

PROPOSAL FOR NEW SCHOLARSHIP RETENTION CRITERIA

Background

After consultation with the Deans Advisory Group on Recruitment (DAGOR), the Division of Enrollment Management changed the way in which scholarships are being awarded to students admitted for Fall 2011. In place of the old system of Trustees', President's, Provost's, Provost's Special, Dean's, Faculty Honors, Faculty, and Bolton Scholarships, each associated with a fixed dollar amount, only three categories of scholarships, with a range of dollar amounts going to students who receive each type, are being awarded to students admitted for Fall 2011, University, Michelson-Morley, and Bolton Scholarships. (While the Bolton name was used before for a set of scholarships in nursing, the way in which these scholarships are being awarded now is different.) The new program is designed to affect enrollment behaviors in predictable ways so that CWRU enrolls the best possible class at the best possible price and the least amount of student debt. Students are selected for these scholarships differently, the dollar amounts are different, and the way in which these scholarships interact with need-based aid is different. They might best be thought of as "enrollment-optimizing scholarships." We need to develop retention criteria for these new scholarships.

Proposal

- The scholarship retention criterion for students entering CWRU beginning in Fall 2011 with University, Michelson-Morley, or Bolton Scholarships shall be in good academic and disciplinary standing.
- Scholarship eligibility shall be evaluated at the end of each semester.
- Scholarships for students who return to good academic and disciplinary standing shall be reinstated. Students lose a semester of scholarship eligibility for each semester that they fail to achieve good standing; that is, students will not receive these scholarships while on probation or during their first semester back from an academic separation.

Comments

1. University, Michelson-Morley, and Bolton Scholarships, like the old set of scholarships (including the Bolton, contrary to popular belief), are not endowed. Endowed scholarships recognizing particular talents and leadership qualities will not be affected by these new criteria; these scholarships will continue to have the same retention criteria that have always been in place, sometimes codified in the gift agreements.
2. The proposed retention criteria would put us more in line with competitor/peer universities that most often require good standing in order to retain similar scholarships. Our current retention criteria in all cases other than Provost's Special and Bolton Scholarships, require a certain number of cumulative hours earned and a higher GPA; the retention criterion for Provost's Special Scholarships is already good academic standing and there are no academic retention criteria for the current Bolton Scholarships.

3. The proposed criteria would be less confusing for students as they would only need to be aware of a single set of good standing criteria for both academic standing and scholarship retention. Similarly, the new criteria would be easier to administer as they would not require a special calculation of a “scholarship GPA” (that includes the original grades earned in repeated courses).
4. While scholarships will be lost when a student is placed on probation for a single semester, the overall loss of funding for a student will be less because the scholarship will be reinstated upon return to good standing. Under our current system, once a scholarship is lost, there is no way to get it back.
5. With the new criteria, it is hoped that more students will be able to make course selections based upon their educational needs and interests rather than based on concerns about scholarship retention.
6. Concerns were raised about a family’s ability to replace lost scholarship funds between the fall and spring semesters. (Currently, scholarships are reviewed only once a year at the end of the spring semester.) We were told that there should be no problem in turning around loan applications during this period and need-based grant aid will still be available, as these come out of the same pool of tuition discounts as the scholarships that are otherwise lost.
7. Concerns were raised about how first-year students and their families will respond to the loss of a scholarship after a single semester. Some think that they will go away and not return; others think that they are likely to stick it out for a semester to see whether the scholarship will be reinstated. We really don’t know and will need to monitor this closely.
8. There will continue to be an appeal process through the Academic Standing Board by which students who fail to meet the retention criteria may make their case for retaining their scholarships based on special circumstances.
9. It is expected that there will still be funds available to offer scholarships of some kind to continuing students with outstanding performance in the community. These would need to be designed in a new way and the committee can move on to that task later in the spring.
10. The proposed retention criteria were approved by the FSCUE Subcommittee on Admissions at its meeting on February 4, 2011; and by the FSCUE Subcommittee on Academic Standing by email vote on February 4, 2011, following discussion at its meeting on January 27, 2011 and subsequent email discussion.

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