

Scholarships and Academic Awards Committee

Meeting Minutes, Sept. 12, 2013

ACTION ITEMS FOR THE CENTRAL OFFICE

Item # 2 & 3 ! (below)

Board Members Present: Brewster, Gore, Hoagland, Gabriel (Staff), M. Johnson, Kerrigan (Chair), Leonard, Stanley, Williams

Minutes

1. Gabriel provided a brief synopsis of recent changes to STARS in terms of how students will experience the system this Fall
 - a. Kerrigan noted additionally that some changes to the administrative side of the system should make the work of the committee a bit less reliant on the Central Office
 - b. Kerrigan thanked Elfi Gabriel and Josh Wilkin for their work in support of the committee
2. The committee voted unanimously to approve changes to the Summer Program Scholarship (see Appendix A)
3. The committee voted unanimously to eliminate the one-year membership requirement for applicants to be eligible to apply for the Alumni Scholarship. The committee approved Gabriel's suggestion that "applicants must be Alumni Epsilon members in good standing at the time of their application in order to be eligible to apply for the Alumni Scholarship."
4. The committee discussed Gabriel's Summer 2013 report
 - a. A long discussion ensued about the chapter nomination process.
 - i. Kerrigan noted that we don't really have a "process," and Gabriel clarified that for the past two years, a checkbox on STARS has allowed us to have an "honor system" whereby students must attest that they have sought the nomination of their chapter as they apply for a scholarship.
 - ii. Kerrigan noted that the idea of "soliciting nominations" is a remnant of the process when applications were received on paper; applicants were required to submit letters from their sponsors declaring them eligible. While we no longer require letters of nomination, there is a lot of confusion amongst sponsors (and questions fielded by the Central Office) because of the way we used to require written nomination.

- iii. Kerrigan explained that the chief that the Committee requests nominations is that it's the only way we have to enforce the rule that no more than three students from a single chapter can apply for any particular scholarship we offer.
 - iv. Gabriel responded to a question from Gore by noting that we have not had a situation in which four applicants from one school tried to apply for the same scholarship.
 - b. After further discussion, Kerrigan requested that the committee table this item for now, upon the understanding that with further committee input as well as results of a survey in late Fall 2013, the committee will be well positioned to revisit this issue in the spring.
 - c. The committee unanimously endorsed the report's suggestion of a follow-up survey of all students who set up a STARS account (whether they actually applied or not).
5. Kerrigan asked for the committee's advice/input regarding what to do when scholarship recipients who have not been accepted into graduate programs in a given year request a deferral.
- a. Brewster offered that deferrals should be possible only rather exceptional cases.
 - b. Williams noted that in most circumstances, students who request deferrals should be encouraged to re-apply the following year rather than be enabled to receive an automatic deferral.
 - c. Gabriel suggested that the committee ought to look at establishing and enforcing a hard date by which students must turn in the follow-up materials requested by the Central Office if they wish to receive the money for the scholarship they've been awarded.

Respectfully submitted,

John Kerrigan

APPENDIX A: Proposed changes to the Summer Program Scholarship

RATIONALE: The Summer Program Scholarship has been discussed for the past three years (at least!) as in need of significant re-vamping because so few students apply for it. (A total of 3-4 applications during the past three years, and in some recent years there have been no applications at all.) Our committee discussed last year the idea of allowing seniors who are graduating to apply for this scholarship (they have been excluded in the past) and opening the scholarship to short-term summer study abroad applicants who have basically no chance of winning the Study Abroad Scholarship because the duration of their study is one factor that's considered by judges. The proposal below also recommends an increase in the scholarship amount from \$1000 to \$1500. You can view the old (or current) form of the scholarship description on the next page.

PROPOSED NEW VERSION:

Summer Program Scholarships (up to \$1,500)

Due April 1, 2014

These scholarships are for active undergraduate members, including seniors who are about to graduate at the time of application. The scholarship is to be used for the purposes of attending a special summer program, in the U.S. or abroad, one which furthers the applicant's engagement with the mission of Sigma Tau Delta. Qualifying summer programs should be at least three weeks in length and no longer than three months. Applicants should demonstrate academic scholarship and chapter service, and they should explain the relevance of their summer program to fostering their engagement in the discipline of English, including literature, language, writing, and literacy. Scholarships are determined by May 15. *Note: This scholarship cannot be used toward a regular summer session at the student's home institution.*

Scholarship Eligibility Criteria

[View required application documents.](#)

- [General Eligibility Criteria](#)
- Currently an undergraduate student, including graduating seniors

To receive this scholarship, applicants will be required to provide proof of their enrollment in the summer program described in their applications. Should winners not be able to provide such verification within three weeks of being notified about the scholarship, their awards will be presented to runners-up.