2015-2016
EXCEPTIONAL FUNDING HANDBOOK

Norman Topping Scholars

I. Policy

II. Online Forms
I. POLICY

Exceptional Funding Policy for Norman Topping Scholars

General Eligibility Criteria:

- All Exceptional Funding applicants must be in good standing with the Fund.¹
- Exceptional Funding opportunities are available from September thru May or until the annual Exceptional Funding budget is maximized, whichever comes first.
- Topping Scholars on scholarship probation are not eligible for Exceptional Funding.² Scholarship probation occurs when a Scholar’s cumulative grade point average drops below a 2.5³ or 3.0⁴ depending on the status of the student, or when the student fails to complete an average of 32 units per academic year (fall/spring).
- Failure to complete one (1) of the NTSAF program requirements during the academic year will render a Scholar ineligible for Exceptional Funding for that academic year (see Topping Scholar Contract).
- A Topping Scholar is no longer eligible for Exceptional Funding once her/his degree has officially posted, or s/he has met their applicable Exceptional Funding term maximum (whichever comes first). The Exceptional Funding term maximum is based on the status of the Scholar upon entering USC:

**Exceptional Funding Maximum**

*(based on class standing upon entrance to USC)*

- Freshman: Eight (8) semesters
- Transfer: 30-47 transferable units—Seven (7) semesters
- 48-63 transferable units—Six (6) semesters
- 64+ transferable units—Five (5) semesters
- Graduate: Five (5) semesters

Application/Request Procedures:

- Submit completed application or request form via the online database to the Associate Director by the applicable deadline.
- Applicants will be notified of the funding decision via USC e-mail account.
- If approved, the Scholar is responsible for contacting the NTSAF office for an appointment to discuss all necessary payments for funding.
- Approval and payment is pending the completion of all scholarship program and academic requirements as stated in the NTSAF Scholar Contract.
- If approved, all payments for services will be made at the NTSAF office with a NTSAF staff member. Scholars may NOT make any changes to services and/or payment information without the consent of the NTSAF Associate Director.
- Original receipts must be submitted to the Associate Director within two (2) weeks of the initial date of payment or the Scholar accepts full responsibility for reimbursable expenses.

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¹ Good standing includes, but is not limited to, cumulative GPA minimum requirement, academic year unit completion minimum and full attendance at all NTSAF program requirements and shall be determined by the NTSAF Executive Committee.
² Topping Scholars on scholarship probation are eligible to apply for the Summer Tuition opportunity only. (See Summer Tuition: Special Circumstance Application for instructions.)
³ 2.5 GPA minimum applies to Topping Scholars who are undergraduates.
⁴ 3.0 GPA minimum applies to Topping Scholars who are graduate students.
Types of Exceptional Funding:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REQUESTS</th>
<th>APPLICATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Journal</td>
<td>Conference Travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Fees</td>
<td>Preparatory Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honor Society Membership</td>
<td>Study Abroad Travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Association Membership</td>
<td>Summer Tuition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch with Academic Instructor</td>
<td>Summer Tuition: Special Circumstance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1) Requests:
- Requests are accepted on a rolling basis between August 24\textsuperscript{th} and April 29\textsuperscript{th}.
- Completed request forms must be submitted and formally approved by the NTSAF Associate Director before the service takes place.
- Requests will be approved pending the review of all eligibility requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REQUESTS</th>
<th>FUNDING (Maximum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Journal</td>
<td>One (1) Journal per academic year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Fees</td>
<td>Two (2) Exams during tenure at USC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honor Society Membership</td>
<td>Four (4) Memberships during tenure at USC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Association Membership</td>
<td>One (1) Membership per academic year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch with Academic Instructor</td>
<td>One (1) Lunch per semester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Applications:
- Deadlines for Conference Travel and Preparatory Course applications are due the first Friday of every month: September thru April. The 2015-2016 academic year due dates are as follows: 9/4, 10/2, 11/6, 12/4, 1/15\textsuperscript{th}, 2/5, 3/4, and 4/1.
- Applications for Summer Tuition and Summer Tuition: Special Circumstances are due by Friday, March 4, 2016 at 5pm.
- All Conference Travel and Preparatory Course applications must be submitted online (https://sait.usc.edu/ntsaf/scholars/student/login.aspx) by the deadline that is at least six (6) weeks prior to travel. (For example, if the travel begins December 5, the application MUST be submitted by the October deadline)
- Application requirements vary by the service requested. See application for further details.
- Applications require approval from the Governing Board.
- Application deadlines are final, no exceptions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPLICATIONS</th>
<th>FUNDING (maximum during tenure)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel Awards</td>
<td>Two (2) Travel Awards for undergraduates One (1) Travel Award for graduate students</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Conference Travel AND/OR</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Study Abroad Airfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparatory Course</td>
<td>One (1) Course during tenure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer Tuition</td>
<td>Four (4) Units during tenure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Tuition: Special Circumstance</td>
<td>Four (4) Units per academic year</td>
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</table>

