APPLYING FOR THE PAUL & DAISY SOROS FELLOWSHIP FOR NEW AMERICANS

Outline of Workshop

Part 1: Intro to the Soros Fellowship
Part 2: Parts of the application
Part 3: Writing the essays
Part 4: Editing and revising
Part 5: Organizational tips
Part 6: Additional resources
Part 1: Intro to the Soros Fellowship

What is the P.D. Soros Fellowship for New Americans?

What does it cover?
- $25,000/yr stipend for 2 years
- 50% of required tuition & fees (up to $20,000/yr) to UCLA

*** First year of fellowship cannot be deferred ***

Who is eligible?
- New Americans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immigrants</th>
<th>Children of immigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Was born abroad as a non-US citizen</td>
<td>• Was born in the US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Must be…</td>
<td>• Was born abroad as a US citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. a naturalized US citizen</td>
<td>2. Both parents must have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. a green card holder</td>
<td>been born abroad as non-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. adopted by US citizens</td>
<td>US citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. a DACA recipient</td>
<td></td>
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Part 1: Intro to the Soros Fellowship

Who is eligible? (continued)

- Early Graduate students (1st or 2nd year) enrolled full time
  - For joint-degree programs, must not have begun 3rd year of the degree program for which you seek funding
- Must be 30 years old or younger as of November 1st of the current year
- All fields of study*
  - *Except ineligible programs: online programs, MBAs, extended 5-year undergraduate/master’s programs

Application Deadline:
- November 1st at 11:59 pm EST

Approximate timeline:
- Finalists usually contacted in mid- to late-December
- Interviews of finalists conducted in January/February
- Fellows announced in March
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Part 2: Parts of the Application

What will you need to apply?

- Personal information
- Transcripts
- Scores of standardized tests (e.g., GRE)
- Recommendations (3 required, up to 5 accepted)
- Optional exhibits
- Resume
- Two essays
## Part 2: Parts of the Application

### Personal information
- Confirmation of your eligibility
- Personal & contact info
- Your higher-education history
- Graduate program(s) for which you seek support

### Transcripts, standardized test scores:
- Unofficial copies are acceptable
- If you are invited for interviews, you will need to submit official copies
- Request official copies early
  - Request transcripts from UCLA in person at the Registrar’s Office (Murphy Hall) or online via MyUCLA
Part 2: Parts of the Application

Recommendation Letters – Whom to pick:

• Your recommendations should support your narrative
  • Choose recommenders who have worked closely enough with you that they can comment on the specific personality traits or accomplishments that you have brought up in your essays
• Best to have recommenders who really know you & your accomplishments
• Be sure they will submit by the deadline!

Part 2: Parts of the Application

Optional Exhibits

• Optional, but recommended if you have any
• Appropriate exhibits include...
  • Publications, conference presentations
  • News articles/media coverage about you/your work
  • Portfolio of your art/music/other media
Part 2: Parts of the Application

Resume – What to include:

- Education/Training, including degree programs and relevant research, teaching, and/or work experiences (may or may not be limited to academia)
- Significant academic & professional honors
- All previous fellowships, scholarships, & grants
- Publications & presentations
  - Include “In Preparation” and “Under Review”

Part 2: Parts of the Application

2 Essays: (1) Experience as a New American & (2) Career-related Activities/Goals

- Word limit: 1000 words
- Tailor your writing to:
  - Mission/goals of the Soros Fellowship
  - Fellowship criteria (https://www.pdsoros.org/apply/criteria)
Part 2: Parts of the Application

Primary Review Criteria
1. Demonstrate *creativity, originality and initiative* in one or more aspects of your life
2. Demonstrate a commitment to and capacity for accomplishment that has required drive and sustained effort

Part 2: Parts of the Application

Primary Review Criteria
3. Demonstrate a commitment to the values expressed in the U.S. Constitution & Bill of Rights
   • Including (but not limited to)…
     • Supporting human rights & the rule of law
     • Opposing unwarranted encroachment on personal liberty
     • Advancing the responsibilities of citizenship in a free society
Part 2: Parts of the Application

Other Review Criteria

• Show promise of continued significant contributions. Contributions are likely to reflect distinctive creativity, originality and initiative and will mark the candidate as a leading and influential figure within her/his fields of endeavor.

• Graduate training is relevant to her/his long-term career goals and is of potential value in enhancing her/his future creativity and accomplishment.

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Part 3: Writing the Essays

Prep Work

Get used to talking about your experiences and your work

Remember: Essays = Persuasive Documents

Argument is:
  • You are a good fit for the mission of the funder
  • Your work is/has been significant and your future work is feasible
  • You are qualified to undertake your work

Know the evaluation criteria

Know your audience
  • Who are the reviewers?
    • Safe to assume that reviewers may not be in your field
  • What’s the review process?
    • Initially, individual review of application
    • If selected as a finalist, panel review (group discussion) of application
Part 3: Writing the Essays

Create a narrative across the app. components:

- How do your life experiences (Essay 1: Experience as a New American Essay) make you suited to do this work (Essay 2: Career-related Activities/Goals Essay)?
- Use Essay 1 to highlight elements of your background
- How do your career-related activities expand on past experiences to further progress toward career goals?
- Ask referees to highlight specific aspects of your personal &/or professional background
- Aim: Prove that (1) your experiences as a New American have impacted you & your goals, (2) you are trained, motivated, & well-prepared to undertake your work, and (3) that this work is original & meaningful within your field & broader.

Part 3: Writing the Essays

Essay 1: Experience as a New American Essay

“Tell us about your experiences as a New American. Whether as an immigrant yourself, or as a child of immigrants, how have your experiences as a New American informed and shaped who you are and your accomplishments?

