Postgraduate Awards:  
What Are They & How Can I Get One?

Postgraduate awards include opportunities to fund graduate study as well as opportunities to spend a year or two doing something worthwhile before heading to graduate school. Some awards are to be applied for in senior year, while others are for sophomores and juniors.

Muhlenberg students and recent graduates have applied for and received such prestigious awards as the Fulbright, Truman, Rotary, National Science Foundation and more. Additional information on the awards and award winners can be found on Muhlenberg’s website at http://www.muhlenberg.edu/main/aboutus/dean-academic/awards/, or through the link on the Career Center website.

These are generally awards that do not require a service or repayment. Sometimes, they are a block amount designed to help offset costs and sometimes they cover specific costs such as tuition and fees plus a stipend to help with expenses. A grant may require one to be studying a certain field and is usually awarded to someone who demonstrates need. A fellowship is usually awarded on the basis of ability and does not require a demonstration of financial need. The portion of a grant or fellowship that is used to cover anything other than educational expenses may be considered taxable income.

Postgraduate awards offer an excellent way to seek funding to meet your goals, but they aren’t for everyone. Awards seek to find the most scholarly students, those with a passion for learning and a restless curiosity. Unfortunately, students who might be highly qualified often overlook these opportunities.

The following are a few quick tips if you are considering applying:

- Look online at the website noted above to find details on several national and international awards.

- Talk through your ideas with an advisor or faculty member who knows you well. Ask her/him to challenge you. You need to dig deeper than you may be used to. Think of the old adage about peeling an onion - the focused ideas are a few layers deeper than you might initially be thinking. You need to demonstrate that focus and speak about your intended area of study as if you are already a graduate student in that field.

- Plan ahead. Know your deadlines. Ask well ahead of time for recommendations you may need. Plan to revise your personal statement or essay several times before it is finalized.

- **GO FOR IT!** We hear from alumni that the process alone made it worthwhile, regardless of whether or not they received awards. The self-reflection and discipline required for the application process provide excellent preparation for whatever may lie ahead for you.