Recommender Guidance - 2016 Marshall Scholarship Competition

Important Dates:

- **September 1, 2015 - Campus Nomination Deadline**
  Recommenders are encouraged to share letters with the nominating committee by this date. Past recommendations or draft letters are acceptable.

- **September 25, 2015 – Deadline for sharing recommendations with the Director of Scholar Development.** Thank you for sharing (at least a draft version of) your recommendation with me by email at kelly-thornburg@uiowa.edu by this date to allow me to include your perspective in our institutional nomination letter as requested by the Marshall Foundation.

- **October 1, 2015 - Deadline for submission of final nominee applications and recommendations**
  Because online application portals can and do malfunction, I encourage writers to upload their letters into the system by 5 PM on Tuesday, September 30, 2015, but letters MUST be in the application system by 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on Thursday, October 1, 2015.

Resources for Recommenders:

- The Marshall Foundation’s **2016 Referee Instructions may be found here:**
  http://www.marshallscholarship.org/applications/recommendersinfo

The following is the advice provided by the Marshall Commission on the contents of the Letters of Recommendation:

"Please use the form provided for a letter of recommendation commenting on the candidate's general fitness for the course proposed and the suitability of the university chosen as well as considering how they meet the Commission’s criteria of Academic Merit, Leadership and Ambassadorial Potential. Confidential observations, negative as well as positive, on the candidate’s general character as well as academic standing and ability will be of great value to the selection authorities in their task of deciding which candidates should be summoned to the Regional Centre for interview."

In appointing Scholars the Selectors will look for candidates who have the potential to excel as scholars, as leaders and as contributors to improved UK-US understanding. Assessment will be based on academic merit, leadership potential and ambassadorial potential. We ask that you consider our criteria when completing your letter.

The Selectors will also look for adequate preparation for the proposed course of study, particularly in the upper-level course work and real strength in the major field. Preference will be given to candidates who combine high academic ability with the capacity to play an active part in the life of the United Kingdom university to which they go, and to those who display a potential to make a significant contribution to their own society.

I encourage recommenders to give selectors:

- An “evidence-based” perspective on their nominee, which includes specific examples/stories of the individual’s contributions to the context the writer came to know the student in as a scholar, leader, and
person. It isn’t unusual for external committees, (especially beyond the regional or district stage) to underestimate or be unfamiliar with the level of intellectual and practical opportunity undergraduates have access to the University of Iowa, in Iowa City and the state, so this step can be particularly important for nominees.

- **Some context** – Experience has taught me that recommenders in the midwest usually give too little information about themselves. Do not forget to include a few sentences that provide the reader with a sense of your expertise and your background as a scholar, educator, or mentor. This adds clarity to the narrative and can elevate the readers’ impressions of nominee’s accomplishments and experiences.

- **No more than two pages, but no less than one** – Selectors have a great deal to read and they must read quickly. For the Marshall, I do recommend that writers go with a two page letter if they feel that they are able to do so with authenticity. The opportunity only requires four recommendations and our endorsement, so we want to give the committee as full a view of the student as is possible.

**Address and Salutation:**

I’ve included the appropriate address and salutation information for your final letter, which should be saved on letterhead with a formal signature (see Formatted sample recommendation for further detail).

**Address for Iowa’s Marshall Regional Committee:**
Chicago Regional Committee,
Marshall Scholarship,
British Consulate-General,
625 North Michigan Avenue,
Suite 2200, Chicago, IL 60611

**Sample Salutation for the Marshall District Committee:**
To the 2016 Chicago Regional Marshall Scholarship Committee:

**Institutional Representative at the University of Iowa:**
Kelly Thornburg, Director of Scholar Development
431 Blank Honors Center │ Work: 319-335-1874 │ Cell: 319-450-9842
kelly-thornburg@uiowa.edu │ honors.uiowa.edu/uipfellowships