

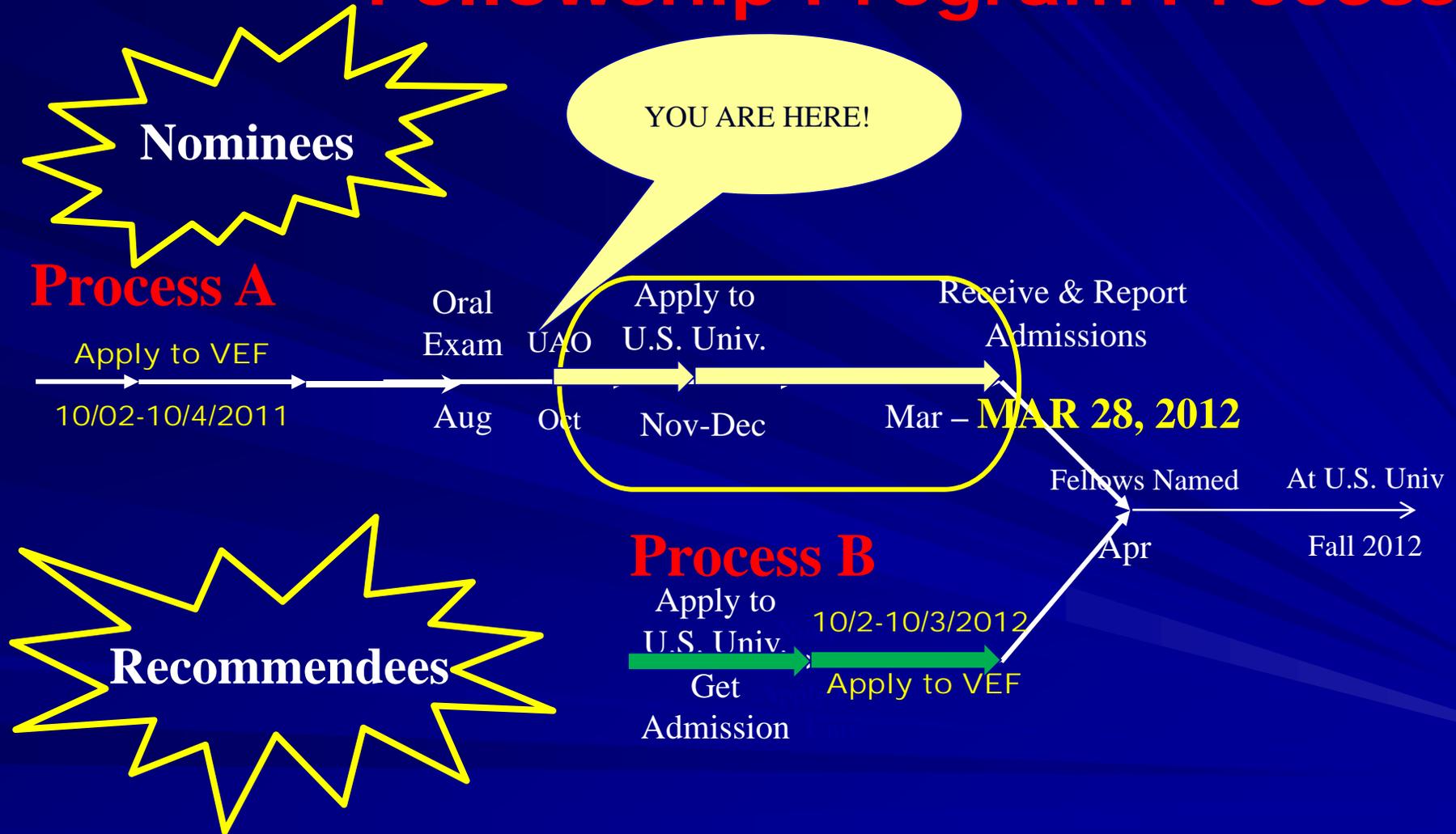
# **Applications and Admissions to Graduate Programs in U.S. Universities : Process and Procedures**

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Dr. Phuong Nguyen  
VEF Country Director

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

# Where are You in the VEF Fellowship Program Process?



# Application Action Plan



# YOUR GOAL UNTIL MAR 28, 2012

- To get admission, with financial aid, into top U.S. graduate programs that accept VEF financial terms.
  - 5 universities recommended by US professors
  - Other universities of your choice

# Prepare to Apply

- Study the schools
  - Visit schools' Web sites
  - Visit professors' homepages
  - Learn about their current research
- Prepare your applications tailored specifically for them
- Know application timelines -> submit application timely



# What does the School and Professors Expect from Graduate Students?

During your degree program, you are expected to:

