

The Department of Sociology

**Awards & Scholarships
for Continuing Students
2009**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction1

Writing a Good Personal Statement.....3

Creating an Effective Resume.....5

Getting the Best Letters of Recommendation.....9

E. Jackson Baur Award.....13

Dear Sociology Major,

Congratulations on having earned a strong enough record to be competitive for an award or scholarship! With this little booklet we hope to help you do the best job possible in presenting yourself in our competition but the advice in these pages will come in handy as you apply for jobs or graduate school too.

The Department of Sociology annually chooses students to receive

THE MARSTON M. MCCLUGGAGE SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship was created in 1987 to honor the memory of Dr. Marston M. McCluggage, who was for many years a member of the Department of Sociology faculty. Because of his keen interest in undergraduate education, his family has specified that the scholarship be awarded annually “to deserving undergraduate students majoring in the academic field of sociology.” Awards vary from year-to-year and range from \$500 to \$1000, to be applied directly toward tuition and fees at KU in the academic term immediately following the awarding of the scholarship.

THE HARLEY S. NELSON FAMILY FUND SCHOLARSHIP

Recipients are normally selected in the spring of their junior year, with the money being disbursed during their senior year. Recipients should have an outstanding academic record both in general studies and in the major. It is expected that recipients will have a grade point average of at least 3.0 overall and at least 3.5 in the major. Approximately \$1400

To be considered for any of these awards, you need to submit a packet including:

- Your personal statement
- Your resume
- A current ARTS form
- 2 letters of recommendation (We only need a single letter from each letter writer, no matter how many awards you are applying for)

Bring your application to the **Department of Sociology, 716 Fraser Hall**. It must be complete by:

Friday, February 13, at 4 p.m. in 716 Fraser

This scholarship is decided by the University Interdisciplinary Committee

E. Jackson Baur Award Scholarship.....*Due to Sociology*
Mar. 2, 2009

For more information please see the flyer at the end of this brochure

Visit <http://www.honors.ku.edu/scholarships/> for information about other awards!

Writing a Personal Statement

**** a few tips ****

A personal statement, sometimes referred to as a “statement of purpose,” is a document that succinctly describes your qualifications for an award, scholarship, or entry into graduate school. It is typically 1-2 pages in length.

⇒ **Have Others Read It** – Award and admission committees expect to see extremely polished personal statements. Be sure that yours is free of grammar and spelling errors.

⇒ **Brag Without Bragging** – The personal statement represents a chance to promote your achievements. You shouldn’t assume that the committee will recognize your greatness after reading your resume or CV. Use the personal statement to highlight your volunteer work, your academic accomplishments, and anything that makes you stand out. Toot your own horn! On the other hand, be careful that your tone does not sound conceited or overly boastful. Accomplish the trick of “bragging without bragging” by allowing other people to give you feedback on your statement’s style and tone.

⇒ **Have a Plan Even if You Don’t Have One** – After describing your accomplishments, describe your career aspirations. What do you intend to accomplish in the future? What is your plan? Your uncertainties might lead you to be vague and to write about a general plan instead of a specific one. Instead, be specific as possible about what you intend to do after you graduate. Indicating that you want to enter law school is too vague. Writing that you want to go to law school to study environmental law is a little better, but writing that you want to specialize in environmental law so you can work for a nonprofit organization concerned with water scarcity is better still. Committee members reading your personal statement understand that you might change your life plan, but a personal statement that describes concrete goals makes the candidate appear mature and confident.



Creating an Effective Resume

A resume is a tool for getting people to take you seriously. It needs to showcase what you've done and what skills you have to offer. Your resume should include:

Identification

- Make it easy for them to see your name.
- Include the most relevant contact information (school and/or home information).
- Include your e-mail address but, partygurl07@ku.edu is likely to send a signal to employers/graduate schools that you are not serious.
- Avoid unnecessary personal information such as marital status and date of birth.

Education

- This section always goes first on your resume, as long as you are in school or a recent graduate.
- If you are still an undergraduate and applying for an internship, *list your high school* below KU in this section.
- As a graduating senior, your **GPA** should always be mentioned, as long as it is above 3.0.
- **Significant honors and awards** can be included as a sub-category of your Education section, or as a separate section if you have many awards or honors that are non-academic.

