INTRODUCTION
The mission of the Thomas J. Watson Fellowship Program is to offer college graduates of unusual promise a year of independent, purposeful exploration and travel outside of the United States in order to enhance their capacity for resourcefulness, imagination, openness, and leadership and to foster their humane and effective participation in the world community.

For seniors who will graduate by May 2016, a 5 page (maximum) proposal description for your ideal Watson journey, and a 100 word autobiographical statement that connects your life story to your proposal, are due by email on Monday, Sept 21 at noon to fellowships@scrippscollege.edu. No late proposals will be accepted.

The Thomas J. Watson Fellowship will enable 40 graduating seniors from top liberal arts colleges in the United States to spend $25,000 on a year’s journey outside of the United States or their home country in order to pursue something about which they are truly passionate. If selected for a fellowship, Watson winners must leave the US by Aug 1, 2016 and may not return to the United States or their home country for a year. Do not apply if you are unable to stay out of the United States for an entire year.

International students as well as US residents may apply. The Watson Foundation looks for passionate individuals who are curious, strong, intelligent, mature and resilient. Their life story needs to connect with an idea for a proposal about which they are truly passionate. If you are interested in applying for this fellowship, please carefully review everything at the Watson website (http://watson.foundation/fellowships/tj) before you begin planning or talking to your academic advisor, Career Planning & Resources or any member of the Watson Committee.

Each participating college in the Watson program has its own guidelines for the first stages of the process. Scripps College will nominate three seniors this fall. The expanded project proposal, personal statement and 2 completed candidate evaluation online forms in support of each of our 3 finalists are due Friday, October 30, 2015.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN TO WRITE
Read every part of the Watson Foundation website including the ideas and countries of past winners. Make certain by researching this fellowship that it is in keeping with your values and ideals before you begin the application process. If you are considering applying for this fellowship, you should start your research by summer before senior year, at the latest. Start with
serious self-reflection: What are you truly passionate about? Where did this passion come from? How has it manifested in your life? The Watson Director has pointed out that sometimes the first thing that comes to mind may be a strong basis for a proposal. Where will you go that you have never been before? Are these the right countries for your project? Does this proposal serve only your self-interests? You may not visit countries on the State Department watch list or countries that you have visited before for more than a day or two.

Think carefully about whom you share your idea with, as it is your intellectual property. Talk to your faculty advisors, the Watson faculty committee members, Career Planning & Resources staff or your family members and friends from home about your proposal idea. Brainstorm with Scripps friends who have very different passions and proposal ideas than yours. We need to see how the specific story of who you are connects to your activities, interests and to your proposed Watson journey.

Your passion-based idea for the proposal, the quality of your initial five-page written proposal, your 100 word autobiographical statement and your demonstration of that passion in terms of the way that you have lived your life thus far are the most important part of the initial selection process and should be uniquely yours.

WHEN YOU ARE READY TO START YOUR DRAFT PROPOSAL
You need to submit two pieces of information to apply:

1. an initial (five page maximum, single spaced, 12 point font) proposal describing your plan for a 12-month fellowship year including details of how you intend to carry it out. A maximum of four pages should be devoted to the project description, with a fifth page used to describe the project "mechanics": strategies for carrying out the project, navigating countries, finding homestays, etc., and any progress made in these areas.

2. an additional page that is your cover sheet that contains your name, the title of your proposal, your phone number and email address, a 100-word autobiographical statement about how your life story and campus and community activities connect to your proposed Watson journey, and the names of two Scripps, including Keck Science faculty, or staff members who know you well and would be willing to write a letter on your behalf IF you are selected as a Watson finalist. Note that you do not need actual letters unless you are selected as one of our three finalists. If you have an off campus major such as linguistics, government or sociology, one of these references can be from a professor at one of the other Claremont Colleges.

These two pieces of information are due by email by NOON ON MONDAY SEPTMEBER 21 to fellowships@scrippscollege.edu.

For the Watson, unlike some other fellowships including the Fulbright, passion, a great project idea, prior experience (i.e. Service) related to your Watson idea and a desire to have an intelligent, creative, open-minded adventure counts more than GPA. What is it about you that makes you think that you can survive on your own for a year in many different parts of the world? Do you have skills, talents or experiences that would help you to undertake what you a proposing? It would benefit greatly for you to meet with a CP&R staff member at least once and to email at least one or two members of the Watson committee as well as your academic advisor to go over your project idea and proposed countries well before submitting your proposal on September 21 by noon. Many Scripps Watson winners and finalists started on their proposals a
year or more ahead of time. We will be available to help via email during the summer but no one on the Watson Committee will read drafts (for reasons of fairness). Feel free to get help with your drafts from the staff of CP&R, your academic advisor if she/he is not on the Watson Committee and from the Writing Center.

For all seniors who are very strong of heart and mind, have a desire to see the world and have a grand adventure, and who are certain that this fellowship would be a good fit for their ideals, and that they will graduate by May 2016, this is a fellowship worth trying for. The only thing that you have to lose is the time that it takes to plan and write your initial 5-page proposal. Please email Associate Dean Gretchen Edwalds-Gilbert or Professor Susan Rankaitis (arts division), for feedback on your idea or any problems that you may be having in understanding the Watson Guidelines (http://watson.foundation/fellowships/tj). Remember, no member of the Watson Committee will read actual proposals or drafts before they are formally submitted on September 21 in order to insure fairness for all applicants but we can give you feedback on your idea, countries, etc.

