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 are the top priority of For the Future: The Campaign for Penn State Students, and the Trustee Matching Scholarship Program has helped us to raise millions in endowed support for students with the greatest financial need. Now, as the campaign enters its final phase, the Trustee Matching Scholarship Program is offering an even more powerful incentive for alumni and friends who want to make a difference not just today, but for generations to come.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Through the Trustee Matching Scholarship Program, the University matches 10 percent of the total pledge or gift at the time a Trustee Scholarship is created, 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 15 percent of the endowment’s market value each year.

$5,000 (10 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

When the pledge is fully paid, approximately $7,250 in John and Jane Donor Trustee Scholarships is available for students every year in perpetuity

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

“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.
The 10 percent annual match level applies to endowments created on or after March 1, 2013. This level, which represents an increase from the program's original 5 percent match, will be available through the end of For the Future: The Campaign for Penn State Students on June 30, 2014, or until the pool of matching support has been awarded.

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 one additional preference. 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 3.39.
- 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 800 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.

“I always dreamed of attending Penn State, but I faced big financial hurdles in paying for my education. The scholarships I have received allow me to work fewer part-time jobs, providing the opportunity to earn an excellent education and remain actively involved in campus life. Thanks to private support, I have been able to take part in campus activities that have expanded my understanding of the world and of my own capabilities.”

Shelbie McCurdy is an Elementary Education major at Penn State Greater Allegheny. She is a recipient of the Sam Zabec Trustee Scholarship and the Penn State Greater Allegheny Blue and White Scholarship. After graduation, Shelbie plans on pursuing a master’s degree in library sciences and becoming an academic librarian.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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