Work Experience

- Don't feel that you must limit this section to paid work experiences, especially if you are still in college or a recent graduate. We all understand that the most valuable or most challenging experiences often occur in internships, volunteer work or other extracurricular activities.

Achievements/honors

- See section on education above, or make this a separate section if you have many awards and honors outside of your academic work.

Activities, interests, volunteer work, memberships

- If you choose to separate your work experience from your extracurricular activities or volunteer work, they *can* go in a separate section. BUT they don't have to go in a separate section; some of these activities may demonstrate your skills just as well or even better than your paid work experience.

Special skills

- This is an optional section - if specific skills are necessary to the job, or if your skills help you stand out from the crowd, then include a skills section in your resume.

Computer skills:

- You may wish to list the systems (Macintosh, IBM, UNIX, etc.) and applications (Filemaker Pro, Microsoft Word, Pagemaker, HTML, Excel, Powerpoint, etc.) with which you are capable.

Languages:

List languages in which you have more than just some basic ability. In other words, if you are able to carry on a conversation in that language, list it.

- o Indicate your level of ability ("basic conversational ability," "proficiency," "near-fluency," "fluency") or the number of years of college-level study.

References

- **Do** create a references list as soon as you can and have it available, in case an employer asks for references. Make sure your references know you list them as a reference. Like asking for letters of recommendation, you might want to be certain your references will speak highly of you.

Formatting your resume

- Leave plenty of white space on your resume - don't make your resume look crowded.
- Emphasize job titles by boldfacing them (except where the name of a prestigious organization you have worked for will grab their attention first).
- Place the most important information closer to the top of your resume. (For example, if you are a student and your paid work has been fairly mundane, but you have great computer skills or excellent extracurricular leadership experience, then put the skills or the extracurriculars near the top of your resume.)
- Where appropriate, descriptive category headings can attract an employers attention (for example, "Counseling and Tutoring Experience" or "Leadership Experience" instead of just "Experience").
- Leave blank space between the separate sections and items on your resume.
- Design your resume for easy skimming: emphasize by boldfacing, capitalizing and italicizing.

- Use 8 1/2" x 11" white, off-white or very light-gray bond paper. Do not use colored paper.
- Avoid using the Microsoft word resume templates—they often do not look very professional in the end. You don't need a graphic design degree to have a simple, well-organized resume that stands out.

See Boston College's site below for good examples of formatting:

<http://www.bc.edu/offices/careers/skills/resumes/samples.html>

Some marketable skills you may have as a Sociology major:

- Analyze, Synthesize & Interpret Information
- Interpersonal Communication (oral & written)
- Knowledge of Community Resources
- Statistical Abilities
- Ability to Understand & Improve Human Relationships
- Insight into Group Dynamics
- Computer Skills (data processing & analysis)
- Knowledge of Social Structures and change
- Interact well with Diverse Cultures/Groups
- Research and Planning (sociological)
- Critical Thinking
- Resolve Conflicts/Counseling
- Work well under Pressure

Letters of Recommendation

How important are letters of recommendation?

Letters of recommendation are required for almost every graduate school application and are a very important part of the application process. Usually grades and test scores factor in most heavily; however, your letters of recommendation could be the deciding factor in the admission process. Strong letters of recommendation can strengthen your application and if there are deficiencies in your application, they can help to

outweigh them.

Whom should I ask for letters of recommendation?

DON'T BE SHY.

Professors expect to write reference letters for good students. They once needed the kind of support you are asking for now!

The best letter writers are those that know you well and can provide an evaluation of your ability to perform and succeed at the graduate level. If you are planning to attend graduate school, take every opportunity to get to know and talk with your professors: go to office hours, ask questions in class, seek advice about your career, do independent research or study with a professor whose recommendation you may want.

