

## ***Student Success Portfolio Program***

### November Discussion Starters

#### ***Reference Letters***

When it is time to apply for Scholarships, Bursaries and/or Awards, it is almost guaranteed that you will need a reference letter as part of the application process. Getting a letter of reference can feel like a challenge, especially if you do not know who you should ask to supply this important document.

Typically, a reference letter provides the Award Committee(s) with valuable insight regarding your qualities, character, and accomplishments. Whether your reference knows you well or not, it is a good idea to assist this person with a document where you reflect on your strengths, goals, skills, and significant experiences.

The best reference letters come from people who have worked closely with you and who understand the goals of the award for which you are applying. Some examples of people you may consider for your reference letter(s) are teachers, former or current employers, clergy members, coaches, school counsellors/advisers, and leaders of an organization with which you are associated. Your reference(s) can greatly influence your chances of receiving an Award, so make sure you select the best person to represent you based on the Award's criteria.

Whenever someone writes a reference letter for you it should be viewed as a favor that is deserving of appreciation. In the end, the person may be responsible for you receiving an Award, so giving thanks is the polite thing to do.

1. What Scholarships, Bursaries and/or Awards are you applying for?
2. What are the criteria for references for each specific Award for which you are applying?
3. Who should you ask for a reference letter for each Award? Who knows you the best with regards to the specific criteria requested?
4. Once you have chosen whom you will ask to be a reference for you, have a conversation with the referee (person writing the reference letter) about the Award(s) for which you are applying.
5. Do you have your information document ready to offer the referee which gives insight into your qualities, character, and accomplishments?
6. Have you written a thank you note to your referee(s)?