\footnote{Topping Scholars are required to attend the Student/Faculty Luncheon each semester. Only Scholars who miss the luncheon due to an approved academic conflict are eligible for the “Lunch with an Academic Instructor” Funding request. Academic conflicts must be pre-approved by the Associate Director (see Scholar Contract).}

\footnote{January 15\textsuperscript{th} is the first Friday after winter recess.}
Norman Topping Student Aid Fund  
2015-2016 Conference Travel

PURPOSE:
- The purpose of the Conference Travel opportunity is to compensate the expenses incurred by Topping Scholars to promote national and international travel to academic/service learning leadership conferences and/or meetings. Undergraduate scholars are eligible for 2 (two) conference travel opportunities while graduate scholars are eligible for 1 (one). *Please note that international conferences will only be considered if the scholar will be a presenter at said conference. International programs sponsored by a USC office or department are exempt from this requirement.*

WHEN TO APPLY:
- Applications are accepted the first Friday of every month: **September through April**. Completed applications must be submitted by 5 pm to the NTSAF office:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 2, 2015</td>
<td>January 15, 2016*</td>
<td>April 1, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 6, 2015</td>
<td>February 5, 2016</td>
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* January 16th is the first Friday after Winter Recess.

NOTE: All Conference Travel applications must be submitted by the deadline that is **at least six (6) weeks prior to travel**. (For example, if the travel begins December 5, the application MUST be submitted by the October deadline.)

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES:
- **Travel** between the Scholar’s home and the site of the conference/meeting, according to the guidelines described in the application instructions. Transportation at (or during) the conference is the applicant’s responsibility and is not reimbursable;
- **Registration** fees up to $300.00;
- **Food** costs reimbursable up to $25.00/day for a maximum of 4 days;
- **Lodging** up to $125.00/night for a maximum of 4 nights;
- **Airfare** up to $1,500.00 (not to exceed $1000 for domestic flights).

*Important Note:* All original receipts and reflection statement must be received by the NTSAF office within two (2) weeks of the official final conference day or the Scholar accepts responsibility of reimbursable expenses. Reimbursements will NOT be processed without an original receipt.

SELECTION CRITERIA:
- Applicants are evaluated on the following criteria:
  - Complete application (by applicable deadline)
  - Comprehensive documentation
  - Degree to which they meet the purpose of funding
  - Validity of recommendation letter
• Priority will be given in the following order:
  1. Applicants who are presenting at the conference
  2. Applicants attending an academic conference/meeting
  3. Proximity to completion of degree
  4. Scholars who have not utilized Conference Travel

ONLINE APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

I) Section I: Expenses:

A) **LONG DISTANCE TRAVEL** is travel from home to the location of the conference/meeting, and back (airfare maximum $1,500.00). NTSAF will only fund a single means of long-distance travel unless it is shown that:

i) Combining another means of travel is less expensive than completing the trip by the single means 

   OR

ii) The conference city can only be reached by a combined means of travel

   Topping Scholars requesting funding for a combined means of travel under clause “i” must provide a written price quotation to show that alternate means are less expensive than single means. Receipts for airline travel must include both the invoice and the ticket receipt. The Conference Travel grant reimburses fuel costs for rental cars only: the Fund does not reimburse mileage.

   *For example, a Scholar delivering a paper in Boulder, CO would normally be funded for a plane ticket to Boulder via Los Angeles, CA. S/he could, however, be funded for a plane ticket to Denver, CO and a rental car from Denver to Boulder if (s)he proves that the plane ticket to Boulder is more expensive than the amount requested for the combined means of travel (i.e. the airplane to Denver and the rental car to Boulder). If there was no airport in Boulder, the Scholar could also be funded for a plane ticket to Denver and a rental car to Boulder under clause “ii.”*

B) **LOCAL TRAVEL** is travel from a transportation center (e.g. airport, train station, bus station) in the area of the conference to the actual conference site and back. The NTSAF does not fund transportation during the conference or for cars rented during the conference. Rental car expenses are only allowable if the car was rented to get to the area of the conference (i.e. for long-distance travel).

