

July 13, 2015

Email conversation between Cindy Stocks and Jennifer Jones, Keasbey Scholarship representative

Cindy:

Is there a preference for students who have not yet had the chance to experience the UK educational system? Is there a preference for applicants who *have* prior experience?

Jennifer:

During the past ten years that I've been interviewing students I think I can safely say that roughly 20 to 25% of all the students we interview for the Keasbey Scholarship have had some significant experience as undergraduates studying at Oxford or Cambridge, or visiting for a short program. Often it is the experience of having studied there that motivates them to return to do graduate work. So having studied at Oxford or Cambridge is by no means a disqualified or unusual.

The Foundation is always looking for candidates who will do a good job representing the Keasbey Foundation and who will do a good job as American citizens serving as "ambassadors" while abroad.

Having had some prior experience studying abroad can sometimes help the student highlight for the Keasbey Foundation how they adjusted and took advantage of opportunities while living abroad.

Additionally, the Keasbey Foundation is interested in selected scholars for whom:

1. The proposed course of study at Oxford or Cambridge makes sense for the student's academic interests and career path. We ask, is the program at Oxford or Cambridge one of the best places for the student to study in their particular career? Would the student actually be better served by a graduate program in the US, or a different kind of training? As trustees we do our best to study the programs that the potential Keasbey scholars propose. But we also depend heavily on the student's "pitch" in their essay and the recommendations of their advisors. It is always a good idea to the professors writing the letters of recommendation to specifically comment on the quality and fit of the program to which the student is applying. Connected to this point, we devote quite a bit of attention to assessing whether or not the student can actually gain admittance to the program. Admissions to all the graduate programs, even the M.A. programs, has become much more competitive in the past ten years. Unfortunately several Keasbey scholars in the past decade have not been admitted to the programs to which they apply. Finally, we are increasingly scrutinizing the quality of the M.A. programs at Oxford and Cambridge to make sure that our scholars will receive the quality of education and attention from faculty that they expect.

2. The years at Oxford or Cambridge will personally, as well as intellectually, transform the Keasbey Scholar. That is to say, when Miss Marguerite Keasbey set up this

foundation in the 1950s she wasn't thinking of this scholarship as just professional training. She wanted to offer recent American graduates a life transforming experience. In honor of that mission, we are looking for students who will throw themselves into life at Oxford or Cambridge. There are many forms this might take from taking up rowing, to singing in a choir, to joining an activist group on campus, to engaging in charitable work outside the university. Since the Keasbey Scholarship is a kind of "gift", we hope that recipients will use their two years in England to take risks, explore new interests, develop new skills, and expose themselves to new kinds of people and new ways of life. Sometimes (although not typically) the Oxford or Cambridge experience leads to the student's reassessment of their career goals. Miss Keasbey would not have been bothered by this.