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 decades, more than $8 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 achieve the goals of *For the Future: The Campaign for Penn State Students* and ensure that our University continues to represent opportunity for future generations.

**HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS**

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 can be renewed each year throughout the recipient’s Penn State education, up to a total of $6,000 in support over eight semesters.

“The Daugherty Renaissance Fund Scholarship has been a great motivation to pursue my passion in the arts and education. It means that someone saw something in me and decided that I was worthy of support, and it helps to make it possible for all five of my siblings, along with myself, to continue our education without our financial situation hindering our ambitions. A gift to support the Renaissance Fund really can change a student’s life.”

Maurice Blackmon is an English major and president of the vocal group Essence of Joy as well as Thon chair for the Penn State Glee Club and a member of the Penn State Thespians. He hopes to work for Teach for America and earn a graduate degree in theatre arts.

$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 1855”

$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 1855”
Renaissance Fund Scholarships may be designated as University-wide or targeted to a particular 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 more than 500 undergraduates to overcome financial challenges and excel at Penn State. Among the students who benefited from the Renaissance Fund in 2008-2009:

- 50 percent are the first generation in their family to attend college.
- 48 percent come from low-income households.
- 43 percent come from single-parent homes.

In every undergraduate college and at every undergraduate campus, across 143 majors, Renaissance Fund Scholars are setting the standard for their peers, earning a median grade point average of 3.55 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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Dan Genard
Director of Development
Undergraduate Education and Scholarships
2 Old Main
University Park, PA 16802
Phone: 814-865-7594
E-mail: dqg2@psu.edu

Kathryn L. Kurtz
Associate Director
Office of Annual Giving
2583 Gateway Drive, Suite 200
State College, PA 16801
Phone: 814-865-8754
E-mail: klk13@psu.edu

“The students who benefit

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For the future

The Campaign for Penn State Students

“Receiving the Berkey Renaissance Fund Scholarship not only means a lot to me and my mother, who is trying to put two children through college at the same time, but it also makes me feel like my hard work has been recognized. It’s as though someone is saying, ‘Congratulations! You’re doing what you’re supposed to do.’ There are lots of students like me who find a reason to study in every dollar we receive.”

Melanie Perna is a Civil Engineering major and a member of the Honors Leadership Team at Penn State Altoona. She is also a member of the Society of Women Engineers and a volunteer for Girl Scouts of Western Pennsylvania.