



**DONNELLY
COLLEGE**
EST. 1949

Merit Scholarship

Approved Date: January 16, 2020
Approved by: Admin. Council
Responsible Official: Financial
Aid/Admissions

Merit Scholarship Proposal

We, the SEM Committee, to empower Admissions staff to recruit new students more directly and effectively, propose to update the Merit Scholarship Options that are currently offered to incoming students for the 2020-2021 Recruitment Cycle. The primary change being the removal of recipient limits for the Bishop Donnelly (50% of tuition and fees) and Sister Jerome (75%) scholarships.

Limitations of the current process:

1. Promotion of scholarship includes outlining a complicated process and can overwhelm potential students.
 - To qualify for scholarships, currently potential students must: Be made aware of what they might qualify for, apply for admissions, apply for the scholarships; turn in an official copy of their HS transcripts; and then wait (sometimes months) until all students are awarded to know what they get.
 - The set limit on the number of scholarships leads to lengthy explanation of each scholarship instead of a simple, “you automatically qualify for . . .” lead.
 - First generation students are especially at risk of not following up on or following through with scholarships because of the complicated barrier.
2. The scholarship process of awarding and rewarding costs the college valuable time and is a burden on an already overstretched Donnelly staff.
 - In the time that it takes us to compile all applications and make our selections, many students have turned their attention to, and often committing to, other schools before we can present the scholarship to them.
 - Then the students will need to wait until the scholarship committee meets in February and then, depending on if they are a candidate for the Henry W. Bloch scholarship, wait until that committee convenes to receive their final award amounts.
3. By removing the recipient limit, we would have a better chance at recruiting proactive students that are trying to choose a school before the February scholarship deadline.

- We can also more effectively recruit students that apply for scholarships after the deadline.
- The open process will be more enticing to a prospective student and should increase the number of applicants that we receive for scholarships.

Proposed Changes to the Existing Scholarships:

	<i>Presidential Scholarship</i> <i>Merit-based award covers 100% of tuition and fees</i>	<i>Sister Jerome Scholarship</i> <i>Merit-based award covers 75% of tuition and fees</i>	<i>Bishop Donnelly Scholarship</i> <i>Merit-based award covers 50% of tuition and fees</i>	<i>Opportunity Scholarship</i> <i>\$1,000 per semester</i>
Current Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.5 cumulative high school GPA • Minimum 24 on ACT or Donnelly placement test equivalent • Renewable up to 4 semesters with a 3.25 college GPA • Limit of 5 new recipients per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.25 cumulative high school GPA • Demonstrated financial need • Renewable up to 4 semesters with a 3.25 college GPA • Limit of 5 new recipients per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.0 cumulative high school GPA • Completion of FAFSA by March 1st • Renewable up to 4 semesters with a 3.25 college GPA • Limit of 5 new recipients per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not in existence • Currently, we use other non-advertised aid to recruit and retain students who do not qualify for any merit scholarships
Proposed Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarded by scholarship committee based on ACT, GPA, and Essay • Preference given to applicants who applied by February 1st • Renewable up to 4 semesters with a 3.25 college GPA and full-time enrollment • Limit of 5 new recipients per year • 3.5 cumulative high school GPA • Minimum 24 on ACT or Donnelly placement test equivalent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarded to students based on GPA and ACT scores (see chart) • Completion of Online Scholarship Application • Renewable up to 4 semesters with a 3.0 college GPA and full-time enrollment • Not stackable with other institutional or campus-based funds • 3.25 cumulative high school GPA • Limit of 5 new recipients per year • Demonstrated financial need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarded to students based on GPA and ACT scores (see chart) • Completion of Online Scholarship Application • Renewable up to 4 semesters with a 2.75 college GPA and full-time enrollment • Not stackable with other institutional or campus-based funds • 3.0 cumulative high school GPA • Limit of 5 new recipients per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarded to students based on GPA and ACT scores (see chart) • Institutional Scholarship Funded by Donnelly Donors • Completion of online scholarship application and receipt of official transcript • Renewable up to 4 semesters with a 2.5 college GPA and full-time enrollment • Not Stackable with other institutional or campus-based funds

Scholarship Awarding Matrix:

GPA/ACT	22+	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	0-14	
4.0+	Sister Jerome					Bishop Donnelly				Opportunity Scholarship
3.75	Sister Jerome					Bishop Donnelly				
3.5	Sister Jerome					Bishop Donnelly				
3.25	Sister Jerome					Bishop Donnelly				
3	Sister Jerome					Bishop Donnelly				
2.75	Sister Jerome					Bishop Donnelly				
2.5	Sister Jerome					Bishop Donnelly				
2.25	Sister Jerome					Bishop Donnelly				
2	Sister Jerome					Bishop Donnelly				
0-1.99	Sister Jerome					Bishop Donnelly				

