



# 12 QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK OF ANY POTENTIAL SCHOLARSHIP ADMINISTRATOR



## Scholarship Administration at the George Snow Scholarship Fund

Selecting who will administer your scholarship program is an extremely important decision and one that requires a great deal of due diligence. In our almost four decades of administering scholarships in South Florida, we are often asked by organizations and individual philanthropists to advise them on scholarship administration best practices. When selecting a scholarship administrator to manage your program, we encourage you to ask these questions of any organization you are considering. After you learn about the other providers, you will come to understand why the George Snow Scholarship Fund was named the **2015 Scholarship Provider of the Year**<sup>1</sup> and is the best option for donors who are truly committed to investing in the young people we serve. The following are some of the most frequently asked questions.

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<sup>1</sup>National Scholarship Providers Association (NSPA) 2015 Scholarship Provider of the year award. Awarded at the NSPA annual conference in Charleston, SC on October 12, 2015.

**Q: What are your scholarship program's graduation rates?**

Monitoring and tracking our scholarship recipients' progress in school is a priority of the George Snow Scholarship Fund. Our scholars understand that graduation from college is expected. They also know that our staff members are there to support them every step along the journey. This work pays off: Our graduation rate is 89.5%, much higher than the 60% national 6-year college graduation rate.<sup>2</sup>

**Q: Do you have full-time, dedicated staff to administrate this program? If so, how many and how long have they been with your organization?**

The key to the success of our scholars is the relationships they build with our staff and donors. Providing educational opportunities to deserving young people is not just a job to us; it is our passion and life's work. The George Snow Scholarship Fund has two dedicated staff members whose sole responsibility is to take care of the needs of scholarship recipients. This team represents half a century of experience in the field of scholarship administration AND parenting. Our staff often act as an extra parent (or in some cases, the only parent) offering encouragement and guidance, but more important, holding scholars responsible and accountable. A recent study found that these types of support significantly improve a disadvantaged student's chances of graduating from college.<sup>3</sup>

**Q: What kind of reporting will I receive related to my scholarship program and scholarship recipients?**

The George Snow Scholarship Fund provides donors with an annual Donor Report. This report highlights the scholars who benefit from the donor's gift and includes thank you notes written by the scholars. The report also has comprehensive information on each scholar's academic progress and extracurricular activities.

**Q: How do you ensure an adequate application pool to find the most deserving and qualified student who fits my selected criteria?**

The George Snow Scholarship Fund works closely with scholarship coordinators and counselors at each area high school to ensure that qualified candidates are aware of scholarship opportunities. In addition, we give informative presentations on the scholarships that are available to students attending that particular high school. At these presentations, students are advised how to best complete the application, and questions relating to the application process are answered.

**Q: How do you ensure a fair and unbiased application process?**

The George Snow Scholarship Fund has an outstanding group of more than 60 community leaders who serve as volunteers on the Selection Committee and review all the applications. The Scholarship Selection Committee is composed of educators, doctors, lawyers, businessmen and women, former scholars, and other professionals. Most committee members have served many years and have a great deal of experience in our process. All share a passion for helping others. Multiple reviewers score each application.

Students who are selected to interview are contacted via email and/or phone to schedule an interview meeting. For the interview, the selection committee is divided into teams of four. Each team interviews all the candidates assigned to its team and ranks each individual candidate according to the results of his or her interview.

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<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2015). The Condition of Education 2015 (NCES 2015-144), Institutional Retention and Graduation Rates for Undergraduate Students.

<sup>3</sup>The Oregon Community Foundation, Research Brief 2015, Student Success through Scholarships: Promising Practices that Support Post-Secondary Graduation

**Q: How do you determine the financial need of your awardees?**

Our team carefully reviews each applicant's financial aid award letter from his or her chosen college or university to conduct an internal Financial Need Analysis. We collect necessary information such as FAFSA applications, student aid reports, and family tax returns, which are used to substantiate information provided on the candidate's application.

