FACULTY ADVISING FOR FELLOWSHIPS HANDBOOK
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FACULTY ADVISING FOR FELLOWSHIPS

BEFORE THEY EVEN APPLY

• The value of publications and research expertise during undergrad
• In-depth summer opportunities furthering their demonstrated experience in the expressed field of interest
• The significance of the capstone as a showcase of how their brain processes their area of specialization (and is it specialized enough?)

PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION

• Recommending books in the “canon of literature” that are not taught in class that students should be reading
• Identification of the less obvious suspects for programs (when to look beyond the Ivys and Oxbridge) – and how to begin to identify those top notch departmental programs with quality faculty and resources
• Where is the funding/is there funding?

FACULTY OUTREACH

• Suggestions on how to do appropriate outreach to different faculty
• Providing soft introductions virtually with colleagues for students you respect and trust
• Working with students to get them to understand fully the nuances of a specifically faculty’s research and how to approach them if interested in doing PhD level research in their lab/centre/institute

THE RECOMMENDATION LETTER

• How to write specific letters for specific opportunities (see attached handout detailing this process for both graduate school broadly and fellowships specifically)
• When to say no to a student and how to do so

PERSONAL STATEMENT DRAFTING

• Probing for depth and articulation of content expertise
• Getting the student to contextualize their research interests and explaining the previous work done in this field (encourage them to think about detailing why this is important/significant/worth being funded)
**Alphawood Scholarship**
This award is coordinated through SOAS in London, and it allows students to focus intensively on the study of Southeast Asian Art through a certificate, MA, or post-graduate research platform. The scholarship covers tuition and fees, a generous maintenance allowance, and flights to and from the UK. Students from ASEAN are eligible to apply and are expected to return to the region post-completion of the program to enhance the field of art.

**Fulbright Grants**
This award is a bilateral agreement between the United States and approximately 150 partner countries. US students interested in pursuing independent research grants outside of the US in sciences, social sciences, humanities, and creative projects are encouraged to apply. Non-US students hoping to continue their academic studies in the United States should apply directly through the point of contact established through the Fulbright Program for Foreign Students. Many countries have pre-established work experience pre-requisites for eligibility.

**Gates-Cambridge**
This award provides funding for three years of study at the University of Cambridge. The Gates Cambridge Scholarship website states that the award is primarily for “intellectually outstanding postgraduate students with a capacity for leadership and a commitment to improving the lives of others.” Citizens of all countries, excluding the UK, are eligible to apply. The Gates does have an institutional endorsement requirement, and applicants must have a 4.5+ CAP to be eligible for institutional endorsement from Yale-NUS College.

**Harvard Yenching Institute**
This multi-year fellowship covers a two-year Master’s degree in Harvard’s Regional Studies – East Asia Programs. The award is open to Asian nationals pursuing a PhD who plan to return to Asia to teach upon completion of graduate studies.

**Knight-Hennessy Scholarship**
This graduate program that focuses on a multi-disciplinary approach to leadership provides funding for any graduate or professional degree offered at Stanford University. Successful applicants will show demonstrated academic expertise, kindness, and strong previous leadership experience. The award is open to all nationalities and for students up to four years after graduation from their undergraduate programme.

**NUS-Overseas Graduate Scholarship**
This scholarship scheme is coordinated through NUS and is open to Singaporean students who are admitted into top overseas universities for doctoral degrees and have applied for outside funding. Successful applicants will be appointed to a Senior Tutorship prior to or from their commencement of studies. Applicants will also be required to sign an agreement to serve NUS for a period of five years.
open successfully completing their doctoral degree. Upon signing this bond, students are provided a CPF bonus.

**Rhodes Scholarship**
This scholarship provides coverage of tuition fees at the Oxford, airfare to and from Oxford, and a personal stipend per annum. Rhodes Scholars are selected based on their academic excellence, strong leadership skills, and directed energy towards team achievements. The Rhodes Scholarship is open to citizens of Australia, Bermuda, Canada, China, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Kenya, New Zealand, Pakistan, Southern Africa, United States, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The Rhodes for US and Canada applicants does have an institutional endorsement requirement. Applicants must have a 4.5+ CAP to be eligible for institutional endorsement from Yale-NUS College.

