

Notes from the Gates Millennium Scholarship Workshops
Hosted by Indian Education Program

Presenter: Christa Moya from American Indian Graduate Center

Gates Millennium Scholarship – General Introduction

The Gates application is completely online. There are three parts: a nomination, a recommendation, and the student application. You will need to register online to fill it out, and your nominator and recommender will need your access code in order to fill out their portions.

Academics is only one piece of the application. Community involvement/service and extracurricular activities are just as important. Keep in mind that leadership and involvement can take many forms other than the obvious (e.g. president of a club). Many service and leadership experiences come through tribal, church or family activities – raking leaves for an elder or caring for a family member are just as valid as volunteering at the Boys and Girls Club, for example. There are numerous examples in the powerpoint (note: Cheryl has this powerpoint and can email it to you if you wish).

Be sure your nominator knows your academic background and your recommender knows your community service involvement. Write up a list of academics, awards and honors, community service and involvement, and leadership experience by high school year and have that for them so they can write more accurately and completely in their recommendations for you.

When you answer the essay questions, address each component of the question. Each response should be 3 or 4 paragraphs. Do not go over one page per answer. Have others read/critique your responses.

Be sure and thank the reader.

Juniors: College Horizons is highly recommended! (Also can go on your leadership activities.)

Sign up at www.collegehorizons.org/apply

Contact information:

Christa Moya: christa@aigcs.org

Gabriel Bell: Gabriel@aigcs.org

joan@aigcs.org

505-944-6315

1-866-884-7007

From Christa's business card: 505-884-7007 ext. 110

It is OK to contact these people with questions about the application and your responses.

Gates Millennium Scholarship - Specifics

Eligible students:

- Minority students
- Low income households (eligible for Pell grant) www.fafsa.gov includes forecaster
- Must have GPA of 3.3 or higher
- Degree seeking freshmen of any age! Includes GED students
- Demonstrated leadership abilities
- Native American/Alaska Native must have proof of either tribal membership or certificate of descent

Awards:

- Any academic field for undergraduates
- Covers costs not met by other scholarships received
 - Therefore, FAFSA (online beginning of January) as soon as possible – GMS will need a copy of your Student Aid Report
 - Turn in other scholarship applications!!! Don't apply just for Gates
 - Includes tuition/fees, housing and meals, books/supplies, reasonable allowance for transportation and personal financial needs
- If not needed 1st or 2nd year, can apply when the need is there
- Renewable based on satisfactory academic progress for up to 10 years (can go through Ph.D.)
- Can be deferred 1 yr for hardship, 2 yrs for church/military
- Schools include private, tribal, community, and 4 year colleges, even study abroad
- Graduate awards available for Computer Science, Education, Engineering, Library Science, Mathematics, Public Health, Science
- Additional benefits: conferences, mentoring, etc. Gates has a great support system.

Nomination Process: forms from 3 people

1. Nominee – student form, which we will discuss further momentarily
2. Nominator – principal, teacher, counselor, other professional educators who know you (no relatives). This person needs to know you well academically
3. Recommender – any adult familiar with community service/leadership activities (no relatives). This person needs to be able to speak to your activities/responsibilities outside of academics

Pick people who know you, respond positively to you, and who are interested/motivated when asked to fill out a recommendation. Help them out by giving them plenty of time, and give them information about yourself.

- All forms are online at www.gmsp.org
- Deadline: postmarked or submitted online – deadline date can be found online, and will be in mid-January.
- MUST be completely and accurately filled out
- Check the status of your application on line at www.gmsp.org – click on the status button. This is a good way to see if the nominator/recommender forms have been submitted.
- Form does not have to be filled out all at once. You can save your information and log back on again.

General Tips

Get help from your nominator, college career staff, Aspire staff, etc.

Have a professional email account (boring rather than cute) for college and scholarship mailings

Compile a resume listing all awards, honors, activities, etc. to help you when filling out the form

Get your work done early so you can have others proof it for you.

Salem-Keizer students: We have Willamette University students available on Thursday evenings who can help with the proofing and editing.

Form – General Info:

- ALWAYS put a major and a college
- For income questions, estimate if necessary – don't leave blank

Be Prepared To:

- List activities by high school year;
- Summarize:
 - Your academic record
 - Your honors and awards;
 - Your community service/involvement;
 - Your leadership experience;
- Write clearly and with vigor regarding your accomplishments, goals, and dreams;
- *Do more than just answer the questions – TELL US YOUR STORY!!*

Note: Family circumstances can sometimes limit a student's involvement outside of class, e.g. homelessness, serious family illness, etc. If that is the case, speak to this and demonstrate how you have handled these situations responsibly

Honors and awards received

Unpaid volunteer work/community service

Leadership roles



See lists of examples for these categories following the notes on the essay questions.

