

Scholarships and Academic Awards Committee Meeting (Board Meeting)

Meeting convened over GoToMeeting 11am-12pm ET, Wednesday 26 March 2020

Members in attendance: Lexey Bartlett, Leigh Dillard (chair), Elfi Gabriel, Timothy Helwig, Shannin Schrader, Felicia Steele

Minutes:

The committee discussed the **current scholarship cycle** and the following timeline:

- 6 April deadline
- 13 April recommendation letters due
- distribute to judges the following week
- 3-week evaluation period
- decisions 18 May (possible to delay)

Elfi provided related updates on the NEHS awards, noting that it has suspended all its awards for the current cycle and will disburse future award payments directly through school rather than to the students. While there are positive aspects to this disbursement approach, the committee discussed downsides, particularly in terms of timing (making students wait longer for payments) and the potential for universities to reduce the amount of aid based on these kinds of awards. Elfi also provided an update on the evaluator survey responses (28 have said yes); Leigh will follow up with them to confirm availability for the current cycle. The committee reviewed adjustments to the rubrics for the current cycle; the new language allows students to describe their service not just within their local chapter but also more broadly, in keeping with the society's mission. Leigh discussed the award acknowledgement letters she sent to chapter advisors and department chairs for the fall cycle. Similar letters will be automated (with help from the Central Office) and sent for spring awardees. Awardees will be asked in the follow-up questions whether they want to be recognized on the society website. We will also consider other ways to represent the distribution of scholarships on the website beyond the current pattern of student name and school.

The committee briefly discussed the **language in the study abroad and summer program scholarships**, noting that no significant changes need to be made at this point. We will continue to encourage students to read the material carefully to understand the difference between the two awards. Leigh will submit minor editorial revisions to Elfi over the summer.

Based on a question from our last virtual meeting, the committee discussed the responsibilities of the **alumni member**. Although this member does not evaluate award applications, we do appreciate the voice of the alumni on this committee; we do, however, feel that application review should remain the purview of chapter advisors to avoid conflicts of interest.

In terms of **cost-saving measures**, Elfi noted that we should anticipate a 20% trim in scholarships awards or award monies for summer programs. In response, we suggest the following adjustments as possible areas for reduction:

- Some savings could be realized from programs that have been cancelled (study abroad, summer program), including scholarship winners from the fall cycle.
- Offer fewer Regents' Scholarships.

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- At the last board meeting we proposed adding the Classroom Library Grants to the fall cycle; we ask to defer this addition until next year.