Benefits of proposed solutions:

1. Minimizing costs:
 - Currently, students that are not FAFSA eligible almost always receive a 50% Donnelly Grant. Any of these students that qualify for the Donnelly Scholarship (50%) would not have any effect on the amount of scholarship dollars spent\
 - We will use KCOMP, SEOG, and endowment scholarships to replace the potential costs these scholarships could cause minimizing their financial impact.
 - Many of the FAFSA eligible students will also qualify for other scholarships and grants that would replace their merit scholarship (STEM, BLOCH, K-COMP)
2. "Opportunity" Scholarship Option:
 - \$1,000 per semester
 - Would require full time enrollment and not stackable with other institutional funds
 - Students that "Don't fit the mold" are shown that they are valued at Donnelly
 - Would effectively be for admissions/advertisement only without causing an increase to institutional Donnelly any scholarship dollars spent. Every full-time student that doesn't qualify for a larger scholarship currently receives some forms of MSG, SEOG, KCOMP, Donnelly Grant, etc. in excess of \$1,000. Assuming the tuition and fees increase in 20-21 as they have every year, this amount could even potentially increase.
3. Increases better quality applicants to Donnelly College which would lead to enrollments:
 - Based on data from the last 3 recruiting cycles, we have averaged 17 applicants that would have qualified for Sister Jerome or Bishop Donnelly Scholarships under the new proposal at the scholarship deadline. Of these applicants, an average of 8 have enrolled.
 - Under the new proposal, we would expect to increase the number of applicants, particularly after what would have been the scholarship deadline, and the percentage of applicants converted to enrolled students

Notes:

1. We would create an “Early Offer” letter that admissions could provide to prospective students that are eligible for the scholarship. This letter will list “next steps” requirements needed to receive the scholarship (complete FAFSA, turn in official transcript, etc) and limitations to the scholarship (not stacking with better scholarships, not eligible for nursing program, etc.).
2. The Early Offer Letter would be coupled with a Letter of Intent. Admissions will have the recruit sign the letter of intent, confirming their intentions to enroll at Donnelly and accept the scholarship. The admissions office will design this process. Potential ideas are having a Commitment Ceremony or Signing Day, either here at Donnelly or at individual High Schools. The Letter of Intent would also include language to allow Donnelly to release basic student information to advancement for reporting.
3. This proposal would not change how we handle the endowed/donor scholarships overall. However, there are select scholarships funded by donors who like to be involved and given feedback on who their donations are helping. Advancement will identify these donors. When a student that is awarded the “Opportunity” scholarship signs their letter of intent, they scholarship will be re-assigned to one of these endowed scholarship funds.
4. These students will then be asked to attend a scholarship/donor event, similar to the one held last spring in hopes of building a better relationship between the donors and students.
5. The “Opportunity” scholarship is more of an attention getter. Like the Donnelly Grant, it will be replaced with other endowed/institutional/campus-based aid in most cases.
6. The scholarship matrix can be flexible but is based them on applications received in previous years. We are hesitant to make the standards any lower than what is proposed. However, just like we do in so many cases at Donnelly, we acknowledge the possibility that exceptions could be made.
7. “Full time enrollment” has always been a “soft” requirement for our scholarships. Thus, this change is not new, but it would be publicized. We have made exceptions in the past, but do not want to encourage it. Many of the funds that we use as leverage to minimize institutional/endowed fund usage in our merit scholarships have a full-time requirement (particularly the Kansas Comprehensive Grant). For example, a student with a 50% Bishop Donnelly Scholarship in 12 hours would have a scholarship funded by \$1,600 K-Comp and around \$400 institutional funds. That same student in 11 hours would receive around \$1800 in institutional funds because they are not eligible for K-Comp.
8. While the primary target of these scholarships is, and will continue to be high school seniors, adult learners can apply for them as well. We generally would use their transfer GPA and placement test equivalency instead of the ACT. For these purposes, we would consider a student a “Transfer” if they have completed more than 24 credit hours. I would think that using “Opportunity” scholarship as 1 option applying to both HS and adult populations would make things less confusing for students, financial aid, and admissions.

9. We may consider adding a “Contingent upon scholarship availability” disclaimer. However, this concept of limited scholarships is what we need to change. The focus needs to be on leveraging scholarships to increase enrollment/retention. If we increase enrollment (and tuition and fees) beyond what we budgeted, institutional aid should be expected increase accordingly.
10. With a higher academic standard, the increase in scholars should increase our pool of high-achieving students for tutoring, work study, volunteer events, student senate, panels for orientation, etc... (which ties our goal of improving the quality of our students in order to promote retention).
11. The “Opportunity” scholarship will not affect the scholarship budget at all, since all students that it will be awarded to already receive aid in this amount or more.