the address is: <b>UCLA Remittance Processing Center, 405 Hilgard Ave, 1125 Murphy Hall Box 951432, Los Angeles, CA 90095-9000</b>
➔ To apply for a national/international scholarship (such as the Rhodes, Marshall, or Mitchell Scholarship)	➔ The College Honors office (A311 Murphy Hall). <a href="http://www.ugeducation.ucla.edu/honors/">www.ugeducation.ucla.edu/honors/</a>

# ASK THE SRC!

By Hannah Nahm, SRC Staff

## **1. Is the SRC *part of the UCLA Financial Aid Office (FAO)? How is the SRC different from the FAO?***

While we work closely with the Financial Aid Office and both the SRC and the FAO serve to make education more affordable for students, we are a distinct center from the FAO. The FAO puts together a funding package that bridges the gap between your projected educational expenses and your expected family or personal contribution. For the average in-state undergraduate student, that financial package would include loans (which, unlike scholarships or grants, would need to be paid back with interest; for out-of-state students, the expected loan amount is significantly higher). This is where we step in. Our mission is to help minimize your student-loan debts and fund your education at UCLA through scholarships. We are also here for international students, AB540 students and students who do not qualify, according to the standards of the FAO.

Please keep in mind that the SRC does not handle questions regarding your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), Financial Aid Notification (FAN), or EFC (Expected Family Contribution). For these concerns, contact the Financial Aid office at (310) 206-0400. The email address is [finaid@saonet.ucla.edu](mailto:finaid@saonet.ucla.edu).

## **2. *How do I go about making an appointment for scholarship-essay support?***

We recommend that you contact our office by phone (310.206.2875) to schedule a writing appointment. At that time, you will be given the name and email address of the staff member with whom you will work. Our policy is that you email the assigned staff member a draft of your scholarship essay preferably 48 hours (but no less than 24 hours) prior to the day of your appointment. This will allow us sufficient time to review it and offer helpful written feedback to make the essay stronger. On the day of your appointment, you will then sit down with a staff member during a half-hour session to go over the written comments and strategize to make your essay a winner.

## **3. *What are your policies for drop-in counseling?***

For brief questions and concerns (such as a summary overview of our services, a question about an unclear item on a scholarship application, a quick proofreading read-through for typos, etc.), we welcome walk-in visitors during our normal operational hours. For sustained writing consultations or for any other counseling matters where you would want more time, please call us to schedule an appointment.

## ***Take advantage of these free services***

- ***Library of Scholarship Books***
- ***Facebook and Twitter pages***
- ***Workshops Every Quarter***
- ***Extensive Scholarship Website***

(continued from page 6)

**4. *What percentage of students who utilize your services actually win scholarships?***

Given that we rely on self-reports of scholarship winners, it is hard to gauge the exact percentage of our students who won scholarships over the years. We can say, though, that since our inception in 1996, we have helped thousands of students successfully navigate the often choppy waves of the scholarship channel. Once students utilize our services and recognize the wealth of scholarship resources we have to offer, they become regulars at the center. If the recurrent footsteps of these “old timers” are any indication, we are habit-forming, but unlike many habits, the SRC habit is one that pays off!

**5. *What kinds of resources are available on the SRC’s website?***

The SRC’s website ([scholarshipcenter.ucla.edu](http://scholarshipcenter.ucla.edu)) can help you locate two kinds of scholarships—UCLA scholarships administered by the SRC, and extramural scholarships. While we are working on making the website a portal to scholarship information across campus, we currently offer detailed information about the UCLA scholarships that our office handles (which is a small percentage of UCLA scholarships overall). Our website is well-equipped, however, to help you conduct extramural scholarship searches using the scholarship search databases on the

“Scholarship Search” page.

**6. *Is there a comprehensive scholarship book or list available at the SRC?***

In an ideal world, we would know the unique background, circumstances, and career aspirations of every single UCLA student. Since this is not the case, a comprehensive scholarship list is impossible. There is, however, someone who does hold the magic key to your unique profile—you! Put your special knowledge of yourself to work to seek out eligible scholarships. We are here to give you the *tools* you need to search for scholarships and to put together a winning scholarship application. Come see us!

**7. *What kind of support can I expect the SRC to provide for me?***

Although the SRC primarily serves undergraduates, our center maintains growing binders of many scholarship listings for graduate and professional students in a variety of disciplines, including law school, health sciences, and graduate studies. We also offer general scholarship counseling service and proofreading support for graduate fellowship or grant application essays.

**8. *Is there a fee for any of the services the SRC provides?***

Absolutely none! All our services are free for all UCLA students!

**Join our page on Facebook/[uclasrc](https://www.facebook.com/uclasrc) to get alerts  
on upcoming scholarships!**

**Also, follow us on Twitter @UCLASRC**

# Scholarship Resource Center

## Fall 2012 Workshop Schedule

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!

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

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

### Secrets to Winning College Cash

Oct 2	Tuesday	5:00-5:30 PM
Oct 10	Wednesday	4:30-5:00 PM
Oct 18	Thursday	4:30-5:00 PM
Oct 22	Monday	5:00-5:30 PM
Oct 26	Friday	5:00-5:30 PM
Oct 30	Tuesday	5:30-6:00 PM
Nov 7	Wednesday	5:00-5:30 PM
Nov 15	Thursday	5:30-6:00 PM
Nov 19	Monday	5:00-5:30 PM

### How to Win Scholarships

Oct 3	Wednesday	5:00-5:30 PM
Nov 1	Thursday	5:00-5:30 PM
Nov 6	Tuesday	4:30-5:00 PM

### How to Find Scholarships

Oct 4	Thursday	5:30-6:00 PM
Oct 23	Tuesday	5:00-5:30 PM

### How to Write Personal Statements

Oct 9	Tuesday	4:30-5:30 PM
Oct 17	Wednesday	5:00-6:00 PM

### How to Get Letters of Recommendation

Oct 8	Monday	5:00-5:30 PM
Nov 2	Friday	5:00-5:30 PM
Nov 13	Tuesday	5:00-5:30 PM

**Become a fan on  
our Facebook page  
and like us!**