**Schwarzman Scholars**
The scholarship provides a one-year Master's Degree at Tsinghua University in Beijing and covers tuition, fees, room and board, and a personal stipend. Schwarzman Scholars aims “to prepare the next generation of global leaders.” While the program examines topics of politics, business, and international studies through a Chinese lens, all students are eligible to apply, whether they do or do not have a Chinese or Chinese language background.

**Yale-NUS Overseas Graduate Scholarship**
This scholarship scheme is coordinated through Yale-NUS and is open to students who are admitted into top overseas universities for doctoral degrees and have applied for outside funding. Successful applicants will be appointed to a Senior Tutorship at Yale-NUS prior to or from their commencement of studies. Unlike the NUS OGS scheme, students are not required to sign a bond in order to become a Yale-NUS Overseas Graduate Scholar.

**Yenching Scholars**
International scholars enrol in a 12-month program studying at Yenching Academy and receive a Master’s Degree in China Studies. The scholarship includes tuition, round trip airfare to Beijing, accommodation, and living costs at the Peking University campus. The Yenching program places an “emphasis on interdisciplinarity and the value it assigns to thinking about China’s development from both Chinese and international perspectives.” Do note that Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau residents from Yale-NUS College are not eligible to apply for this scholarship.
**INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENT PROCESS AND DEADLINES**

**INSTITUTIONAL DEADLINE**
All applicants who plan to submit an application for the KNIGHT-HENNESSY, US OR CANADA RHODES, SCHWARZMAN, or YENCHING, must submit all application materials on Symplicity by August 7, 2017 @ 12pm SGT. No extensions will be granted.

Applicants must have a 4.5+ CAP to be eligible for institutional endorsement from Yale-NUS College for the Rhodes. There is no internal CAP requirement to be eligible to apply for institutional endorsement for the Knight-Hennessy, Schwarzman, or Yenching.

ENDORSEMENT PROCESS
The Knight-Hennessy, US/Canada Rhodes, Schwarzman, and Yenching require an institutional endorsement process. This endorsement verifies from the perspective of the College that the applicant represents the high-level academic quality of the institution. The decision of the nomination rests in the hands of a faculty committee who are examining the quality of the applicant’s academic proposal, content of the personal statements, and any other materials required by the application. There will be two committees – one will be reviewing Knight-Hennessy and US/Canada Rhodes, and one will be reviewing Schwarzman and Yenching applicants.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES TO NOTE
1. We ask applicants to request faculty recommenders to write a letter and notify them of the institutional endorsement process by July 25, 2017.
2. The internal deadline for comprehensive application submission is AUGUST 7 @ 12pm SGT. For students who have not yet met with Charlotte Evans to express intent to apply, CIPE encourages students to set up a meeting by July 15, 2017 to receive the necessary information about appropriate submission steps for the August 1 deadline.
3. The committee for Yenching and Schwarzman will have its internal review the week of August 21. Exact times TBD. Each committee review will be approximately 30 minutes.
4. The committee for Knight-Hennessy and US/Canada Rhodes will have its internal review the week of August 28. Exact times TBD. Each committee review will be approximately 30 minutes.
5. Faculty recommenders SHOULD NOT begin the writing process of the reference letter until AFTER the student has been granted institutional endorsement. Institutional endorsement is not guaranteed.
6. All applicants who receive an institutional endorsement will also receive constructive feedback from the faculty committee in order to make revisions to enhance their application latest 2 weeks post-committee review. Rhodes does not allow this type of feedback so this will not be provided by the Rhodes faculty committee.
FELLOWSHIPS ADVISING TIMELINES
For those considering an application for
a program beginning AY 2018-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER 2016-JANUARY 2017</td>
<td>Information gathering phase</td>
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<tr>
<td>JANUARY 2017*</td>
<td>Pre-advising questionnaire</td>
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<td>JANUARY 2017</td>
<td>Initial one-on-one advising session</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEBRUARY 2017</td>
<td>Odyssey Solo – self assessment phase</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARCH 2017</td>
<td>Mapping the process and timelines for your own journey</td>
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<tr>
<td>APRIL/MAY 2017</td>
<td>Brainstorming Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAY 2017</td>
<td>Express formal intent for application for specific awards to CIPE office</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAY 2017</td>
<td>Draft 1 – “First go draft”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUNE 2017</td>
<td>Draft 2 – “Dig deeper draft”</td>
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<tr>
<td>JULY 2017</td>
<td>Draft 3 – “Polished draft”</td>
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<td>AUGUST 7, 2017**</td>
<td>Institutional endorsement process for certain awards</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUGUST-DECEMBER 2017</td>
<td>Submission to external portals</td>
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* = students encouraged to set up monthly advising sessions over Skype with Charlotte to complete these tasks (charlotte.h.evans). Please note Charlotte’s working hours are Monday-Friday 9am-6pm SGT.

