

Writing Recommendations for the Udall Scholarship

Scholarship Basics: The Udall Scholarship awards \$7,000 to sophomores or juniors who are committed to careers related to the environment, or to Native American sophomores or juniors interested in tribal policy or health care. Applicants must be U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, or permanent residents.

Successful applicants will have a 3.0 or higher GPA and a robust track record of activism, research, and other initiatives related to the environment or to Native American tribal policy/health care. They must demonstrate a commitment to leadership and service, broadly defined. In short, the Udall Foundation is seeking students who will be change agents in their fields on behalf of environmental or Native American issues.

Carnegie Mellon can nominate up to four students in the environmental category, and up to four students in the Native American category (for a total of eight nominees).

The national Udall selection process utilizes these **criteria**:

1. Commitment to the environment, or to tribal public policy or health care – *Community involvement, research, educational/professional goals related to these issues*
2. Personal characteristics – *Desire to solve problems and make a difference; leadership; recognition by peers, mentors, community; well-roundedness*
3. Academic Achievement – *Challenging coursework that is appropriate to goals; GPA with positive trend; honors and awards; references attest to academic/professional potential*

Content Advice:

- Ideally, each of the student's three letters will speak to a specific aspect of their candidacy: 1. Commitment to environment- or Native American-related issues; 2. Leadership; and 3. Public service. Before writing your letter, check with your student about the area on which you should focus.
- What examples can you provide that illustrate the student's motivation to be a change agent in their professed issue area and career field?
- From your experiences with the student, how knowledgeable are they about their issue area? (E.g., if they are an environmental applicant with interests in water quality, has your student given you the impression that they are actively developing their knowledge of this issue? Can they speak authoritatively about it?)
- Can you offer any anecdotes that illustrate the student's leadership skills? Their commitment to service?
- If possible, discuss the student's communication skills and ability to persuade, build consensus, and motivate others around important environmental or Native American issues.
- If you are familiar with the student's research, describe their work and findings for a general audience. Does their academic work point to likely future success in graduate school?

Timeline (See exact dates at <https://www.cmu.edu/fso/prestigious-%20scholarships/national/Udall/index.html>):

- **Campus deadline (early February)** – Date by which your signed recommendation letter must be emailed (on letterhead) to oursd-general@andrew.cmu.edu.
- Internal campus review and nomination decisions: Mid-February
- Mid-late February: If your candidate is nominated, we may share any revisions suggested by the campus committee for your letter at this time.
- **Endorsed applicant deadline (early March)** – In case you choose to make updates to your letter, we will need the final version to be emailed to us by the endorsed applicant deadline, which can be found at the above link and will also be communicated to you by OURSD.

Thank you for supporting this student!