Thank you for supporting your applicant in their pursuit of one of the University of Iowa’s four Goldwater Scholarship nominations. We appreciate your willingness to share your letter with the UI Undergraduate Fellowships Committee at the campus level, as the discipline-specific expertise you provide is essential to our understanding of your applicant’s knowledge, experience, and potential. Having early access to your insight and analysis will inform how we support your nominee as they develop their application.

As a reminder to those of you who have supported past applicants and to orient faculty and investigators who are new to the Goldwater process, I have included some guidance on content and focus below.

**Content & Focus**

It is important to describe your candidate *using the lens of the Goldwater Scholarship’s stated criteria:*

- Research experience
- Strong commitment to a career in math, the natural sciences, and engineering
- Potential for a significant future contribution in the applicant’s chosen field(s)
- Intention to pursue a doctoral degree with the intention of making their primary contribution to their professional community through research*.

*Interested candidates intending to eventually study and practice medicine outside of an MD/PhD program and research track are not usually appropriate for the Goldwater process.*

**Competitive recommendations are EVIDENCE-BASED**

At this level of competition, letters must include evidence. Selectors at the national level frequently stress how impactful stories can be when offered as a demonstration of a candidate’s intellect, skill, or instincts. Because all of the students who advance as institutional nominees are genuinely impressive, decision-making often comes down to what they know about HOW student’s do the work they do, not just that they do it.

**What kind of evidence is useful to the committee?**

*One of the best ways to give depth to your letter can be to connect your assessment of a student’s strengths and skill set to a:*

- description of a definitive experience with the student where her contribution to your lab, research group, or a classroom experience clearly stood out in your mind and why,

- shared memory or story which illuminates for the committee the clear commitment she makes to her studies and the intensity of her commitment to the exploration of ideas,

- or more concrete evidence of her skills as a teacher, mentor, or innovator. An example of this would be to include measures of advancement or to describe how her membership on your research team, student organization or classroom community made a significant impact on overall progress.

**Appropriate length**

In general, these scholarships appreciate longer letters of recommendation – a minimum of one page, preferably one and a half to two pages) that give the reader a good sense of the applicant as a student, thinker and developing researcher.
Help from Your Applicant
In addition to this message, I encourage each applicant to provide the following information to help you build a strong, representative letter of recommendation that speaks directly to the objectives of the Goldwater Scholarship:

- a brief explanation of their interest in the opportunity,
- a description of their research interests and the concept/question driving their Goldwater research proposal,
- an up-to-date curriculum vitae, and
- a sense of why they invited you to write for them. What perspective are you to focus on in your letter? Are you to evaluate them as a researcher, as a contributor in the classroom, or in another scientific context?

Important Dates:

- **Monday, November 9, 2015 --- Deadline to Apply for Campus Nomination**
  Recommenders are encouraged to share an electronic copy of their recommendation with the nominating committee by emailing it to kelly-thornburg@uiowa.edu by this date. At the campus level, previous recommendations or DRAFT letters are acceptable. If your applicant is selected to represent the university as a nominee, recommenders will have an opportunity to refine their letters.

- **Friday, January 22, 2016 --- Final Submission Deadline for Campus Nominees**

- **Monday, January 25, 2016 --- Final Submission Deadline for Recommenders**
  Because online application portals can and do malfunction, I encourage writers to upload their letters into the system by 2 PM on Monday, January 26, but letters MUST be in the application system by 4 PM Central Time (CST) on Tuesday, January 26, 2016.

Do not forget!

- Please address the letter to the scholarship selection committee to the 2016 Goldwater Scholarship Selection Committee or to the the 2016 Goldwater Scholarship Selectors
- In the letter, please be sure to state that you are recommending the student for the Goldwater Scholarship competition.

**INSTITUTIONAL CONTACT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA:**

Kelly Thornburg, Director of Scholar Development
Work: 319-335-1874 | Cell: 319-450-9842
Email: kelly-thornburg@uiowa.edu
Website: honors.uiowa.edu/uihp fellowships