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](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 offer selectors:

- **An “evidence-based” perspective on their nominee.** At this level of competition, saying someone is one of the best students (or even THE best) you have had the pleasure of teaching doesn’t distinguish them. What
will help readers understand the extraordinary value and potential of your nominee is EVIDENCE. Use illustrative example or a quick story to help the readers SEE whatever unusual combination of knowledge, skill or insight your nominee possesses and understand HOW they might develop or use it more fully with the investment and support of the opportunity.

- **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 a 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 of a view of the student as is possible.

**Address and Salutation:**

I’ve included the appropriate **address and salutation information** for your final letter. Because most online application portals request that the text of letters be copied and pasted into an electronic form, it is no longer necessary to save the final recommendation on letterhead or submit it with a formal signature.

**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/uhfp fellowships