2019-2020 EXCEPTIONAL FUNDING HANDBOOK

Topping Scholars & Fellows

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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 April or until the annual Exceptional Funding budget is maximized, whichever comes first.
- Scholars/Fellows must be at USC at least one semester, complete 16 units*, and have a GPA over 2.5 to apply for Exceptional Funding grants. (*Fellows may have different units for fulltime status.)
- Scholars/Fellows on scholarship probation are not eligible for Exceptional Funding.
  Scholarship probation occurs when a student's cumulative grade point average drops below a 2.5[2] or 3.0[3] 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 one ineligible for Exceptional Funding for that academic year (see Topping Scholar/Fellow Contract).
- A Scholar/Fellow is no longer eligible for Exceptional Funding once their degree has officially posted, or they have met their applicable Exceptional Funding term maximum (whichever comes first). The Exceptional Funding term maximum is based on the status of the student upon entering USC:

Exceptional Funding Maximum
(based on class standing upon entrance to USC)
Freshman: Seven (7) semesters (after the first semester)
Transfer: 30-47 transferable units—Six (6) semesters (after the first semester)
48-63 transferable units—Five (5) semesters (after the first semester)
64+ transferable units—Four (4) semesters (after the first semester)
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/Fellow 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/Fellow 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

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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] 2.5 GPA minimum applies to Topping Scholars who are undergraduates.
[3] 3.0 GPA minimum applies to Topping Fellows who are graduate students.

consent of the NTSAF Associate Director. **If Scholars do not use the services purchased, they may owe the money back to the Fund.**

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Types of Exceptional Funding:

REQUESTS	APPLICATIONS
Academic Journal	Conference Travel (incl. ASB, GLP, Maymester and other short-term programs)
Exam Fees	Preparatory Course
Honor Society Membership	Study Abroad Airfare
Professional Association Membership	Summer Tuition

1) Requests:
* **Requests are accepted on a rolling basis between August 26, 2019 and May 1, 2020**.
* 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.
* Once a request is approved, you must meet with the Associate Director to arrange payment.

REQUESTS	FUNDING (Maximum)
Academic Journal	One (1) Journal per academic year
Exam Fees	Two (2) Exams during tenure at USC
Honor Society Membership	One (1) Membership per academic year
Professional Association Membership	One (1) Membership per academic year

2) Applications:
* Deadlines for Conference Travel, Prep Courses, and Study Abroad Airfare applications are due the first Friday of every month: **September thru April**. Applications for Summer Tuition are due by **Friday, March 6, 2020 at 5pm**. Application deadlines are final, no exceptions.
* All Conference Travel, Prep Course, and Study Abroad Airfare applications must be submitted online 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)
* **Letters of recommendation and advisor certifications should also be completed by the deadline.**
* Application requirements vary by the service requested. See application for further details.
* Applications require approval from the Governing Board or the Executive Committee.

APPLICATIONS		FUNDING (maximum during tenure)
Travel Awards	-Conference Travel AND/OR -Study Abroad Airfare	Two (2) Travel Awards for undergraduates One (1) Travel Award for graduate students
Preparatory Course		One (1) Course during tenure
Summer Tuition		Four (4) USC Units during tenure

Norman Topping Student Aid Fund
2019-2020 Conference Travel/Academic Travel

PURPOSE:
- The purpose of the Conference/Academic Travel opportunity is to compensate the expenses incurred by Topping Scholars to promote national and international travel to academic/service learning leadership conferences, short-term programs (ASB, GLP, LINC, Maymester) and/or other meetings. Undergraduate scholars are eligible for 2 (two) academic travel opportunities while graduate scholars are eligible for 1 (one). Study abroad airfare will only be purchased for an approved USC-sponsored program. *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 5pm to the NTSAF office (this includes letters of support):

September 6, 2019	December 6, 2019	March 6, 2020
October 4, 2019	January 17, 2020*	April 3, 2020
November 1, 2019	February 7, 2020	

    * January 17th is the first Friday after Winter Recess.

    NOTE: All Conference Travel applications must be submitted by the deadline that is <u>at least six (6) weeks</u> 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, up to $100. 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 *(Not applicable for ASB, LINC, GLP, Maymesters and other short-term USC programs where some meals are included in program fees)*;
- **Lodging** up to $125.00/night for a maximum of 4 nights;
- **Airfare** up to $1,500.00 for international travel (not to exceed $1000 for domestic flights).

