Tips for a More Competitive Gilman Application

First, make sure you have accessed the tips from the Gilman website. Here are general tips from the IGS staff:

- **Your essay matters!** Don’t write the essay online at the last minute. Take some time with the essay and revise it at least once. Have someone look over your essay to check spelling and grammar. Thoroughly address all questions asked. For help with ideas about what to write about, see the second page of this document!

- **Hook the reader from the beginning.** Scholarship reviewers read hundreds of essays from students who are all writing about study abroad. Catch their attention with an interesting, short anecdote or quote, or start with information about why you are unique.

- **Make yourself stand out.** What is unique about you as a person? Do you have a unique interest or hobby? Are you involved with something on campus or in your community? What are your goals for study abroad above and beyond the formal requirements of your program?

- **Make a clear case for how/why your program is relevant to your major, career goals, future plans or all of the above.** Gilman wants your study abroad location/program choice to be well-researched and that you have academic or career-related reasons for your choice. Make these connections, especially if you are on a short-term program, and explain them in as much detail as possible. Including personal goals can be appropriate, but they should include other intellectual interest (i.e. visiting museums or other cultural/historical sites) or extra-curricular activities such as internships, volunteer options, etc. Mention of personal travel and social activities will not be viewed positively by the selection committee.

- **If you are a first-generation college student or belong to an under-represented population, identify this in your essay.** Ethnic diversity is important to the Gilman, as is supporting other under-represented populations in study abroad such as first generation students, Engineering, Math, or Science majors, etc.

- **If you are studying in a traditional destination (Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand), explain in detail why you selected your program (from an academic or career-planning perspective) as Gilman typically favors non-traditional locations and competition for traditional locations is high. If you selected your traditional destination primarily for personal reasons, you will not be viewed as highly by the selection committee.**

- **If your GPA is below a 3.0, explain reasons.** Has your GPA steadily improved? Do you work a large number of hours each week and, thus, cannot devote as much time to your studies? Do you have extra obligations such as running the family business, or caring for young or elderly family members? Did you have one particularly rough semester due to illness, family situation, etc.? If a situation like this applies to you, explain this in your essay.

**Tips for the Follow-on Service Project**

- Read the “Examples of Follow-on Service Projects” here from the Gilman website. Most of them are outreach-oriented, which is essentially what Gilman is asking for. The purpose of the project is to promote both study abroad and the Gilman Scholarship.

- Before suggesting you complete a certain project with IGS here on the University of Delaware campus, research what we already do.

- When describing your follow-on project, consider partnering with clubs or organizations with which you are already involved.

- Describe the who, what, when, where and why of your follow-on project.

- Describe what impact the project will have on your audience. What is your intended outcome with the audience – what do you hope they will DO as a result of your project.

- Consider creative uses of technology, media, photography, etc.
Application Tips for Your Gilman Statement of Purpose Essay Worksheet

Directions:
Telling Your Story: List out different aspects of your personal history by categories: “Situational,” “Choices,” “Relationships,” “Interests.”

- In each column, list out as many items as you can.
- Take one element from each column and combine to tell a story.
- Does it tell a compelling story? Is it missing anything? Try it with different combinations.
- You want to see that your story can be told many ways. Just be sure to include relevant parts of the story that help explain why you want to study abroad and how studying abroad will help you to develop personally, academically, and professionally.
- This exercise will help you to think of your story as a whole, which will help you answer the Statement of Purpose essay prompts.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situational</th>
<th>Choices</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adopted siblings from Eastern Europe</td>
<td>Volunteered working with refugees</td>
<td>Intentionally joined international student club in HS</td>
<td>Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grew up in small town in Midwest</td>
<td>Thesis on Balkan Wars</td>
<td>Pen pal program with Eastern European girl</td>
<td>Cultural knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First in family to go to college</td>
<td>Major in history</td>
<td>Seek out mentors in international development</td>
<td>International development</td>
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Your Story:

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