



## Office of Undergraduate Scholars and Fellows Nationally Competitive Scholarships

B209 Smith Warehouse • Box 90756 • 919-660-3070 • [ousf.duke.edu](http://ousf.duke.edu) • [ncs-ousf@duke.edu](mailto:ncs-ousf@duke.edu)

# 2021 Duke M. David-Weill Recommendations

The Michel David-Weill Scholarship carries a monetary value of \$80,000 and covers the cost of tuition and living expenses during a two-year master's program at Sciences Po in Paris, France.

Michel David-Weill is an alumnus of Sciences Po and former Chairman of Lazard Frères, a leading financial advisory and asset management firm. The Michel David-Weill Foundation created this scholarship to encourage exceptional American students to pursue their graduate education at Sciences Po, an international research university which specializes in the social sciences and offers multidisciplinary programs taught in English and French.

The scholarship is awarded each year to one American student who exemplifies the core values embodied by Michel David-Weill: academic excellence, leadership, multiculturalism, tolerance and high achievement.

Duke is allowed to nominate one student annually.

## NCS-OUSF Advice on writing M David-Weill recommendations

As you see from the criteria above, MDW is awarded to one student nationwide with stellar academics and who has shown interest in multiculturalism and who has achieved much while in college. As with most of the foundations, they want to invest in students who will be leaders in their respective fields. Your job is to paint as clear a picture as you can as to why you believe that the student will benefit from the opportunity to study at Sciences Po.

We suggest that before you begin, you reflect on how you believe the student fits the criteria of the MDW scholarship. The student will have a total of three letters, two academic and one personal. You may want to talk with the student about what they think you can speak about in the letter—why did they choose you?

A good letter of recommendation for MDW is at least one and ½ pages and usually, we find that two pages are sufficient, but that in some cases that are well documented you may need additional space.

But, what goes into all that space? MDW wants the particular student who will benefit by studying in France and who truly will make a mark on the international landscape. Your job is to tell them the story of your candidate from YOUR point of view. The best letters use anecdotes to illustrate the points you are trying to make. If you claim Johnny is brilliant—how did he perform in class relative to other students, what was brilliant about the paper he wrote, the argument he made or the experiment he proposed? If you claim that Suzy will cure cancer in her lifetime, what tendencies show that she has the perseverance to get the job done?

These are hard letters to write, but the Office of Nationally Competitive Scholarships is here to assist you—send us drafts, we are happy to look at them. We will look closely at your letter and let you know if we find typos or other corrections prior to the final submission.

We do urge you to consider carefully before you agree to write the letter. You are not required to write for every student that asks—only those for whom you believe you can make a good case

If at anytime you have questions or concerns about a student in the process, please contact either Babs Wise ([babs@duke.edu](mailto:babs@duke.edu)) or Bevin Tighe ([bevin.t@duke.edu](mailto:bevin.t@duke.edu))



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*Please note: All students have waived their rights to see your letters. Additionally, it is against OUSF policy to accept letters originally authored by students. We need the letter to be from you.*

## Further Resources:

Strong Recommendations from Inside Higher Ed: <http://bit.ly/stronger-letters>

## Process for M David-Weill Recommendations

Action	Comment	Date
Receive a request from a student to write a recommendation		Spring/ Summer
Decide whether or not you are able to write the letter	Students should supply you with a resume, a conversation about what they are applying for and why, and papers they have written for you. YOU make the decision on whether or not you have the time to help the student' application or not.	ASAP
Write the recommendation and submit to <a href="mailto:ncs-ousf@duke.edu">ncs-ousf@duke.edu</a>	The letter should be a polished draft for the national competition on letterhead.	October 15
Recommendation Revisions	Students will be notified by October 22 whether or not the University has nominated them. NCS will notify you if we found typos or have questions about your letter.	By November 29
Final Deadline	OUSF must submit all the nominated students materials directly to the foundation	MDW National Deadline
Final Selection of MDW Scholars		February /March