Expense Caps on Conference Travel: $2000 for domestic travel; $2500 for International Travel.

Important Note: <u>All original receipts</u> must be received by the NTSAF office <u>within two (2) weeks</u> of the official final conference day or the Scholar accepts responsibility of reimbursable expenses. Reimbursements will NOT be processed without an original receipt. <u>Reflection statements</u> are due within 4 weeks of travel.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

Applicants are evaluated on the following criteria:

- o Complete application (by applicable deadline)
- o Comprehensive documentation
- o Degree to which they meet the purpose of funding
- o 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:

1) 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 Int'l; $1,000 Domestic). 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

Conference Travel grant does NOT reimburse for rental cars, fuel, or mileage.

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 (up to $100.00 max). The NTSAF does not fund transportation during the conference.
For example, a Scholar may request to be funded for the cost of a shuttle bus from the airport to the University/Hotel 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.

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. (Not applicable for ASB, LINC, GLP, Maymesters and other short-term USC programs.)*

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.

(IF YOU RECEIVED OR ANTICIPATE OTHER FUNDING FOR THIS TRAVEL, COMPLETE THE "OTHER FUNDING" LINE ON THE APPLICATION.)

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 from attending the conference and/or meeting. This reflection statement is due to the NTSAF Associate Director <u>within for (4) weeks</u> of travel.

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Norman Topping Student Aid Fund
2019-2020 Preparatory Course Funding

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:

September 6, 2019	December 6, 2019	March 6, 2020
October 4, 2019	January 17, 2020*	April 3, 2020
November 1, 2019	February 7, 2020	

* January 17th is the first Friday after Winter Recess.

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

- **Summer prep courses must be completed before July 31.**

Expense Cap on Prep Courses: $2000.

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES:
- Only one (1) Preparatory Course will be funded during the Scholar's tenure at USC.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

Applicants are evaluated on the following criteria:
- o Complete application
- o Comprehensive documentation
- o Compelling and thorough Statement of Purpose

Priority will be given in the following order:
- o Proximity to completion of degree
- o First-time applicants

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Norman Topping Student Aid Fund
2020 Summer Tuition
Deadline: March 6, 2020 by 5pm

PURPOSE:
- The purpose of the Summer Tuition opportunity is to help students complete their USC degree.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES:
- Scholars and Fellows who do not meet the academic eligibility requirements may still apply for Summer Tuition. This funding is intended to provide Scholars/Fellows the opportunity to graduate within the allotted scholarship terms at the University. To apply, use the Summer Tuition Application, and add an explanation of your special circumstances to your personal statement.
- Summer Tuition applications are reviewed by the Executive Committee of the Governing Board.

WHEN TO APPLY:
- Completed Summer Tuition applications must be submitted via the online database by **March 6, 2020 by 5pm**. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted, **<u>no exceptions.</u>**
- **Students should also email a copy of their course plan to the NTSAF office for review** (Obtained this from your academic advisor).

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

SELECTION CRITERIA:

Applicants are evaluated on the following criteria:

- o Degree to which they meet the purpose of funding
- o Compelling and thorough Statement of Purpose
- o Validity of Academic Certification (you must provide your course plan for review)

Priority will be given in the following order:

- o Proximity to completion of degree
- o First-time applicants

II. ONLINE FORMS

All forms must be submitted online via Topping Database link on the NTSAF website.

Requests:

- Academic Journal
- Exam Fees
- Honor Society Membership
- Professional Association Membership

Applications:

- Conference Travel/Academic Travel (including ASB, LINC, GLP, Maymester, etc.)
- Study Abroad Airfare
- Preparatory Course
- Summer Tuition

Appeals:

- All appeals should come to NTSAF as a letter addressed to the Executive Committee of the Governing Board.
- Email your appeal letter to NTSAF@usc.edu.
- When to appeal:
  - i Appeal due to a missed/late event, GPA, or low enrollment/units
  - ii Appeal for an extra semester of scholarship
  - iii Appeal for extra units (1-2) in fall/spring
    - ❖ Extra units must be for coursework that is part of a student's major, minor or GE program, and are essential for degree completion.