Feel free to discuss how individual people (such as family or teachers), institutions, aspects of law, culture, society or American governance made an impact on your life as an immigrant or child of immigrants. The program is especially interested in understanding and contextualizing your accomplishments, be they personal, professional, or academic.”
Part 3: Writing the Essays

Essay 1: Experience as a New American Essay

• Why you? What makes you different?
• How have your experiences impacted you &/or your work?
• How have your experiences exemplified your commitment to the U.S. Constitution & Bill of Rights?
• How have you contributed to society (and/or your field)?

Part 3: Writing the Essays

Essay 2: Career-related Activities/Goals Essay

“Tell us about your current and near-term career-related activities and goals, as well as why you decided to pursue the specific graduate program(s) and schools that you have. How do you see your current work and study informing your early career goals? If you have not been accepted into a program yet, please tell us about why you selected the programs to which you are applying.”
Part 3: Writing the Essays

Essay 2: Career-related Activities/Goals Essay

- Why are you passionate about your work?
- Why are you the right person to do this work?
- How can you benefit your field and society through your work?
- Do your future goals make sense?
- Does UCLA provide the resources you need to do your work?
- How do your activities and goals exemplify your commitment to the U.S. Constitution & Bill of Rights?

Part 3: Writing the Essays

Tips for both Essays 1 & 2

- Argument: Why you are an ideal candidate
- Be professionally personal
  - i.e., describe personal experiences in a professional manner
- Describe hardships for which you can also highlight specific positives that have resulted
- Don’t feel trapped by chronology
- Isolate 4-5 points that you want the reader to remember about you
Part 3: Writing the Essays

Both Essays 1 & 2

- 1000 words
  - approx. 2-2.5 single-spaced pages
  - Can be single or double-spaced

Career-related Activities/Goals Essay:

Introduction (1 paragraph)

- Purpose is to convince reviewers to want to read your essay
- Should contain clear, concise, interesting overarching idea/theme
- Include clear motivation for your past, current, and future work: what is the overall problem and why is it interesting?
- Be sure language is accessible to non-specialists
- Revise this section continuously
Part 3: Writing the Essays

Career-related Activities/Goals Essay: Body of Essay (1.5 pgs)

- What have you done in the past? Be specific!
  - What did you learn from the experience?
  - How has this experience contributed to your current & future work?
  - What is the relevance of your work to the field (narrowly or widely defined)?
- What are you currently doing? Be specific!
  - What have you learned from the experience thus far?
  - How will this experience contribute to your future work?
  - What is the relevance of your work to the field (narrowly or widely defined)?
- What are your future career goals?
  - Do your future goals make sense based on past & current work?
  - Are you capable of reaching these goals?

Part 3: Writing the Essays

Career-related Activities/Goals Essay:
Body of Essay (1.5 pgs)

- **Move 1: Establishing a Research Territory**
  - Show that the general work is important, central, interesting, problematic, or relevant in some way
  - Introduce and review items of previous work in the area

- **Move 2: Creating a Niche**
  - Indicate a gap in the previous work, or extend previous knowledge/work in some way

- **Move 3: Occupying the Niche**
  - Outline purposes or state the nature of your proposed work
  - State the value of the proposed work

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Part 3: Writing the Essays

Career-related Activities/Goals Essay:
Conclusion (1 paragraph)

- Return to relevance and significance of your work, summarize these here
- Use non-technical language
- What is the take-home point?
- Focus on evaluation criteria!
Part 3: Writing the Essays

Challenges and common pitfalls:

• Challenges: writing must be clear and concise; work must be interesting & the relevance must be clear without pages of background
• Common pitfall: overly detailed or technical at expense of logic motivating work

Tips:

• Clearly label different sections
• Address explicitly each evaluation criterion

When reviewing your own essay, ask yourself...

• How is your work framed in the introductory paragraph and background section of the proposal?
• What is the level of detail?
• How does this early part motivate the relevance & significance of your work?
• How do you conclude your essay? What does your conclusion emphasize?
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Part 4: Editing and Revising

Get others to read your essays – feedback is critical

- Fellow students
- More advanced students who hold the grant/fellowship
- Faculty advisor or mentor
- Graduate Writing Center consultants

Plan to revise extensively!
Part 4: Editing and Revising

Content:
• Does it target the evaluation criteria?
• Is it correctly balanced to address those?

Organization:
• Is it “skimmable”?
• Do the important parts stand out?

Argument: Explanatory, not descriptive, language

Style: Precise word choice, concise, jargon-free

Technical: Does it meet the font, margin, word limit, etc. requirements for submission?

Part 4: Editing and Revising

Rejected! What next?

• Think about why the reviewers didn’t like it
• How can you modify your proposal to help the readers understand your point?
• Can you apply again? Do it!
• Give yourself more time the 2nd time around; try to get additional, different feedback
• Take these essays and rework them for another granting agency
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Part 5: Organizational Tips

- Keep copies of every draft, numbered sequentially
- Keep notes from discussions with peers and faculty, all reviewers’ comments
- Keep track of time spent, to gauge time needed next time around
- Create worksheet with deadlines, major evaluation criteria, communications with referees, etc.
- Start the online application early and get familiar with the submission site
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Part 6: Additional Resources

- Information Sessions and Webinars run by The PD Soros Fellowship
  - Watch for emails from your SAO about information sessions at UCLA
  - Webinars: https://www.pdsoros.org/apply/information-sessions

- GWC writing consultant appointments:
  - Several consultants have received grants and fellowships and are available for appointments
    (https://app.qsrc.ucla.edu/gwc/reservations/)

- Graduate Division:
  - Cherie Francis, Graduate Division Fellowships and Financial Services (cfrancis@grad.ucla.edu)