

Hillcrest Scholarship: Research Award

SCHOLARSHIP PURPOSE

The Hillcrest Scholarship is awarded to outstanding sophomore honors students. It provides up to \$7500 in financial assistance for travel expenses and tuition for an off-campus summer enrichment experience following the junior year. Students may use the scholarship to carry out research, to participate in an internship, or to fund language training or another training program related to the applicant's academic goals. The scholarship is not limited to these examples. Students, with the aid of their faculty mentors, are encouraged to design unique projects that help them meet their academic and/or career goals. Please note that the scholarship cannot be used solely to fund a study abroad program.

Hillcrest scholars are selected on the basis of their proposed project, their ability to connect the proposed research experience to future academic goals, their academic achievements and intellectual promise, and their ability to make a significant contribution to society in the future. The Hillcrest Scholarship helps fulfill the JMU Honors Program's mission of providing an academic community engaging highly motivated and intellectually gifted students in exceptional experiences that develop excellence in leadership, service, and scholarship.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Hillcrest Scholars are selected on the following basis:

1. **The quality of the proposed enrichment experience:** The selection committee will look for a specific and feasible project proposal that clearly articulates how the proposed activity fits into the applicant's academic and career plans and indicates why the applicant plans to carry out this activity in the proposed location. The proposal should clearly discuss how the research project contributes to future academic endeavors, such as the honors thesis.
2. **Academic achievements and intellectual promise:** The selection committee will look at the applicant's academic record, scholarly awards and honors, and potential to excel in his/her field of study.
3. **Ability to make a significant future contribution to society:** The committee is interested in projects that promote the public good.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants must be sophomore honors students in good standing. Each applicant must select a faculty mentor to support and guide him/her through the application process. The faculty mentor's roles include helping the applicant develop a feasible project, writing a letter of recommendation for the applicant that will be included in the portfolio, and serving as an advocate for the student throughout the application process.

To apply for the Hillcrest Scholarship, students submit a portfolio. It must include the following materials:

1. Current curriculum vitae
2. A letter of support from the faculty mentor that specifies how the applicant meets the selection criteria and discusses the feasibility and merit of the applicant's proposed project
3. Personal statement

4. Detailed project proposal
5. Letters of support/acceptance from individuals and/or organizations included in the project proposal
6. Budget for the project
7. Documentation of work completed by the student to prepare him/her to carry out the proposed project. This can include papers written by the student, artistic works by the student, photographs of the work of the student, notes from an applicant's journal, letters, or other evidence documenting the work of the student.

The portfolio is limited to 25 single-sided pages.

SELECTION PROCESS

1. Initial Screening by Honors Program Staff: Honors Program staff will review applications to ensure that students are eligible to compete for the scholarships and that the portfolio conforms to all requirements.
2. Preliminary Interviews: Preliminary interviews will be scheduled in February 2012. Applicants will be interviewed by JMU faculty, students, and/or staff. Committee members may ask questions about the portfolio, the proposed project, the applicant's preparation to carry out the project, how the project connects with the applicant's academic and professional goals, and relevant current events.
3. Final Interviews: Finalists will participate in a second round of interviews. The final selection committee may include faculty members, students, alumni, and other friends of JMU.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

September 21, 2011: An information meeting discussing the Hillcrest Scholarship will be held in the multi-purpose room in Shenandoah. Non-residents should enter through the courtyard by E-Hall. All interested students must attend the information meeting or schedule an individual meeting with Melinda Adams (adams2mj@jmu.edu).

October 28, 2011: Deadline to declare the intent to apply.

December 16, 2011: The first draft of the portfolio is due. Submission of the draft portfolio is required.

January 20, 2012: The final portfolio is due. No late portfolios will be accepted.

February 2012: Preliminary interviews.

March 17, 2012: Final interviews. Recipients will be announced at the end of the interviews.