You do not need a budget in your initial proposal but realize that you will have approximately $30,000 for the year and plan your itinerary with that figure as a basis. You only have to submit a budget if you are a finalist. Home stays in countries are great when you can get them. List any contacts that you have made in your proposed countries in your five-page proposal; any contacts that you have made will be helpful in demonstrating the feasibility of your project. No couch surfing contacts, please.

SEMI FINALIST INTERVIEWS

Based on the quality of the written proposals (Watson guidelines, uniqueness of and passion for the proposed project, feasibility, solid planning, contacts that you have made in countries etc.), the five member Scripps Watson committee will interview approx 5-10 Scripps semi-finalists the week of September 28. Three of those semi-finalists we interview will be recommended to President Bettison-Varga and if she approves the faculty committee recommendations, we submit those names to the Watson Foundation. No one who applies, however, is out of the pool until the finalists are sent to the Watson Foundation. There may be a need for various reasons to interview more applicants if the initial oral interviews are not strong or if a finalist decides not to go forward.

The three Scripps finalists will then have October to expand and revise their project proposals, make additional contacts in their countries, write a personal statement (approx. 4 pages) and submit transcripts and have the two recommenders complete the online evaluation forms, all due at the end of October. The Watson Foundation director, or a member of the Watson national selection committee will interview our finalists on campus between Nov. 15 and Feb. 10.

Please make certain to carefully read all of the guidelines on the Watson website and read about all of the past projects by Watson Fellows BEFORE you begin to draft your initial proposal and before you discuss this with your advisor, CP&R or a Watson Fellowship Faculty Committee member.

HELPFUL HINTS TO AVOID COMMON PITFALLS IN WATSON PROPOSALS

1. Do not select a country where you have done study abroad or visited for more than a day or two. Watson wants you to visit entirely new countries.
2. Do not propose an overly academic research project that might be something that you would do for a Masters Thesis in your field or anything that involves taking formal, academic classes in anything but (perhaps) short term language. In other words, no proposals to take ballet classes at foreign dance schools.
3. When possible, pick countries where you can use your language skills since using translators other than occasionally is not always advised. You may be able to use some translators in countries with uncommon languages (i.e.: Estonia, Cambodia, Bulgaria, etc.) but don’t plan to spend five months in Germany if you can’t speak German. Do not propose six months in Asia if you haven’t already studied an Asian language.

4. Think about questions that you are truly passionate about but that go beyond “self-serving” or “cool vacations”. We get many yoga, spiritual journey, sports, chocolate, coffee and cooking projects, very few which are truly personal that enable applicants to meet a wide variety of people or that help to develop leadership skills. The Watson Foundation is always on the lookout for proposals that stem from personal passion, are well written and well thought out but that may be ideas that they haven’t heard before and are unanticipated. Are you obsessed with dying languages? Do you love playing banjos that you build yourself? Do you want to design roller coasters? Save endangered sharks? Are you smitten with rare stone sculptures, only found on Islands, which are in dire need of preservation? Interests such as these may well be the basis of a good Watson Proposal. The story of who you are as a person should be a good match for your proposal. **The Watson funds interesting people.**

5. Do not pick more than one expensive country/city if you can help it. $30,000 does not go that far in Moscow, Tokyo, Singapore, Norway or Paris.

6. Think about what a typical day might be like in your first country and how a typical day might be imagined in your last country. How would your first country be a different experience than your second country? How will you meet people in each country? Do not assume that people will want to talk to you or be interviewed by you.

7. What is important about those countries in terms of your proposal? Try to make contacts in the countries that you plan to visit to explore whether what you want to do can actually be done successfully in those countries.

8. Let us know ways in which you have been resourceful or independent and why we should believe that you have the fortitude and maturity to leave the country for a year on your own. What makes you a fine representative of Scripps College and of the Watson Foundation? What challenges have you faced? Have you been a leader of any type while at Scripps or have you been involved with an interesting and important activity while at the Claremont Colleges or at home?

9. Proposals to do films or videos should be directed to Fulbright, not Watson. No heavy equipment.

10. While you may not bring a friend with you on a Watson, in that these are supposed to be individual journeys, let us know in your initial proposal if you have a spouse or dependent child who will travel with you, both of which are allowed under guidelines.

11. Contact two Scripps (including Keck Science) professors who know you well to ask them if they could write you a very supportive letter of recommendation should you be selected as one of the finalists. These need to be about who you are as a person and what makes you special. Initial proposals do not require letters but do require the names of the two Scripps College or Keck Science professors who will write on your behalf if selected as a finalist.

12. Do not plan a proposal that involves internships, working only with NGOSs or wobblies (working on farms in exchange for board).

There is no research paper or project expected at the end of a Watson Fellowship. The only paperwork or product required is a two-page report every three months emailed to the Watson Foundation and attendance at a two-day event for all returning Watson Fellows in early August 2017.

Please feel free to email us with any questions after you have read these guidelines and after you have read all of the information on the Watson website. When emailing any of us on the Watson committee or the staff of Career Planning & Resources, please put Watson as the email heading.

Associate Dean Gretchen Edwalds-Gilbert and Professor Susan Rankaitis, The Fletcher Jones Chair in Art, Co-Chairs, Scripps College Watson Fellowship Committee