Form – Essay Questions:

- Use lots of adjectives
- Introduce yourself in your/a Native language and interpret it in English
- Avoid using the word "I" a lot
- Answer all portions of each question

1. Discuss the subjects in which you excel or have excelled. To what factors do you attribute your success?

Explain how you achieved excellence. Give history, e.g. went to an elder and learned oral traditions, etc. Most important part of the essay answer is what contributed to success.

2. Discuss the subjects in which you had difficulty. What factors do you believe contributed to your difficulties? How have you dealt with them so they will not cause problems for you again? In what areas have you experienced the greatest improvement? What problem areas remain?

Write a paragraph for each question. How have you used the resources available to you? Regarding the last – problems that remain – explain how you will succeed when you go to college. How you plan to achieve success is a key part of this answer. This helps show that you can transition successfully from high school to college.

3. Briefly describe a situation in which you felt that you or others were treated unfairly or were not given an opportunity you felt you deserved. Why do you think this happened? How did you respond? Did the situation improve as a result of your response?

Take a pro-active approach to this question – don't whine! Make sure the situation turned out well. Can take the approach of an activist – how have you changed situations/stepped up on behalf of others?

4. Discuss your short and long-term goals. Are some of them related? Which are priorities?

Short term: graduate from high school with high gpa, with college readiness courses

How you are going to succeed in college – attend classes, turn in work, study, etc.

Long term: grad school

NOT: positive relationships, social interactions

5. Discuss a leadership experience you have had in any area of your life: school, work, athletics, family, church, community, etc. How and why did you become a leader in this area. How did this experience influence your goals?

Possible situations: organize assemblies or homecoming dance, recycle, cut wood for elders, fund raise for a cause. Choose the experience that had the most impact. Note: Some students have few leadership opportunities at school because of family responsibilities. Fulfilling these responsibilities shows leadership as well.

6. Discuss your involvement in and contributions to a community near your home, school, or elsewhere. Please select an experience different from the one you discussed in the previous question, even if this experience also involved leadership. What did you accomplish? How did this experience influence your goals?

Community service, youth work, elderly, tutoring, mentoring, etc. Engage the reader's interest and emotions.

7. Other than through classes in school, in what areas (non-academic or academic) have you acquired knowledge or skills? How?

This is an excellent question to show gaining of traditional knowledge . . . hunting, fishing, blessing, camas, sun dance, canoe journey, interview with an elder, huckleberry picking. . . Keep the sacredness in your tribe. Don't discuss too much about a ceremony. Again, engage the reader's interest.

8. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about that may help us evaluate your nomination (i.e. personal characteristics, obstacles you have overcome)?

Loss of loved one, household issues, drug and alcohol, pregnancy, domestic violence, abuse, poverty

No obstacles: pick a quote about how to overcome an obstacle

Thank the reader in your Native language and in English.

The following examples of leadership roles, honors and awards, and unpaid volunteer activities are from the PowerPoint:

Leadership Examples:

- ♦ Classics Club
- ♦ Mediator for Assembly on Affirmative Action Debate
- ♦ Navajo Language Club Vice President
- ♦ Student Council Body President
- ♦ Moderate Chapter House Meetings in Navajo
- ♦ Coordinated Navajo Taco Sales to raise money for toys for tots
- ♦ Soccer Coach for little league
- ♦ Boy Scouts – Eagle Scout
- ♦ Captain cross country team
- ♦ Girls camp Mentor
- ♦ 4-H member
- ♦ Member of the Fall Creek Fish Hatchery
- ♦ Student Government (President, Vice-President, etc)
- ♦ Captain of Varsity Volleyball
- ♦ Teens Excited about Ministry (Director, Assistant Director)
- ♦ Section Leader in Band
- ♦ Tutor at Boys and Girls Club
- ♦ Member of the Robeson County Livestock Association
- ♦ Camp Counselor at Vacation Bible School
- ♦ Junior volunteer at Southeastern Regional Hospital
- ♦ Member of the Drug Prevention Team
- ♦ Member of the dish crew for teen camp (SKEE-NAS Native Camp)
- ♦ Makah tribal youth representative at Native Youth Summit held at the University of Washington
- ♦ JROTC Cadet Leader
- ♦ Participated in SADD Red Week
- ♦ Member of the United National Indian Tribal Youth Council (UNITY)

