For more than 150 years, Penn State has been committed to creating opportunity. Our land-grant mission demands that we keep our degrees affordable for students from every economic background. Over the last three decades, however, rising costs and declining state support have placed an increasing burden on students and families. Today, many undergraduates work multiple jobs while carrying a full course load, yet students are graduating with an average educational debt of more than $35,000. These financial realities are restricting the dreams of far too many students and families.

Scholarships can make the difference. This kind of need-based aid allows students to graduate with less debt and more choices, and the support of our alumni and friends inspires our undergraduates to succeed at the University and beyond. Scholarships also allow students to take full advantage of everything Penn State has to offer, from research opportunities to internships to study abroad. Through the Trustee Matching Scholarship Program, donors can become the University’s partners in keeping the Penn State experience within reach, now and for generations to come.

How the Program Works
Through the Trustee Matching Scholarship Program, the University matches 5 percent of the total pledge or gift at the time a Trustee Scholarship is created with a minimum commitment of $100,000, making the matching funds available for student awards as soon as possible, even before a donor’s pledge is fulfilled. The matching funds continue every year thereafter, along with a percentage (currently, approximately 4.5 percent) of the endowment’s market value. Therefore, when the endowment becomes fully funded, a Trustee Scholarship will provide approximately 10 percent of the endowment’s market value each year.

$100,000 pledge from John and Jane Donor

$5,000 (5 percent) is directed as soon as possible (and every following year in perpetuity) from the University budget to the John and Jane Donor Trustee Scholarship

A percentage of the endowment’s market value (currently, approximately 4.5 percent) is directed every year in perpetuity to the John and Jane Donor Trustee Scholarship

When the pledge is fully paid, approximately $9,500 in John and Jane Donor Trustee Scholarships is available for students every year in perpetuity.
With some restrictions, donors may target their Trustee Scholarships to the student population with whom they feel the deepest connection. While all recipients must meet the federal Pell eligibility guidelines, donors can indicate a preference for students enrolled in any of Penn State’s academic colleges or at any of our campuses, or donors may designate their endowments for use by one of several administrative units within the University (Educational Equity, Student Affairs, Outreach, and Intercollegiate Athletics). Donors may also specify additional preferences. These most commonly include academic major and geographic origin (i.e. graduates of a specified high school or those with home residences in a particular city, state, or county). If no recipients meet the preference criteria for the scholarship in a given year, the funds will be awarded to other students within the academic unit who have demonstrated financial need.

The Students Who Benefit

Last year, more than 4,000 students received Trustee Scholarships, and their diversity reflects the diversity of Penn State itself. Recipients come from all over the Commonwealth and the country, and the program benefits students in every college and at every campus. Whether they are engineering or economics majors, aspiring nurses or teachers-in-training, the students who are helped by the Trustee Matching Scholarship Program have important qualities in common:

- They are academic achievers, with an average GPA of 3.38.
- They have demonstrated financial need (a typical recipient comes from a household with a median income of less than $31,000 a year).
- More than half are the first generation in their family to pursue a college degree.

Since the program was created, more than 1,200 endowments have been established. The need for scholarships remains great, however, and the Trustee Matching Scholarship Program continues to represent an unparalleled opportunity to ensure that a Penn State education remains accessible for students whose means may be limited, but whose ability and ambition are limitless.

For more information

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“Scholarships made it possible for Darin to earn his Penn State degree with less debt and less worry, and we are both grateful for the education we received at the University. We would have found a way to give back no matter what, but thanks to the Trustee Matching Scholarship Program and employer matching funds, we have been able to help even more students pursue their own educational goals, even in the face of tough challenges. You can’t lose investing in Penn State students.”

Laura Taylor Johnson ’97 and Darin Johnson ’95 are both graduates of the College of Engineering. The Houston couple has created Trustee Scholarships targeting students in their respective majors, Chemical Engineering and Civil Engineering. Through their gifts, they have leveraged additional support for students from both the Trustee Matching Scholarship Program and their employers, ExxonMobil and Shell.

“Without scholarship support, my family and I would have been constantly worrying about loans and debt. Scholarships have set an example for giving back that I want to follow. Knowing how much support has meant to me, I will contribute in any way I can.”

Ryan McDevitt ’14 is a past recipient of the Darin P. and Laura Taylor Johnson Trustee Scholarship in Civil Engineering.

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