

Scholarships 101: A Q&A with Dr. Michelle Miles, Director of National and International Scholarships and Fellowships

Q: What are some of the prestigious scholarships that you can help students apply for?

A: There are a variety of national and international scholarships and fellowships for which KSU students are eligible to apply. These prestigious awards include such notable mentions as the Rhodes, Marshall, Mitchell, Fulbright, and Goldwater awards. A comprehensive listing of the scholarships is available on the Honors College website. While many of these scholarships are for graduate study, there are some awards available for undergraduates.

Q: Are KSU students competitive for these scholarships?

A: While these scholarships are indeed highly competitive, KSU students – and in particular, KSU Honors students – are certainly viable candidates. Often, scholarship foundations are looking to diversify their student bodies, and as such, when an outstanding candidate applies from a university that has had few (or no) successful applicants (such as KSU), that student captures the attention of the scholarship committee(s). Since 2013, KSU has produced three Fulbright scholars and Gilman and Goldwater scholarship winners.

Q: What do most of these scholarships require?

A: Most scholarships require a personal statement, a statement of grant purpose (or other scholarship-specific essay), a curriculum vitae, official transcripts, and letters of recommendation from at least three faculty members. Often, there will be an initial internal review of applicants prior to the national application submission. A select panel of KSU scholars and administrators will review the candidate's materials, schedule an on campus interview, and decide whether or not to endorse the applicant. A letter from the institution will then formally nominate the student for the award.

Q: What is the ideal timing for students to begin the process of applying?

A: While many scholarship applications will not be submitted until the fall or spring semesters of the student's senior year, the most successful applicants begin working on their application long beforehand. Ideally, a student should identify the award(s) for which she plans to apply at least six months ahead of time and meet with Dr. Miles early in order to learn more about the specifics of the award as well as to create a timeline towards completion.

Q: What are the first steps students should take?

A: Students are encouraged to make an appointment with Dr. Miles (preferably, by email at mmiles18@kennesaw.edu) to discuss their interest in applying for scholarships/fellowships. If the student has a good sense of his or her field, area of interest, etc., that's more than enough to begin! We will start with a conversation regarding the student's desires, talents, etc. and then narrow down our focus to find the best possible application fits. Dr. Miles also has some print materials that she is able to lend students that will allow for their extended perusal of available opportunities. In addition, Dr. Miles periodically offers university-wide workshops to anyone interested in learning more about scholarships and fellowships.