

Knauss Fellowship Application Best Practices

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Version: 0.1

Date: 2020-01-16

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to briefly describe a few best practices for successfully applying for a Knauss Fellowship. Before reading this document, you should familiarize yourself with the fellowship and the application process by visiting the [Knauss Fellowship page on the National Sea Grant Website](#). There is also good information on the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) [Prospective fellow overview page](#) and [this more detailed page about the application process](#). The NSGO also has a [recorded webinar](#) where you can learn more. There are many other resources available on the National Sea Grant page and elsewhere on various state Sea Grant program pages. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with as many of them as you can to see how your skills can benefit the Knauss Fellowship program and how the fellowship can benefit you.

If you have questions about applying for the Knauss Fellowship, please reach out to Angie Archer, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant's Campus Engagement Coordinator, at amcbride@purdue.edu or 765-496-3722.

Knauss Fellowship Application Best Practices

The overall idea you should keep in mind while completing an application is that you need to show why you are right for the position and why the position is right for you. All of your application materials should keep this concept in mind.

Your statement

The best advice for the written statement is to remember that it will be read by people who are reviewing many applications at once. Your statement should be well-written, free of typos, and strike a good balance between depth and concision.

Here is some more advice, in rapid-fire, bullet point style:

- Start it with something that will pull the reviewer in
- Tell a coherent story that combines the various parts of your application to answer the question “why are you right for this job” and show why this is the culmination of everything that came before this
- Write clearly and stay on-point
- This isn’t a summary of your research: they don’t want graphs and data, but you should make ties between your research and your big picture, illustrating your education, experience, and passions
- Your statement should clearly articulate a life or career goal that ties into the goals of the Knauss Fellowship
- Have someone you trust who is a good editor take a look at it and make suggestions. 1000 words can be tight!
- If there’s a relevant prestigious honor/award/grant that you’ve received, you might want to highlight that in your written statement to make sure that it shines through and that the relevance and prestige is obvious to reviewers

Your resume/cv and transcripts

- Resume/cv advice
 - Limited to 2 pages
 - Make sure that if you have to cut stuff, cut the stuff that’s less relevant to Knauss Fellowship
 - Keep it clean with no typos! Keep descriptions concise
- Transcripts
 - Official copies
 - Have good grades...almost all Knauss Fellows have a 3.5 or greater GPA in graduate school, with many having a 3.8 or higher
 - If your grades are lower, then the rest of your application has to be compelling
- Recommendation letters
 - 2 letters of recommendation, one from major advisor
 - You want someone who wants to write about you
 - A personal letter talking about your experiences is more powerful
 - Template-type letters don’t necessarily rate that highly
 - Looking for specifics about you, something compelling
 - Your letters can’t come from members of Congress, friends, or relatives

Other general advice

- Knauss Fellows tend to be well-rounded individuals and your materials should demonstrate how you are well-rounded, as well. Ideally, you can show how your extracurriculars inform your strengths as a candidate...you have a life outside of the classroom/lab, but that life also influences your life inside the classroom/lab.

- Remember, this is a job application, not a research grant application. Knauss Fellows may do some research, but it'll likely be research to achieve management or policy objectives.
- It is worth your time to talk with former or current Knauss Fellows about the opportunity. This will help you better understand what the fellowship entails and will help you write a stronger application. If you don't know any current or former fellows, you can usually find their names by digging around on the NSGO Knauss website.
- There are a range of levels of experience out there and you may be competing with applicants who are further along in their studies than you are. That said, MS students get chosen all the time, but you need to show why this is the right time and the right opportunity and why your package is outstanding.
- If you're in a 4+1 program, you need to have the bachelor's part done before you can apply for a Knauss Fellowship.