

## Advice for Bone Scholar Applicants

Over the years, the Bone Scholar Selection Committee has noticed several ways in which some Bone Scholar applications could be improved and made more competitive. The purpose of this note is to describe some of those ways.

In general, you should know that, like you, the other candidates are among the most outstanding students at Illinois State University. Therefore, the candidates will be submitting highly competitive, superior applications. In order to be selected for this honor from among the group of excellent students, you will need to do your very best work on your application. This means that you will need to do your best writing and thinking as you prepare your application.

Several specific pieces of advice that will be useful to you:

1. Write fully and specifically. Both the Project Critique and the Essay are fine opportunities to display your critical and analytic abilities. Use them to your full advantage.
2. Proofread mercilessly. Check the spelling and wording in your application. You may think that a computer spell check will suffice, but it will not. Rely only on yourself, and proof your writing carefully. You may think that it does not make a difference, but of two otherwise equally competitive applications, one with misspelled words will be less strong. Also check your grammar. Correctness is a premium.
3. **SERVICE ACTIVITY ANNOTATIONS:** When you list service activities, tell the committee, in appropriate annotations, what the nature and extent of your service work has been. What was your role? How much time did you spend on each activity? Candidates who list a service activity, with no explanation of how much they did or what they did, are at a disadvantage in relation to candidates who explain what they did and how much work was involved.
4. **LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION:**
  - a. Once you ask people to write letters of recommendation for you, do not just assume that they will automatically submit their letters to the selection committee by the deadline. They might, or they might not. Follow up. Check with them on occasion about whether they have sent your letter. Check about a week before the applications are due, to remind them of the due date for the letter. It would be unfortunate to wind up with a less strong application because of too few letters.
  - b. If appropriate and possible, try to get a recommendation from a nonacademic source. If, for example, you had an internship with a local service organization, it might be appropriate to ask a person who knows your work in that organization to write for you.