- **Carry out research**

*Requires you to be:* intelligent, creative, motivated, proactive, able to work with others

- **Publish papers**

*Requires:* communication skills, being well organized

- **Assist with teaching**

*Requires:* communication skills (esp. spoken English)

\* **HARD WORKING**

After your degree program, you are expected to:

- **Have a successful career (successful alumnus/a)**

# Application Documents

- **Application form**
- **Statement of purpose (SOP)**
  - Be author of your own, start early, contact SOP reviewer early
- **Letters of recommendation (LOR)**
- **Supporting documents**
  - Educational documents
    - Certified transcripts: translated, Vietnam's grading system (available from EducationUSA)
    - University diplomas
  - Evidence of financial resources (VEF letter of financial support)
  - Evidence of English proficiency (TOEFL & GRE) (sent directly by ETS)
  - Awards and merits (certified English translation)
  - Curriculum vitae
  - Explanation of your Vietnamese name (optional)

# Application Form

- IMPORTANT to state that
  - For Nominees: “I am a nominee for a VEF Fellowship and I am seeking supplementary financial support from the school.”
  - For Recommendees: “I am seeking full financial support from the school.”
- check (✓) boxes asking if you are requesting financial support\* from the university.

# Letters of Recommendation (LOR)

- LORs are very important:
    - Confirm your qualifications
    - Provide additional information about you (vs. application, CV, and scores).
  - A good LOR should be **reasonable, specific, & personalized**
    - **Reasonable**: recommender **knows you well** and has the **qualifications** to evaluate you.
    - **Specific**: cites examples, provides specific information, and tells little stories about the student.
      - Example: What was your rank in class? What is the outcome of a project you have done? How do you relate to others?
    - **Personalized**: gives insight into what kind of person you are and believes in your potential.
- ⇒ **Contents of LOR should match SOP** (research experience, work experience)
- Personal Statement: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zo6NI4wHf4&NR=1>
  - Application process: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjGI2e4GG9E&feature=related>

# What Makes an Application Stand out?

- High test scores (TOEFL, GRE, GRE Subject test) only get you into the short list
- To be selected, you have to make your application stand out
  - SOP, LORs, CV (background & research experience, GPA, awards, honors, extracurricular activities, leadership, publications, and skills)
- Schools/professors read these to **get a whole image of you**

# Curriculum Vitae

- Spend time writing and rewriting your CV
- Make it short (1-2 pages) and sharp
- Most notable:
  - GPA
  - Class rank
  - Awards/honors
  - Research experience
  - Publications
  - Special talents/skills

**Key: Your CV should indicate that you are an outstanding student**

# What U.S. Universities you Should Apply?

- Five recommended U.S. universities
- Other of your choice:
  - US News Education school ranking:  
<http://www.usnews.com/sections/rankings/index.html>,  
or
  - rankings of Ph.D. programs at  
<http://www.phds.org/rankings>.
- Also consider
  - Schools that have already had successful VEF Fellows and/ or Vietnamese students.
  - Schools where well-known professors in your field teach (reference lists)
- Google search: Key words of research interest, fields of study, professor names, schools

# Application Timelines

- Application seasons: late September to mid-December
  - Different from university to university, from discipline to discipline
  - Weekly reviews of complete applications
- Apply early
- Admission decision: December 15 to early March.
- Deadline to inform VEF: March 28, 2012

# Contact Universities & Professors in the U.S.

- Make sure your application is complete
- Review status online
- Contact admissions office by e-mail--the quickest and easiest way to get answers.
- Send a personalized email to the professor
  - Email subject
  - Do homework, study & think, make it short but sharp.
  - Personalized letter gets more attention.
    - Indicate that you visited professor's homepage and find a good match.
  - Don't send exactly the same letter to every professor.
  - Might attach your CV with the letter.
- Be persistent and proactive

# Conclusions

To be a successful applicant to top U.S. graduate schools:

- Prepare well the application docs (SOP, LORs, CV, scores, diploma, merits and awards)- research, extracurricular activities, leadership
- Submit applications early
- Follow up & report admissions to VEF.
  - Work **diligently** and **patiently**.
  - Be confident and motivated
  - Do homework: study and think! Be specific, Create an image that stands out
  - Be proactive and persistent

# Formula for Success

4 “Ch”s

- Chuẩn bị
- Chăm chỉ
- Chủ động
- Chiến lược

**CHIẾN THẮNG**

**Thank you  
&  
GOOD LUCK!**



**Contact Information:**

Nguyễn Thị Thanh Phượng, Ph.D.  
VEF Country Director  
04 39363670 (Ext. 24); [phuongnguyen@vef.gov](mailto:phuongnguyen@vef.gov)