The Renaissance Fund
Supporting the best and brightest students with the greatest financial need

In 1969, five Penn Staters decided that more could and should be done to keep the University’s opportunities within reach for those academically talented undergraduates who must overcome economic challenges to earn their degrees. Together, the group established the Renaissance Fund—a scholarship program that recognizes and encourages achievement both among Penn State students and in communities across the Commonwealth.

Over the last four and a half decades, more than $11 million has been raised through the Renaissance Fund to support students with records of academic achievement and proven financial need. Donors can make gifts to the general Renaissance Fund, create separate scholarships in their own names or in honor of others, or add to one of the endowments recognizing the annual Renaissance Fund honorees, extraordinary individuals whose leadership and service have had a profound impact on their communities. Income from all Renaissance Fund endowments is directed to scholarship support for talented students who might not otherwise be able to choose Penn State and who help to make the University a stronger and more diverse institution.

From the first five contributors to the Renaissance Fund, support for the program has grown dramatically—and so has the need of Penn State students. More than ever before, scholarships are making the difference in the educational choices of high-achieving undergraduates. Through support for the Renaissance Fund, alumni and friends can help us to ensure that our University continues to represent opportunity for future generations.

How the Program Works

$30,000 pledge from John and Jane Donor
Pledge paid over five years by John and Jane Donor
When pledge is paid, a percentage of the endowment’s value is directed to the John and Jane Donor Renaissance Fund Scholarship and awarded to a student who meets the program criteria
After the John and Jane Donor Renaissance Fund Scholar graduates, the funds are awarded to a new recipient
The cycle of support continues in perpetuity

Penn State University Development
The Renaissance Fund offers Penn State’s alumni and friends the most affordable means of establishing a scholarship at the University. A Renaissance Fund Scholarship may be created with a gift of $30,000, payable over up to five years. Currently, an endowment at this level will allow the Renaissance Fund to award $1,500 per year to one recipient, and this support will be renewed each year throughout the recipient’s Penn State education up to a total of $6,000 in support over eight semesters, as long as the recipient maintains a minimum GPA of 3.0 and continues to demonstrate financial need.

Renaissance Fund Scholarships may be designated as University-wide or targeted to a particular non-University Park campus, but no other criteria (college, academic major, geographic origin, etc.) may be specified, to ensure that support is being directed to the most talented students with the greatest financial need. The group of students who receive Renaissance Fund Scholarships reflects the diversity of Penn State as a whole.

Donors who wish to make gifts to the Renaissance Fund below the $30,000 level may:
- Create a single-year scholarship with a cash gift of $1,500, which will help to support a student for two semesters.
- Contribute to the general Renaissance Fund endowment, which pools gifts from alumni and friends and awards scholarships to undergraduates across the University.
- Support an existing named Renaissance Fund Scholarship, including those recognizing past Renaissance Fund honorees. For a full list of these community leaders, please visit www.RenaissanceFund.psu.edu.

The Students Who Benefit
Last year, Renaissance Fund Scholarships helped nearly 500 undergraduates to overcome financial challenges and excel at Penn State. Among the students who benefited from the Renaissance Fund in 2013–2014:
- 54 percent are the first generation in their family to attend college.
- 53 percent come from low-income households.
- 41 percent come from single-parent homes.

In every undergraduate college and at every undergraduate campus, Renaissance Fund Scholars are setting the standard for their peers, earning a median grade point average of 3.62 and serving as leaders inside and outside the classroom. Past support for the Renaissance Fund has had a profound impact on these students' lives, and through gifts to establish new endowments and increase existing funds, Penn State alumni and friends can make a difference for future undergraduates with exceptional ability and need.

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“Before I came to Penn State, I had heard of ‘Penn State pride,’ but I didn’t fully understand what this idea meant. Now that I’ve been here for a few years, I realize why Penn Staters have so much to be proud of. We’re proud of our school, we’re proud of our work, and we’re proud of the commitment to giving back that makes us who we are. This is what Penn State is all about. This is what the Renaissance Fund is all about.”
Cory Eberly is a junior civil engineering major from Chambersburg, PA and a recipient of the Mimi Barash Coppersmith Renaissance Scholarship. Cory completed the first two years of his Penn State education at Penn State Mont Alto.