

THE KEYS TO GAINING A PRESTIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

START PREPARING EARLY

While graduation seems like an eternity away, it will quickly creep up on you. Prepare yourself **NOW** with the keys of success so that you will be competitive for graduate schools, scholarships, and employers.

There are important things that you can do right now to prepare for your future. Graduate schools, scholarship committees, and employers look for students who have applied themselves; they look for students with excellent grades in challenging course work, service experience, good written and oral communication skills, leadership, and a broad perspective of the world. It is best to start to develop these traits early, possibly as a freshman, so that regardless of what you decide to do with your education, all doors will be open to you!



FIRST KEY: Strive for **excellence in challenging classes**. Go beyond getting good grades. A lot of scholarship organizations look for someone with a 3.9 GPA or higher! Take honors classes and other challenging courses and learn a foreign language. Committees are far more impressed with the student who has taken

challenging course work than with the student who has straight A's with unimpressive classes. **REMEMBER: EDUCATION IS NEVER WASTED!** Even if you are unsure about what you want to do with your life; keep all opportunities open by doing well in school.



SECOND KEY: Get **work, internship, and volunteer experience** in your field. Many scholarship organizations look for the student who is intelligent AND who is willing to give back to the community. Sure the Rhodes Scholarship looks favorably at applicants who spend their summers solving hunger problems in

Ethiopia, but do what you can manage—maybe just a couple of hours of service per week. BYU's Center for Service and Learning (2010 WSC) offers several service opportunities for students on and off campus while the Kennedy Center (273 HRCB) has information on international internships and volunteer ideas. Be sure your summer experiences are enhancing activities that build your future scholarship application.



THIRD KEY: **Get to know people**, especially professors, advisors, administrators, and other employees. It is never too early to forge good relationships. Initiate contact by going to their offices with questions or comments. Get to know professors even if you are in a class of three hundred students.

Professors are an invaluable resource as they will write you much needed letters of recommendation. Also, they often have projects they are working on, and they are looking for research assistants or teaching assistants. These relationships provide opportunities for career and scholarship networking, mentoring relationships, and potential references for the future.



FOURTH KEY: Develop a global perspective. Expand your knowledge of the world, people, places, and events in any way you can. Keep up on the news and read a variety of opinions. Read the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, etc. Learn to defend your views while also admitting the strengths in another's argument. Take advantage of travel opportunities such as study abroad, work internships abroad, or other special programs. Start investigating your interests. If you are in a class and are very interested in that subject, talk to your professor about possible research opportunities. Prestigious scholarship organizations like students who have worked with professors on research projects...but make sure it is something that interests you as well!



FIFTH KEY: Seek out leadership positions that are important to you. Many opportunities in leadership exist. For example, you could apply to be on the council for your dorms. Honors Student Advisory Council also has spots open for underclassmen. BYU Student Association also looks for students to fill some of their positions as well. These positions will also be good stepping-stones for other leadership positions later in college.



SIXTH KEY: Get involved in interesting extra-curricular activities that are meaningful to you. Students who live in the library are not nearly as interesting as someone who sky-dives and starts his own sky-diving club. Some scholarships, such as the Rhodes, look at sports involvement. So aim to be a well-rounded individual.



SEVENTH KEY: Work on your communication skills. Many scholarships require interviews with multiple interviewers, so learn to be at ease answering questions on the spot.



EIGHTH KEY: Apply for large and small scholarships. Also consider submitting essays to writing contests or to publish your writing. Each small scholarship and award is a building block to a larger one.



NINTH KEY: Start early! Many scholarships have application periods several months in advance of the actual award and require extra preparation. So, **know the eligibility requirements and deadlines** for scholarships appropriate for your interests and goals. Allow plenty of time to write and revise your application before the due date.

Obtain faculty reviews of your application and revise, revise, revise! Be flexible in your plans, and apply for multiple scholarships.



TENTH KEY: Don't give up if you don't receive the scholarship. Many highly qualified people are turned down because there are so few of these prestigious scholarships to go around. Just find another award or opportunity that suits your interests.

With these valuable keys, you will be able to unlock many doors of opportunity which lead to a bright future. Just remember to focus on your own interests, and always pray for your own inspiration to know how best to take advantage of these opportunities.