** = tentative timeline, subject to change

RESOURCES THROUGHOUT THIS PROCESS

**CIPE** – Charlotte Evans (Fellowships), Zhana Sandeva (graduate school), CIPE advisors (for general career/graduate plans)

**Faculty** – Head of Studies advisors, Capstone advisors, Writer’s Centre

**Mentors** – internship supervisors, EAP mentors

**Community** – peers, family, friends
**Recommendation Letter Guidelines**

Recommendation and reference letters are key elements to a strong application. In their personal statements for various opportunities, students articulate their positive contributions to the College community and emphasize their strengths and readiness for the next role (graduate school, fellowship, or job.) Your letter validates and contextualizes many of these student examples. We hope the resources below will assist you as you think about ways to frame your relationship with and knowledge of the student.

**Recommendation Letter vs Reference Letter**
The main difference between the two is that a recommendation typically elaborates on the student’s ability to do well and make meaningful contributions in an academic or professional setting, as demonstrated by their prior experiences and positive impressions they have made on the recommender. On the other hand, a reference letter focuses on the student’s character, values and personal qualities as shown in specific evidence.

**Talking to the Student in Advance**
Many letter prompts ask for concrete examples that demonstrate the student’s abilities. As you work with the student, you may wish to ask them the following questions to allow for you to write a specific letter.

1. What course of study do you want to pursue? Why this fellowship? Why this graduate program?
2. Who else from Yale-NUS are you asking to write a letter? How do you view each of our letters fitting in with your larger application?
3. Is there anything you were hoping I could highlight specifically? If so, can you send me a few bullet points on this via email?
4. Can you send me your latest resume or CV and your personal statement for the program?

We ask that faculty to refrain from asking students to write a full draft of a letter for them. However, a healthy dialogue between student and faculty after the initial agreement to write a letter will be a great way to make sure the letter is specific.

**Being Specific**
Both graduate school and fellowship letters should be specific about the student’s achievements. Providing background and examples that expound upon the students’ stellar capabilities will support their candidacy much more effectively than making claims with no direct evidence. For fellowships, your letter is a chance for the admissions committee to evaluate the fit and authenticity of the applicant. Therefore, a very specific and detailed analysis of the student in relation to the goals of the fellowship award will be most beneficial. To that end, CIPE encourages faculty to review the one-page document that outlines the goals of different fellowships. (See it [HERE]).
Saying “No”
In a small community, we get to know many students well. However, if you feel that you do not know the student well enough, have not worked with them long enough to confidently speak for their abilities, or do not have enough time to write the letter, please let the student know. A generic letter will not help and may even hurt their candidacy.
When talking to students who are applying for graduate school and fellowships, CIPE emphasizes that they should approach every potential recommender early and ask if they are comfortable writing a letter. Students are advised to leave room for “No” and expect it as a possible answer, for many reasons. This is also why you should not hesitate to decline a student’s request if you do not feel capable of writing a sincere letter of recommendation.

Regional Differences in Tone
Different academic cultures have different expectations in terms of tone. A US-based institution often looks for a glowing commentary that compares the student favourably to their peers with positive, enthusiastic language, e.g. “one of the top 5 students I have had in my 15 years of teaching”, “in the top 5% of his/her class”. This type of letter will fall flat for a British audience that is looking for an honest and direct commentary on the student’s capacity.

