

SCHOLARSHIPS

PURPOSE

Scholarships are useful in promoting both the quantity and quality of entrants into a particular profession or trade. They recognize merit and provide financial assistance to those who otherwise might not be able to obtain a college education. Scholarships are also used to disburse excess funds or to generate good public relations.

SPE SCHOLARSHIPS

SPE annually awards one 4-year scholarship valued at USD 5,000 per year and one 4-year fellowship valued at USD 10,000 per year in each of its 15 regions. In addition, SPE offers the Gus Archie Memorial Scholarship for students with high academic credentials who are pursuing their first undergraduate degree in petroleum engineering and the Nico van Wingen Memorial Graduate Fellowship for PhD students planning to pursue careers in academia.

SPE SECTION SCHOLARSHIP AND STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

The SPE Board of Directors established the SPE Section Scholarship Support Program in 1974. The program was designed to support section scholarships given to students pursuing studies related to the petroleum industry.

Through the program, SPE offers matching funds to sections that provide assistance to university students or educational outreach programs for preuniversity students. For university students, sections can receive matching funds for individual scholarships, student travel to SPE meetings, or SPE software or publications.

The board structured the program in a way that would allow sections as much autonomy as possible. Two requirements exist for sections to participate in the SPE Section Scholarship Support Program:

1. Section scholarship programs must support students in a field of study related to the petroleum industry.
2. Sections must submit the proper forms to SPE by the deadline.

UNIVERSITY STUDENT SUPPORT

The board also adopted several guidelines it hopes sections will embrace in administering their scholarship programs. The guidelines list specific objectives and give shape to the society's philosophy on scholarships.

1. *Support accredited petroleum engineering curricula.* Because SPE is a professional association for petroleum professionals, the board feels the first emphasis should be placed on supporting petroleum engineering departments whose curricula are accredited. This is accomplished by giving preference to students entering such accredited programs.
2. *Help provide an adequate supply of engineering manpower.* A primary goal of the society is to perpetuate the profession by stimulating the entry of top candidates into petroleum engineering curricula. Sections are encouraged to grant scholarship assistance to those students whom, on the basis of careful review of qualifications, offer promise to make a contribution to the petroleum industry.
3. *Give preference to entering freshmen.* Surveys show that the greatest need for scholarships exists at the entering freshman level. In view of the projected demand for engineers and scientists, the board recommends that sections grant scholarships at this level.
4. *Recognize academic excellence.* All other things being equal, financial need may be considered. The board, however, recommends that section scholarships be weighted to recognize academic achievement.

PREUNIVERSITY STUDENT SUPPORT

In March 1999, the SPE board expanded the Scholarship and Student Support Program to allow sections to use SPE matching funds for educational programs for preuniversity students (kindergarten through 12th grade). The funds are available for programs that directly increase the students' knowledge about the petroleum industry. The following policy applies to these funds:

1. Funding may be used only for support of SPE section programs (not to be given to other organizations with similar goals).
2. Funds may NOT be used for section-officer or other section-volunteer travel costs.
3. Funds may be used only for items directly related to sharing industry information with students (e.g., brochures, CD-ROMs, petroleum museum admission, section-sponsored teacher training fees, prize money for poster contests, etc.).
4. Food items, T-shirts, and other promotional items are not eligible for funding.

MATCHING FUNDS FROM SPE

In 2007, the SPE Board of Directors expanded the matching funds available to sections through the SPE Scholarship and Student Support Program. The maximum support available to a section's scholarship program each year is based on the section's previous 2 years of contributions to scholarship(s). SPE matches 50% of section contributions in all categories, up to a maximum of USD 5,000. Regardless of section contribution, no more than USD 5,000 will be available to any one section in a year.

Sections are required to submit details of how the matching funds were spent. That information will be used to calculate matching funds for the program 2 years into the future. SPE sections must report the amount contributed to their scholarships before 1 June.

Sections that did not receive support in the previous year may apply for support if they have committee funds planned for scholarships for the year. The request form must be submitted before 1 June to be eligible for society support. Each section is responsible for the administration of its own scholarship program.

SECTION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

Many SPE sections have ongoing scholarship programs. This is not to say that all sections should have such a program. Each section should evaluate, on an annual basis, whether creating or sustaining a program is in the best interest of the section, the community in which the section operates, the industry, the profession, and the society.

Before beginning the section year, determine from section records, the purpose of your scholarship program, why and when it was created, and whether there are any long-term objectives for the program. If such documentation cannot be found, draft objectives and an operating plan for approval by the section's board of directors.

Long-Term Objectives

Consistency is a very important element to a scholarship program for those who benefit from scholarships (i.e., recipients, counselors and teachers, and university engineering departments). A USD 1,000 scholarship given one year and eliminated or reduced the next can create adverse effects. A consistent program awarding the same amount each year on relatively the same selection criteria will receive support from those who supply candidates (counselors and teachers) and those who support the program through other means.

