

**2015 Graduate Student Summit! –
Asking for, getting and obtaining LETTERS OR RECOMENTDATION.
Notetaker: McNair Scholars Jaycie Loney and Kelly Walls**

1. Found tricky for letters because I was not close with many faculty. Who else would be good for LoR for an NIH grant.
 - a. Usually 2 or 3 for NIH. Use your advisor, people in your lab who you are doing research with. If your using their technique, anything your doing and they can see your active in both labs and that your diverse. Become close with the people from your panel. Will help if you are taking classes with.
 - b. Learned lots of stuff from your class and when you did well in it. Go in and talk to them after the class is done. They would appreciate it and would probably be more then willing to write you a letter if you talk to them about what your doing.
 - c. Ask people to come view your poster at the poster presentation. Network network network!
 - d. Self promotion is hard but it very important. Hard for women
 - e. When writing letters for its not always just the letter but very specific rubrics. If you can cater to those things on the rubric it will make it easier for the writer to write it or fill out that rubric for you. About being a great person is just as important as being a great scientist/student.
 - f. Think about specific examples about the certain parts of the “Rubric” this example of my life fits this part of the rubric. Makes it easy to represent yourself.
2. How do you tell them about your extracurricular things? Do I come out and say right away this is where I am spending my extra time and it has to do with my children.
 - a. This is what the rest of my life looks like other then just my school and GPA. They can pull specific examples from what you have given to them. Makes the letter writing process easier.
 - b. Include a CV. But also give them a list of what the grant is, when the total application is due but ALSO when the specific date of the letter is due. Also put in who do I email this letter to.
3. How much time to give someone?
 - a. Usually at least a couple of weeks. The more time the better.
 - b. The sooner the better. But if I get a good one written if I’m doing more then one for you it is easier to just tweek it.
 - c. I know it feels like your being irritating when you have to remind people to write your letters. But really its not, I love getting those reminders. It makes me think the student is really on top of it.
 - d. Use your commitee because you have a great committee in immunology and micro.

4. who would be the best to write me a letter.
 - a. Do a lot of research into the people who do the most applicable to what you are doing.
 - b. Pretty soon you'll know who the "grant getters" of your department is good. And also they are funding women in science which is a great opportunity for you. So definitely apply.
5. Are their grants specific for women?
 - a. Use this website: uc boulder website (Colorado.edu) all on fellowship for minority and women students. AT&T women in science. Fellowships in STEM, performing arts, social sciences.
6. What's the scope of who I can ask for a letter? Obviously advisor? What about a boss at work? What do they like or what turns people off?
 - a. Who can give the best info about what you're going to be doing? Anyone who can say this is what this person is doing and why this grant fits them.
 - b. Not employer unless you're a business major and it's a super important boss. Always research faculty, people on your committee, people in your lab. Not only research skills and talents but also you as a person. It's so much more than just you as a student but you as an overall person. Are you willing to work diligently, contribution to diversity, knowledge, creativity, teamwork, accepts feedback, works well under stress. So much more for the letter to reflect everything about you, not just your brain.
 - c. It's okay to fill your letter writers in as to what the rest of your life looks like. They like to know everything so give them a CV.
 - d. Make your proposal to the people you want to write you a letter is very organized.
7. Can I ask someone to write you a letter twice? Can I ask them to write another one for another grant?
 - a. Yes, because if they have written you one letter they mostly like to just tweak it.
8. How do I say thank you?
 - a. Always want to know. I have never expected someone to say something but something like an email or phone call, or thank you card is sufficient. We don't expect a bottle of wine but we really do love to know about it.
 - b. People who I have written for who have gone on, is very important. Just keep them in the loop.
9. Do they give more weight to an advisor letter?
 - a. I think they weight them all the same. Want your advisors letter to be very strong because it's their personal advisor who should be the best because you should be the closest. That's why it's so important to inform the letter writers of what to speak to in the letter. Make sure your letters show a full picture of you. One can see you in the lab, one can see you're extracurricular, what can you do outside of academics.

Are they one of the most honest people I know? You wouldn't think you would be getting ranked on these, but you are so make sure you are having your letters paint a full picture of you.

10. Can any student from any department apply to NSF?
 - a. Yes but there is a limited amount of each in each field. Make sure that you know what fellowships are here because sometimes we don't have the finances that we had a little while ago because someone else wrote a grant and that money moved to a different place.
11. University of Washington. Have a good calendar for available fellowships.
 - a. Can see what's due per month. Makes it a little easier and not so overwhelming as some other websites.

- What if you feel like you are bragging when promoting your academic and life accomplishments? (I have a great link to research done by MSU's Dr. Jessi Smith that points to how it is frequently more difficult for women to "toot their own horn". I would like to share this with students if they want.)
<http://pwq.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/12/20/0361684313515840.full>
- The Unspoken Benefits of Grant Writing:
<https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/unspoken-benefits-grant-writing>

Identifying Fellowship/Scholarship/Internship/Assistantships/Loans/Funding agencies/foundations

National Graduate Fellowships:

<http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/financial-support/fellowships.html>

<http://www.colorado.edu/graduateschool/funding/national.html>

<http://www.grad.washington.edu/students/fa/calendar.shtml>

<http://www.gradschools.com/financial-aid/graduate-fellowships-scholarships>

<http://www.gradschools.com/financial-aid/graduate-fellowships-scholarships>

- a. Prestigious Scholarships and Fellowships
<http://www.fastweb.com/college-scholarships/articles/prestigious-scholarships-and-fellowships>
- b. MSU Office of Sponsored Programs

- <http://www.montana.edu/research/funding-opportunities/>
 - c. Grants
 - i. <http://grants.gov/>
 - d. College departments or graduate school
 - i. <http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/fellowships.html>
 - e. National McNair website
 - i. <http://mcnairscholars.com/funding/>
 - f. <http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/funding>
 - g. <http://www.nelnetsolutions.com/terc/>

- 2. More Research Opportunities: Programs and Centers at MSU: INBRE, NSF Epscor, REU, BRIDGES, USP, TRIO, MSGC, PIRE (all on McNair website), USDA, FDA, CDC, NIH, NASA, DoE, DoD, DoT, DoC, etc.
 - a. <http://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/intern.htm>
 - b. <http://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/college-students.htm>