The best letter writers:

- Someone who knows you well
- Someone with the title of “Professor” AIM FOR PERMANENT FACULTY.
- Someone who is a professor at the school granting your baccalaureate degree
- Someone who has earned the degree which you are seeking in your graduate work

- Someone with an advanced degree who has supervised you in a job or internship aligned with the graduate program you are pursuing (e.g., Public Health, Social Work, Business Administration, etc.)
- Someone who has academically evaluated you in an upper-division class

Note: letters from family friends, political figures, and the like usually are discouraged and may, in fact, be detrimental.

How do I approach potential letter writers?

First, make a list of professors and/or supervisors who will be your best advocates. Then, set up an appointment to discuss your request in person. Do not make the request via email. Be prepared to articulate your interest and reasons for attending graduate school.

Letters of recommendation are written strictly on a voluntary basis; a faculty member or employer may decline to write them.

The best approach is to ask potential letter writers if they are willing to write you a strong letter.

If you sense reluctance or the answer is no, ask someone else. – remember, the last thing you want is a bad letter!

When should I approach letter writers?

Give your referees as much lead time as possible. Two weeks before the deadline is the absolute minimum – a MONTH is far better! Professors are busy people and they will need the extra time to write you a good letter.

How can I go about getting good letters of recommendation?

Since your best letters will come from those who know you well, make an effort to get to know your professors and/or supervisors.

The best strategy you can use to get a good letter of recommendation, particularly if a professor does not have a long acquaintance with you, is to provide your letter writer with ample information about you. This way, you will get a letter that includes concrete details about you, instead of a letter that contains only your grade or class rank, which is of limited value.

What information do my letter writers need to write good letters?

You can help your letter writers write enlightening letters by giving each of them a portfolio that includes:

A bland letter won't take you too far!

1. A cover note that includes:
 - a. Information on how to get in touch with you in case they need to reach you
 - b. What you would like emphasized in each letter
 - c. A list of schools to which you are applying, and due dates, with the earliest due date at the top
 - d. Any other information that is relevant
 - e. Open and close your note with thanks and acknowledgement that the letter writer's time is valuable and that this letter is important to your professional future.

2. Recommendation forms – make it easy for letter writer to complete forms in a timely manner, complete the following:
 - f. Applicant information typed in
 - g. Recommender's name, title, contact info (telephone, fax, address etc) typed in
 - h. Your unofficial transcripts (note courses you took with them)
 - i. A draft of your statement of purpose
 - j. A copy of your best work in the course (with instructor comments on it), lab evaluations, projects, publications etc.
 - k. Your resume
 - l. Stamped and addressed envelopes to send letters and forms directly to the Career Center Letter Service or schools of your choice.

Nowadays most schools do online applications-make sure you separate those and provide a folder with schools which need paper copies....

FOLLOW UP

Remember what most faculty offices look like? Chaos. It's best to check back with each referee to see that the necessary forms and letters have been sent out. Polite reminders a few days before the deadline are greatly appreciated.

SAY THANKS!

Keep in touch. Let your referees know you appreciate their help. Tell them what happened, and what your plans are.

Information provided here is partly taken from: University of California at Berkeley, Career Center. 2008. "Graduate School - Letters of Recommendation". Retrieved January 21, 2008 (<http://career.berkeley.edu/Grad/GradLetter.stm>)

E. JACKSON BAUR STUDENT AWARD FOR RESEARCH AND STUDY OF SOCIAL CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Monetary awards are available to KU students interested in the study of social conflict and its resolution. These awards are used to support research, professional travel, or manuscript preparation as well as to recognize scholarly accomplishment.

Undergraduate as well as graduate students are eligible.

Applications from graduate or undergraduate students are due **March 2, 2009**, and should be sent to: *The E. Jackson Baur Award Committee, Department of Sociology.*

1415 Jayhawk Blvd. Room 716

Lawrence, KS 66045-7556

To apply, please submit the following items:

(1) The cover sheet, (2) a letter (2-page maximum, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins) from the student describing his/her qualifications and/or the use to be made of the monetary award, (3) an academic transcript (ARTS form), and (4) two letters of support from two faculty. The letters from the two faculty must be sent separately.

These awards are made from a fund created to honor Professor Emeritus E. Jackson Baur when he retired from the Department of Sociology. The intent is to encourage research and study of group conflict and its nonviolent resolution.