Avoiding Gender Bias
Studies show that gender bias in workplaces and recommendation letters (especially in the sciences) persists and that both male and female supervisors and recommenders can be affected without realizing it. Examples of subtle negative bias include: shorter letters, using too much passive voice to describe the candidate, and focusing more on their hard work than on their achievements.
A quick way to test your letter for bias is to change all the pronouns from “he” to “she” or vice versa, and read the letter out loud. If it sounds odd, chances are that the language used may be reflecting unconscious gender bias.
For helpful resources on avoiding bias, visit the CIPE Graduate School webpage HERE and scroll down to the “For Recommenders” section.

Guidance on Fellowship Letters from Peer Institutions
The Yale Fellowships and Funding page explains nicely some key points and takeaways in three sections: What Helps, What Hurts, and When to Say “No.”

Guidance from Fellowship Organizations
The Rhodes Scholarship provides funding to support academically exceptional students hoping to pursue a Master’s or PhD program at Oxford University. The New Zealand Rhodes office has guidelines for referees that provide advice specifically for the Rhodes. However, you should also review this document if you are writing a letter for applicants to other fellowships, as the guidelines still apply. (See it HERE).

The Schwarzman Scholars program supports global student leaders hoping to pursue a Master’s degree at Schwarzman College, Tsinghua University. They also provide a similar template (see it HERE).
Knowing the specific information needed by the admissions committee can be beneficial to ensure that all bases are covered in the materials we send in the process of recommending the student. For example, the Rhodes committee looks for candor on the student’s weaknesses as well as articulation of their kindliness or devotion to duty, while the Schwarzman asks for a cross-comparison of the student in relation to their peers and a commentary on their leadership abilities. We strongly encourage you to review these requirements on the fellowships’ pages or, at the very minimum, to review the one-page document about fellowships (See it [HERE](#)).

**Fellowships Guidance from an Expert**

Have some time and want to read a bit more? Joe Schall is a highly recognized and well-reputed voice in the world of graduate school and fellowships advising. He has a helpful e-book entitled “Writing Recommendation Letters”, which serves as a handbook for faculty recommenders. We encourage a quick read of Chapter 3 for general tips and Chapter 6 for information on writing a fellowships reference.

**Sample Recommendation Letters**

Below you can access sample reference letters from the Joe Schall e-book mentioned above. Schall made the letters anonymous for confidentiality purposes. These Mitchell, Fulbright, and Gates Cambridge letters were submitted on behalf of a student for specific awards in past application cycles.

Fulbright Sample Letters from Joe Schall  
Mitchell Sample Letters from Joe Schall  
Gates Cambridge Sample Letters from Joe Schall

- In the letters for Fulbright, you may note how the writer handles the conversation about national ambassadorial spirit and the ability to immerse in a new environment/country, which is a key concept for many of the fellowships awards (Fulbright/Rhodes/Schwarzman, etc.)
- The Mitchell letters present examples of how the faculty articulated their perspective on the students’ leadership skills, the professor’s view of her academic capacity, and the faculty motivation for selecting a student for an opportunity.
- The Gates letters showcase how the faculty’s commentary can examine both the character and academic capacity of a student. The first essay is also an example of walking a committee through the shift in an academic trajectory and how that was a well thought-out process (one that a student of yours may also highlight in their personal statement, and that then becomes validated by the faculty contextualizing it.)

We hope that these samples can be a good foundation to understand the tone, length, style, and prose that these documents can have. However, please note that all graduate school and fellowships applications are closely monitoring the authenticity of the work. We ask you to use these solely for the purpose of reference and to please not modify or use any of the text when you write your own letters.

**CIPE Contacts**

The CIPE advisor for fellowships is Charlotte Evans, charlotte.evans@yale-nus.edu.sg.  
The CIPE advisor for graduate school (general) is Zhana Sandeva, zhana.sandeva@yale-nus.edu.sg.  
The CIPE advisor for business school, law school, and medical school is Nilanjana Pal, nilanjana.pal@yale-nus.edu.sg.