Tips for Applying for a SDSU Department of Anthropology Scholarship
(Prepared by the SDSU Department of Anthropology Scholarship Committee, Spring 2014)

Applying for a scholarship is important, not only for the financial support, but for the recognition of your excellence as a scholar. This is even more true if the recognition comes from your own Department. Even a small grant shows other potential funders that you are a person worth noting.

Below are five important questions to consider when applying for a scholarship or grant:

1. **Do I qualify?** The first thing to check out is whether you qualify. If you do not meet the qualifications specified for a particular grant, then your application cannot be considered for it. There is no point in applying for a grant you do not qualify for, since it is unlikely that the panel reviewing applications will even see your application. If you are not sure about whether you qualify, ask the scholarship office or program officer.

2. **When is the deadline?** Generally, applications received after the deadline are disqualified and not considered. So, be sure to note the deadline and prepare your application in plenty of time to meet it. Include last-minute glitches in your calculations – e.g., printers that don’t work, overwhelmed websites that can’t cope with a sudden onslaught of applications.

3. **What does the application ask for?** You need to supply all the information asked for in the application or you will likely be disqualified. It is especially important to address the questions asked in any kind of essay or personal statement. A detailed description of your past history is not useful if the question is about your goals for the future. If the application asks you about your research topic, goals, and methodology, address all three of those. A brilliant essay about your philosophy of life, why you decided to become an anthropologist, or how badly you need the money will do you no good if the question is about research design. If the essay prompt asks you to describe your research, then use this as an opportunity to sell it! Be sure to address what your research questions are, the methods you will use, and the significance of your project. In other words, think: What? How? Why?

If an application asks you to address (a), (b), and (c), then do so in that order, and let your readers know which question you are addressing. Make your application as reader-friendly as possible for those determining who gets the grant. Note that if you are applying for a Departmental grant, you should not rely on your general reputation as a good student. Even if the panel knows your work, they must make their decisions based on what you put in the application.

4. **Should I get feedback from others before submitting my application?** Absolutely. You should have peers edit your work and, if possible, a mentor. It is important for your application to be comprehensible to the non-expert. The composition of the scholarship committee crosscuts the sub-fields, so your application should be accessible to an anthropologically educated but non-expert audience.

5. **Why not me?** If you meet the qualifications for a grant, go for it! Why shouldn’t you be considered along with others? Even if it is a small grant, the return on your effort of a few hours can be tremendous. Even if you don’t get this particular grant, you will have sharpened your
skills and clarified your statements in ways that can be adapted for successful applications in the future. There are many grants out there. You should know how to navigate the University’s Scholarships page to learn about them. The people who award grants want to give out the money. They’re just looking for you.