Long-term objectives need to be reviewed, ideally, before the beginning of each section year. Long-term objectives are based on an assessment of how the section can best meet the needs of those who benefit from the

scholarship(s), including the section itself. Canvass local guidance counselors, engineering department chairpersons, and your own membership for suggestions on the best approach for your scholarship program.

Short-Term Objectives

Short-term objectives should be written in concise terms that spell out what is to be accomplished, when it is to be done, and how it will happen. Do not overlook the importance of estimating costs for each activity (e.g., printing and mailing application forms, contacting counselors and teachers, and various other committee expenses).

The current committee may be responsible not only for the conduct of the current year's program, but also for committing funds for the ensuing year's program. Once codified, these short-term objectives, together with a budget, should be presented to your section board for approval.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

One of the best ways to administer and manage scholarships is by appointing a scholarship committee. The members of this committee are responsible for

- Assisting in the development of long- and short-term objectives
- Advertising the scholarship(s)
- Selecting scholarship recipient(s)

The committee is led by the scholarship chairperson whose responsibilities include

- Ensuring the committee develops and adheres to long- and short-term objectives
- Submitting the proper scholarship program forms to the SPE sections manager
- Reporting activities to the section board and the regional director

The position of scholarship chairperson should be filled by someone with previous experience on the Scholarship Committee. This will ensure that the ensuing year's program will be consistent with the Section's past program and that commitments for such programs are not overlooked because of changes to the committee.

Sample Scholarship Administration Timetable

The following is a sample timetable for sections in the Northern Hemisphere

- June: Order materials for school packets.
- August: Send letters to school counselors inviting them to participate in the SPE scholarship program; describe all aspects of the program.
- September: Make appointments with school counselors to deliver information packets.
- December: Collect completed scholarship applications by the first week.
- March: Select scholarship winners by the end of the month.

- April: Notify winners by mail.
- May: Invite winners and families to a section meeting for recognition by the section.
- August: Request proof of enrollment; send checks.

BEST PRACTICES FOR ADMINISTERING SCHOLARSHIPS

Application Form

Application forms should be very thorough in order to give the selection committee enough information to make fair and meaningful selections. The form should specify that it is an application for a scholarship in a curriculum related to the petroleum industry, but it need not give the amount or type of scholarship offered. The application should *not* ask for race, creed, religious preference, gender, or any other information that can be construed as a possible basis for discrimination. It is not advisable to ask for a photograph to be attached to the application. You may request a photograph for publicity purposes *after* the winners have been selected.

Requests for Applications

At a minimum, every high school, junior college, college, and university within your section's boundaries should receive information on your section's scholarship program and an adequate supply of application forms. The best approach is to hand deliver the information to guidance counselors so that questions can be answered on the spot.

Guidance counselors typically influence the number and quality of applicants you receive from their school. Some of them may feel that petroleum engineering is a limited field with a short future. You may have to educate them on the opportunities available in the industry. SPE's energy4me.org website is a great resource tool.

You can also use other forums to announce the availability of your scholarships. Community organizations, civic clubs, church groups, libraries, and public institutions can provide a means to inform parents and students about scholarships. Student and local newspapers sometimes may also print information about available scholarships. You should make a solid effort to generate as many scholarship applications as possible.

Evaluation of Candidates

How you evaluate candidates for scholarships will depend on the objectives you establish for the overall program. The board recommends that section scholarships be weighted to recognize academic achievement and that financial need should be considered if all other factors are equal.

A review of the completed applications may be only the first step toward final selection. Many sections request that their top candidates interview with the selection committee. Check with the school counselor before setting up interviews as many will prefer that interviews be conducted at the school.

Whatever mechanism you choose, *be fair*, not only to the candidates but also to the objectives you have set for the overall program. Evaluate each candidate on the basis of his or her potential to meet those objectives.

Presentation of Scholarships

The actual presentation of funds can be handled any number of ways. Some universities prefer that money be turned over to the university directly so that the enrolling student's fees are paid upon registration. The university can also verify for the section that the scholarship recipient enrolled at the university and return the money if the student fails to appear for registration. Some sections make payment directly to the student once proof of enrollment is provided. Check with the college or university where the student is enrolling, as well as with the student, to determine the best course of action.

It is recommended that you make a formal presentation of the scholarship at a section meeting so members see the results of their goodwill and hard work. This time will also acquaint the recipient with SPE. You may also send a notice of your selection and a photo of the recipient to newspapers where the section is located, where the recipient lives, and where the college is located.

Follow-Up

It is important for the section to stay in contact with scholarship recipients during the course of their studies. The Student Development Committee recommends that sections mentor their scholarship recipients throughout their education to keep the student actively involved, provide guidance on academic direction, and ensure that the section's investment is worthwhile.

Many sections offer scholarships on a semester basis, requiring recipients to submit grade transcripts after each completed semester. This allows you to renew the scholarship only if the student maintains a certain academic level and appropriate course of study.

REFERENCES

- Request for SPE Section Scholarship and Student Support Funds
- Section Scholarship and Student Support Program Report Form

For more information, contact

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