   *For example, a Scholar may request to be funded for the cost of a shuttle bus from the airport to the University where their conference is held and back. A Scholar would not be reimbursed for the cost of buses taken downtown for evening entertainment during the conference, or for transportation between a hotel and the conference site: these constitute transportation during the conference. Neither would a Scholar be funded for a rental car from O’Hare Airport to Northwestern University, since they are in the same metropolitan area.*

C) **REGISTRATION**: Original receipt from conference registration is required ($300.00 maximum).
D) **FOOD**: Meal expenses will be reimbursed according to the following schedule: 1 day at conference: $25.00 max; 2 days: $50.00 max; 3 days: $75.00 max; 4 days: $100.00 max (4 day maximum). Note: the Scholar may spend this allotment at any rate. Original receipts are required for reimbursement. *For example, a Scholar who attended a 3-day conference may request food reimbursement for up to $75 dollars. The Scholar may spend this allotment at the rate of $25.00/day, or splurge for one $75.00 meal, at her/his own discretion.*

E) **LODGING**: Each Scholar may request up to $125.00/night for a four (4) night maximum. If the Scholar shares a room, s/he may only request the amount of the room rate divided by the number of occupants in the room. A room charge slip indicating the room rate, tax, occupancy, and extra charges must be included. The Travel Grant does not cover telephone calls, parking charges or any other incidentals.

*In the column labeled “totals to be tabulated by applicant” calculate the amount of your estimated total expenses in each category (travel, registration, food and lodging). Add the totals from these categories to calculate your total expenses. Then, from your estimated total expenses, subtract the amount of any other funding you received for this trip. The remaining amount is your total Conference Travel request.*

*(IF YOU RECEIVED OR ANTICIPATE OTHER FUNDING FOR THIS TRAVEL, COMPLETE EXPENSE 6: OTHER FUNDING)*

2) **Section III: Statement of Purpose**
Include a typed, 1-2 page explanation of why attending this academic/service oriented/leadership conference/meeting is important to you and how it can support one or more of the following:
- Your academic growth
- Your professional goals
- Your commitment to service in the USC community
- Your leadership development both on and off campus

3) **Section IV: Documentation**
If you obtained funding from a non-departmental source, include copies of all communication and financial documents relevant to the transaction. Submitting this information will strengthen the outcome of your application.

4) **Section V: Reflection**
Upon completion of conference travel you are required to submit a 1-2 page reflection. The reflection statement should assess your academic, personal, and/or professional growth after attending the academic/service-oriented/leadership conference and/or meeting. This reflection statement is due to the NTSAF Associate Director within two (2) weeks of the official final conference day. Reimbursements will not be processed until the self-reflection statement is submitted.
Norman Topping Student Aid Fund
2015-2016 Preparatory Course

PURPOSE:
• The purpose of the Preparatory Course opportunity is to assist Topping Scholars with the preparation for the attainment of a graduate degree.

WHEN TO APPLY:
• Applications are accepted the first Friday of every month throughout the academic year. Completed applications must be submitted by 5pm via the online database on the following dates:

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*January 16th is the first Friday after Winter Recess.

• All preparatory course applications must be submitted by the deadline that is at least six (6) weeks prior to start date of the course. (For example, if the course begins December 5, the application MUST be submitted by the October deadline)

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES:
• Only one (1) Preparatory Course may be funded during the Scholar’s tenure at USC.

SELECTION CRITERIA:
• Applicants are evaluated on the following criteria:
  • Complete application
  • Comprehensive documentation
  • Compelling and thorough proposal in Section C

• Priority will be given in the following order:
  1. Proximity to completion of degree
  2. First-time applicants
Norman Topping Student Aid Fund
2016 Summer Tuition
Deadline: March 4, 2016 by 5pm

PURPOSE:
• The purpose of the Summer Tuition opportunity is to promote the attainment of a double major and/or minor by a Topping Scholar.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE CLAUSE:
• Scholars who do not meet the academic eligibility requirements may still apply for Summer Tuition under the Special Circumstance clause. This funding is intended to provide Scholars the opportunity to graduate within the allotted scholarship terms at the University. To apply, use the Summer Tuition: Special Circumstance Application. Contact the NTSAF office for further information regarding this funding.

WHEN TO APPLY:
• Completed Summer Tuition or Summer Tuition: Special Circumstance applications must be submitted via the online database by Friday, March 6, 2015 by 5pm. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted, no exceptions.

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES:
• The maximum amount of extra units that may be funded under this policy is four (4) tuition units. Funding is available only for USC academic courses applicable to the Scholar’s degree (major, minor, or general requirements).

SELECTION CRITERIA:
• Applicants are evaluated on the following criteria:
  • Degree to which they meet the purpose of funding
  • Compelling and thorough proposal in Section C
  • Validity of Academic Certification

• Priority will be given in the following order:
  1. Proximity to completion of degree
  2. First-time applicants
II. ONLINE FORMS
Exceptional Funding Online Forms for Norman Topping Scholars

All forms must be submitted online at:

https://sait.usc.edu/ntsaf/scholars/student/login.aspx

Requests:
- Academic Journal
- Exam Fees
- Honor Society Membership
- Professional Association Membership
- Lunch with Academic Instructor

Applications:
- Conference Travel
- Preparatory Course
- Summer Tuition
- Summer Tuition: Special Circumstance