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Program Purpose

The Choose Ohio First Scholarship program at The University of Akron (UA) aims to recruit and retain talented Ohio students in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEM) and STEM education fields.

Program Goal and Information

The goal of the Choose Ohio First Scholarship Program (COFSP) is to produce around 800 additional graduates in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields at The University of Akron. The program focuses on interdisciplinary studies and work that supports and expand our efforts in the bio-technology/engineering/materials corridor development for Northeast Ohio. The program targets full-time students who would most likely not have the opportunity or desire to pursue a STEM degree, whether they are currently in high school, early college, or the present workforce.

ALL STEM Scholars receive a scholarship of up to $5200 per academic year.

The students that UA targets in recruitment efforts for the program are:

- Students who would normally go out of state for a STEM degree
- Students interested in STEM but who choose a different major
- Non-traditional students seeking to enhance or change their career
- Former military personnel
- Persons working in industry
- Populations underrepresented in the STEM disciplines

STEM Scholars are required to participate in regular advising, tutoring, socio-cultural events, community service, and peer mentoring. The program also includes participation in a Summer Institute and a strong emphasis on undergraduate research.

Encouraged student activities:

- Cooperative education and student internships
- Capstone senior projects
- Undergraduate research activities
- Learning Communities
- Tiered Mentoring Program
The data collected from the assessment of the program will be used to extend and expand our excellent track record in STEM education research and STEM student graduation and job placement.

**Academic Progress Reports**

ALL Scholars are required to complete Academic Progress Report Forms and return to their COFSP Retention Specialist at least once per semester. Conditional and Contract Scholars may be required to do so more often. The purpose of the progress reports is to increase faculty communication and for Scholars to be aware of their progress. Scholars may be required to attend additional study sessions, seminars, faculty office hours, and/or participate in peer tutoring.

**Funding Information**

COFSP scholarships are awarded on a Federal Financial Aid calendar, i.e. Summer 2014-Spring 2015. Students participating in a co-op are required to inform the program prior to starting cooperative education. This allows the program to ensure that there is no interruption in funds due to the student not being enrolled “full-time.” Scholarship funds may be spread throughout a financial aid year. Therefore, students participating in co-op and/or taking summer classes may use a portion of their total award for summer term.

**Co-ops**

The University of Akron requests that students on co-op do not take classes during the same semester. In support of this, we will not provide scholarship monies to students during the co-op semester. The scholarship can be moved to the summer semester during the same Federal Financial Aid year as the co-op, i.e. a student on co-op during the Spring 2015 semester could move scholarship monies from that semester to the Summer 2014 term, but not the Summer 2015 term. Students wishing to move money to the summer term must alert COFSP staff by April 15th preceding the summer term.
Scholar Expectations

Scholars are required to maintain a full-time student enrollment status at The University of Akron, make continued progress towards achieving a degree in a STEM field of study, participate in advising and events for STEM Scholars and maintain good academic standing. Specifically, Scholars must maintain a grade point average of at least 2.5 per semester, meet regularly with their COFSP Retention Specialist, attend the mandatory COFSP Scholar Reception every semester and participate in a number of socio-cultural activities each term. Scholars are required to complete academic progress reports and abide by the goals outlined in an Individual Success Plan. Scholars will receive a calendar of required socio-cultural events and important dates at the COFSP Scholar Reception for both fall and spring semesters.

Additional scholarship obligations are that Scholars participate in Choose Ohio First Scholarship Program social, educational, peer-to-peer mentoring and advising meetings; participate and/or complete internship(s), projects and presentations connected with the Choose Ohio First Scholarship Program; and participate in surveys, interviews or other methods to collect data pertinent to the administration of the program. ALL new participants must attend a “Jump Start” STEM Orientation session.

Communication

COFSP resources are limited and the number of Scholars is great. Therefore, the majority of communication from the program will be sent via e-mail. It is the responsibility of the Scholar to ensure that he/she has all important information. The COFSP Office maintains an “open door” policy and staff are available for Scholar questions without appointment. In addition, Scholars should ensure that they are members of the Akron STEM Scholars Facebook page and that they check e-mail regularly. It is the Scholar’s responsibility to ensure that program staff has their updated UA e-mail, cell phone, and local addresses.

Consequences

Scholars who violate program expectations are subject to consequences up to and including immediate removal from the program and re-payment of scholarship award for that term. All consequences are up to the discretion of the Program Director in compliance with the policies & procedures of The University of Akron. However, in most cases Scholars that violate
expectations will have the “Three Strike” remediation plan applied. Please note that each violation constitutes a strike and Scholars can accumulate more than one strike during a particular academic term.

**Strike #1:** Scholar moved to CONDITIONAL status. Scholarship reduced by $500 per semester, Individual Success Plan created, regular scheduled meetings with Retention Specialist, greater socio-cultural attendance requirements and frequent academic monitoring.

**Strike #2:** Scholar moved to CONTRACT status. Scholarship reduced by a total of $1000 per semester, Individual Success Plan created, regular scheduled meetings with Retention Specialist, greater socio-cultural attendance requirements and frequent academic monitoring.

**Strike #3:** Scholar removed from the program.

As a Choose Ohio First STEM Scholar, you have been recognized by The University of Akron and the State of Ohio as a student worthy of investment. It is the mission of the program to assist STEM students in identifying and navigating the barriers that lie between themselves and success at UA and in the workforce. We are here to help you achieve your goals and realize your promise!