- ♦ Member of the Gifted and Talented Children Association
- ♦ Peer Counselor
- ♦ Editor, Yearbook
- ♦ Member of the Oregon Youth Conservation Association
- ♦ HIV Peer Counselor
- ♦ Church group youth leader
- ♦ Household income contributor
- ♦ Caretaker for different generations of family members
- ♦ Translator for parents
- ♦ Starting a cultural club at your high school
- ♦ President of the Robotics Team
- ♦ Mentor for kids at Christian Summer Camp
- ♦ Vice President of the Physics Club
- ♦ Captain of team roping
- ♦ All-around Barrel Racer
- ♦ Champion Bull Rider/Bronc Rider
- ♦ Nontraditional types of leadership roles:
- ♦ Fire Chief for Native American Church
- ♦ Water Woman for Native American Church
- ♦ Canoe Skipper for Makah Tribe of Washington State
- ♦ Bestowed honor of making traditional dance gear for Makah Tribal Members
- ♦ Participate in Makah Tribal Canoe Journeys in Neah Bay
- ♦ Invited to sing at Makah Days
- ♦ Cook and prepare fish and other traditional foods at Makah Days

Honors and Awards:

Academic:

- ♦ Enrolled in college physics and calculus at the University of Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics, (only junior accepted)
- ♦ Member of the National Honor Society
- ♦ Honor roll, all high school semesters
- ♦ Presidential Award
- ♦ Valedictorian, Salutatorian
- ♦ Perfect Attendance
- ♦ Academic Letter
- ♦ Awarded Student of the Month
- ♦ Awarded student of year for Biology
- ♦ Received high academic achievement awards for Chemistry
- ♦ Upward Bound Participant
- ♦ Gear-up Participant
- ♦ Participated in Summer Enrichment Program held at Northern Arizona University
- ♦ Participated in Oklahoma State University Creative Writing Camp
- ♦ Oklahoma Principal Science Scholars, Biochemical Engineering Camp
- ♦ Attended South Dakota State University, Journalism Camp
- ♦ Attended College Horizons, College Preparatory Camp
- ♦ National Youth Indian Leadership Project
- ♦ Participated in Upward Bound Program held at the University of Colorado, Boulder
- ♦ Participant in the Oklahoma Principals' Science Scholars Summer Academy

Extra Curricular:

- ♦ Member of the National Forensic League
- ♦ Chosen as Mannford High school's candidate for the Executive Women's International Scholarship competition
- ♦ Cited by Oklahoma State Senate, recognizing contributions to the State of Oklahoma
- ♦ Attended Native Wellness Conference, only student chosen from my high school

- ♦ Received Eastern Navajo Agency Community Service Award for my volunteer work at the chapter house during the summer of 2008
- ♦ Selected to be a member of the Homecoming Court
- ♦ Received an Earth Watch Award for starting a recycling project for community
- ♦ Selected as an exchange student and spent the summer in Germany
- ♦ Nominated for Arizona's Musician Ambassadors Program

Unpaid Volunteer Work and Community Service:

- ♦ Performed at Tulsa's Spotlight theater as the "Rose Legend" in the classic "Beauty and the Beast: With special performances for the homeless
- ♦ Monthly donations for Women's Shelter
- ♦ Monthly activities with Special Olympians
- ♦ Participated in Page Attack Trash Pick-Up
- ♦ Conducted storytelling seminars to pre-school age children: "Creation Story"
- ♦ Exterminated invasive species of plants in local rivers and lakes in Eddyville Oregon
- ♦ Prepared Thanksgiving food baskets for the needy
- ♦ Cemetery clean up or cemetery restoration
- ♦ Organized community fun-runs
- ♦ Cattle – Sheep vaccinations
- ♦ Chopped wood for elders in community
- ♦ Help elders with chores
- ♦ Read to kids at the elementary
- ♦ Haul Water
- ♦ Fundraised money for local cancer patients
- ♦ Organized Fall Festival
- ♦ Promoted Cancer Walk
- ♦ Blood Drive
- ♦ Participated in can food drive for the homeless
- ♦ Babysitting
- ♦ Volunteered for Visions Program
- ♦ Conducted Missionary work in Oklahoma
- ♦ Helped plant and maintain community garden
- ♦ Chaperoned youth events at community center
- ♦ Volunteer time on commercial fishing boats for Makah Tribe of Washington State
- ♦ Smoked fish for elders and for traditional ceremonies held in Neah Bay
- ♦ Handed out fish to Makah Tribal members
- ♦ Gathered wood for Makah Days
- ♦ Volunteered time at Food Bank
- ♦ Picked berries for elders
- ♦ Organized clean up activities at fisheries
- ♦ Cleaned houses for the elderly and mowed lawns
- ♦ Volunteered at Pow-Wow Concession stand
- ♦ Dance
- ♦ Participate in Social Dances
- ♦ Participate in Summer Solstice Dances
- ♦ Participate in Sun Dances
- ♦ Participate in Song and Dance
- ♦ Apache Crown Dancer
- ♦ Zuni - Summer Rain Dances
- ♦ Pow-Wow Dancer: Jingle, Fancy Shawl, Grass, Gourd Dancing, Fancy Dancer, Cloth (northern & southern style)
- ♦ Participate in Buffalo Dances held in early winter
- ♦ Round Dance - Grande Ronde Confederated Tribes
- ♦ Feather Dance – Siletz Tribe