**Q: How will you insure that your scholarship will benefit the student and not his or her college or university?**

Award displacement occurs when a recipient of one form of financial aid, such as a private scholarship, leads to a reduction in other forms of student financial aid. Unfortunately, this is a common practice at many colleges and universities. Every year, many unsuspecting scholarship donors and scholarship recipients fall victim to this practice, but NOT our scholars. Our staff members work tirelessly to ensure our scholars maximize their financial aid award and avoid the displacement of scholarship funds by their college or university. We have developed relationships with financial aid officers at many universities and have a variety of strategies to make sure our scholarship funds benefit the student, not the university.

**Q: Does your organization provide one-year or multi-year scholarship awards?**

We provide multi-year scholarship awards. The award disbursement process is designed to maximize each student's financial aid award. Funds are not released until several benchmarks are met. Scholarship funds awarded to recipients are, for our traditional students, disbursed in eight equal installments over a four-year period. For our nontraditional students, funds are distributed as needed over a longer or shorter duration. Prior to the disbursement of any funds, the scholarship recipient must complete a series of "Funding Documents." These documents include a questionnaire, an affidavit, submission of college transcripts, and proof of continued enrollment. Once scholars complete the required documents and submit them to our office, a check is then issued to the college or university. Students, not their parents, are required to complete funding documents and submit required forms within specific timelines. This is intended to teach scholars a sense of self-responsibility.

**Q: What percentage of my donation is used to benefit the scholar?**

The George Snow Scholarship Fund uses 100% of scholarship donations to directly benefit the scholar. Indirect costs associated with the program are funded by additional fundraising efforts.

**Q: In addition to scholarship awards and support, what other benefits do your scholars receive?**

It is our belief that what we provide to our scholars in the form of programs and services can be just as valuable as the financial commitment we make to them. With this in mind, The George Snow Scholarship Fund has created and implemented a series of programs designed to enhance and maximize a scholar's college experience. We provide a support system that many of our scholars are lacking at home.

**Computers and College Supply Stipends** — When scholars receive their award notifications, in addition to the financial commitment, they have the option of choosing either a laptop computer or a cash college supply stipend. Computers are new, state-of-the-art machines that are designed to last the scholar his or her entire college career.

**Access to Emergency Fund** — The Emergency Fund provides additional financial assistance that can help scholars manage unexpected hardships and challenges such as sudden medical or travel expenses.

**Monday Morning Motivational Message** — We have learned from our scholars that one of the most difficult things for them is to be away from home, and away from someone who will guide them and give them encouragement. With this in mind, each Monday morning scholars are sent a message composed of motivational quotes and stories that help set the tone for the busy week ahead, and let them know that there is someone back home cheering for them.

**College Supply Program** — Each scholar receives a gift bag containing valuable products they can use during his or her college career. These are quality products that are either donated to or purchased by The George Snow Scholarship Fund.

**College Physicals** — Through a partnership with the Boca Raton Regional Hospital, each scholar has the opportunity to have his or her college physicals performed by a hospital physician. In addition, he or she may receive any needed vaccinations or inoculations such as meningitis and tetanus.

**High School to College: Tools for a Successful Transition** — This innovative program educates scholarship recipients on the many challenges and changes in lifestyle and environment they will experience entering their first year of college. The concept behind the program is that once they get through four years of college, they will know “how” the system works. Unfortunately, by that time, it is too late to use this knowledge to their own benefit. We want to communicate that knowledge to our scholarship recipients before entering their first semester of school and let them enter college with the benefit of having learned the easy way what others had to learn the hard way.

**Q: What is the minimum donation amount?**

The George Snow Scholarship Fund is 100% dependent on the generosity of our donors. A donation of any amount will be put to good use. However, to establish a scholarship in your name, or the name of a loved one, there is a minimum donation of \$10,000.00.

**Q: Can I set up an endowed scholarship?**

Yes. We have established the Snow Education Endowment campaign to create a sustainable source of scholarship funds for the young men and women in our community. You can fund an endowed scholarship with one of our many planned giving options, all individually tailored to philanthropic and estate planning goals. Please contact our office to learn more about the Snow Education Endowment and our planned giving options.

## WHAT IF I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

Staff at the George Snow Scholarship Fund are always happy to help answer any additional questions you might have about establishing a scholarship fund with us. For more information please contact:

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