OVERVIEW

The Office of National Scholarships & Fellowships (ONSF) serves in holistic fashion the academic needs and professional goals of UT candidates for such nationally competitive awards as the Fulbright, Rhodes, Marshall, Truman, Goldwater, Boren, and Schwarzman Scholarships, among others. We provide information to students, faculty, and staff across UT on prestigious awards and associated application processes and mentor students through rigorous application processes, providing support in identifying relevant opportunities, guiding students through the application process, and facilitating campus endorsement procedures when relevant.

As a unit within UT’s Division of Academic Success & Transitions, every effort made by ONSF is connected to the unique personal vision of the individual student. Above all else, ONSF emphasizes the importance of the competitive awards process as one that compels significant critical reflection, clarification of ambitions, strategic planning of academic and extracurricular pursuits available to students at an R1 university, and development of crucial and lasting relationships with faculty, staff, and peers.

The scholarship process consists of four stages:
(1) identification of potential applicants;
(2) continuous cultivation of student interest and motivation through ongoing individual advising that includes strategic planning of time at UT and that is supplemented by information sessions and workshops aimed at maximizing each student-applicant’s competitiveness at the national level;
(3) meticulous and collaborative development of application materials—namely, personal statements and project proposals—supported by ONSF and UT faculty whose expertise is relevant to the student’s interests and goals, with the expectation of eventual submission of application(s) to national competition(s); and
(4) timely graduation.

“The support of ONSF was critically important to me in a tumultuous and uncertain phase of my life. I can say absolutely nothing negative about the ONSF office and staff, and would like to add that, as a senior who has interacted with many different campus offices and staff members at UT... I feel this office as a whole has been exemplary in showing true dedication to the well-being of the students who use its services, and truly goes above and beyond to assist students in not only rigorous application processes, but in solidifying their post-graduation goals, which is equally as important.”

- 2017-18 UT Fulbright Applicant

STAFFING

Director

Responsible for coordinating and overseeing UT’s national awards processes; campus-wide outreach/promotion; identifying and advising candidates (first-year students through graduating seniors, recent graduates, and, in some instances, graduate students); reviewing and closely critiquing applications; preparing candidates for rigorous national selection processes, such as through screening and mock interviews; managing website and developing promotional materials; administering internal awards (ONSF Exploration Grants, SIT-ONSF Award); developing and maintaining faculty committees; overseeing budget; representing ONSF across UT and to award foundations; and contributing to leadership of Division of Academic Success & Transitions.

Senior Faculty Director

Works 10 hours per week to represent ONSF—with Director—to UT faculty, academic departments, and administration; contributes to ONSF’s work in advising candidates, reviewing candidate application materials, and screening applicants.

Writing Specialist (temp—hired May ’18)

Works closely with students in the development and drafting of competitive written materials for national awards competitions, with particular emphasis on the Fulbright US Student Program, Boren Awards, and Critical Language Scholarship.
ONSF BY THE NUMBERS: AY2017-18

- Year over last, ONSF increased the number of:
  - student advising appointments by more than 20%, exceeding 600 appointments;
  - endorsed UT candidates for national scholarships and fellowships by 18.2%; and
  - national scholarship and fellowship recipients from UT by more than 60%.
- Organized 78 UT campus committee interviews and 13 finalist mock interviews, engaging 54 faculty and staff panelists in the process.
- Led 35+ workshops and information sessions across campus for audiences ranging 5 – 100+ students.

Fulbright Focus: UT-record number of Fulbright candidates (52), semi-finalists (27), and recipients (19)

UT Fulbright Perspective: UT’s first Fulbrighter graduated in 1958. As recently as 2012 and 2013, however, UT had zero Fulbrights. At the time, UT typically had single-digit applicants. The last four years represent the most productive years for UT since the Fulbright began making awards in 1949. Notably, as the number of UT Fulbright candidates has increased, the percentage of semi-finalists and recipients has likewise increased. Typically, about 18 percent of Fulbright applicants each year receive the award.

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<th>FULBRIGHT AT UT: LAST FOUR YEARS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Year</td>
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National Fulbright Perspective: The Fulbright will not release final national results/rankings (via The Chronicle of Higher Education) until February 2019; however, UT appears on track to be named for the first time a Fulbright “Top Producer.” Here is a selection of unofficial 2017-18 results culled from university press releases: Ole Miss (2), Arkansas (3), Kentucky (5), Auburn (6), Florida (8), Ohio State (9), Penn State (10), Iowa (11), Vanderbilt (12), Alabama (15), UVA (16), Stanford (16), UNC (16), Wisconsin (18), Michigan (25).

Other ONSF Highlights in AY2017-18:
- Boren Awards (UT-record 4)
- Critical Language Scholars (3)
- NIH Oxford-Cambridge Scholar (1)
- Project Global Officer Scholar (1)
- Schwarzman Scholars (2)

UT/ONSF Firsts in AY2017-18:
- American Univ. Cairo Presidential Fellow
- Fulbright UK Summer Institute Scholar

AY2017-18 nominees, finalists, recipients:
- https://onsf.utk.edu/recipients-finalists-nominees/

LOOKING AHEAD

ONSF will hire a second full-time staff member (Assistant Director) in Spring 2019, which will allow us to better keep pace with increasing student interest in and demand for our services, particularly in the Fulbright competition. More broadly, additional staff should allow us to:
- Engage in more extensive campus outreach—to students, faculty, staff, administration—with particular focus on increasing work with 1st-/2nd-year students (e.g., appointments, workshops, class visits) and advising on associated “pipeline” awards (e.g., Critical Language Scholarship, UK Summer Fulbright, Amgen Scholars, DAAD). Early identification of candidates is critical to ONSF’s work.
- Develop targeted, collaborative programming (e.g., with DAST units) in support of first-gen students.
- Expand, and look to solidify long-term funding for, our successful internal award (Exploration Grant).
- Expand ONSF’s “gap-year” advising and our work with applicants for post-graduate fellowships that do not require institutional endorsement (e.g., NSF GRFP, Pickering, Rangel, Soros, Yenching).