

## Scholarships and Academic Awards Committee

Meeting Minutes, Feb. 26, 2014

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### ACTION ITEMS FOR THE CENTRAL OFFICE

Item # 3 e. *(already addressed by J. Wilkin and E. Gabriel on 3/1/14)*

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

#### Minutes

1. Kerrigan apologized to the committee for not having re-sent Fall meeting minutes (a draft was sent immediately after the Fall Board meeting last September). Committee tabled approval of the prior meeting's minutes, since committee members were not offered a chance to review them and since he forgot to bring print copies to the meeting.
2. Kerrigan noted the immediate circumstance of the Fall cycle drawing to a close as the Board approves, with the announcement of scholarship winners to come on Thursday, and the Spring application cycle beginning right away. The new cycle will be open on March 2 and will close on Apr. 1.
3. Kerrigan presented several rules-related questions that arose out of this Fall's review cycle and asked for the committee's consideration of them.
  - a. Is it ok for the Part-Time Scholarship recipient to apply again year after year?
  - b. Is there any way to take into account "demonstrated financial need" when we consider to whom we are awarding scholarships?  
**Committee briefly discussed items a and b but came to no consensus regarding potential action.**
  - c. Is it ok for the Study Abroad Scholarship winner to also receive another Sigma Tau Delta Scholarship concurrently? **Committee's consensus is "yes, it's ok."**
  - d. Is it ok for the Scholarly Paper Award winners to also receive another Sigma Tau Delta Scholarship concurrently, even the William C. Johnson Distinguished Scholarship?  
**Committee's consensus is "yes, it's ok."**
  - e. Is it ok for the P.C. Somerville Award winner to also receive another Sigma Tau Delta Scholarship concurrently? **Committee noted the inherent problem that had been discussed in email exchanges by judges over the previous fortnight – i.e., "full-time**

status” as **both** a student and teacher would be necessary to claim both of these. However, under the current rules, for this year, there is no regulation against the committee’s “awarding” both scholarship and award to the same student (even if that person cannot ultimately accept both—the “full-time” issue is not one that impacts or should impact scholarship decisions). Kerrigan noted that we have a clear case in which one student did earn the top score for both the Somerville and Senior Scholarship this year, and it would be unfair not to acknowledge both, even if only one can ultimately be accepted by the student.

The committee’s consensus was to award the scholarship to a student who had won both “this year” but to amend the guidelines for next year. Therefore:

**Committee approved a rules change, effective for the Fall 2014 cycle, as follows: to add to the end of the P.C. Somerville Award description the following: “Recipients of the P.C. Somerville Award cannot accept any other Sigma Tau Delta scholarship concurrently.”**

- f. What do we mean by “English-related” when it comes to scholarships?  
**Committee briefly discussed but came to no consensus on this question. Discussion included the issue of how liberally one ought to construe “English-related”—is it up to the student to make the case? Should law school or Education coursework that does not specifically include any coursework in teaching English count as English-related?**
4. Gabriel reported on the survey conducted in November 2013 of Fall semester applicants.
  - a. A question that arose was, “Would students who are graduate students (under Alumni Epsilon) be better off applying for a graduate school scholarship?”
  - b. Students want more direct email informing them of scholarship opportunities.
  - c. We should better detail the recommendation letter requirement.
  - d. STARS should signal to students that essays will need to be uploaded at the end.
  - e. Our scholarships are labeled according to student’s current academic/membership status, but many look at the scholarships in terms of scholarships for undergraduate studies, or scholarships for graduate studies.
5. Kerrigan noted that the number of applications decreased this year, and particularly that the number of graduate student applications had significantly declined. Kerrigan speculated that the timing and earlier deadlines may have a significant impact on these numbers. Gabriel disagreed, noting that the 2012 deadline was earlier than 2013 yet there were fewer applications this year. Gabriel noted that there are many complex factors involved.
6. Kerrigan noted that a future ongoing concern of the committee needs to be to consider possible ways of streamlining the scholarship application and review process. Gabriel will likely work with the next committee chair to attempt to address this concern.

7. Stanley thanked Kerrigan for his work in chairing the committee, noting that Kerrigan's term as Regent is coming to an end and that a new committee chair will be appointed. Kerrigan expressed thanks to all of the committee member judges for the countless hours of work on behalf of the committee (those present at the meeting as well as many who were not), and particularly singled out Stanley, who has served as a reviewer for both Scholarships and Convention submissions concurrently for at least ten years.
  
8. Hoagland asked about why the Part-Time Scholarship is only open to undergraduates and not to graduate students. Kerrigan offered an explanation of the rationale, noting that it would be possible to add a separate, additional PT scholarship for graduate students – but given that most graduate students are part-time, anyway, we need to consider that we do already offer two scholarships (Graduate and Alumni Epsilon) for which such students are presumably eligible to apply.

Respectfully submitted,

John Kerrigan