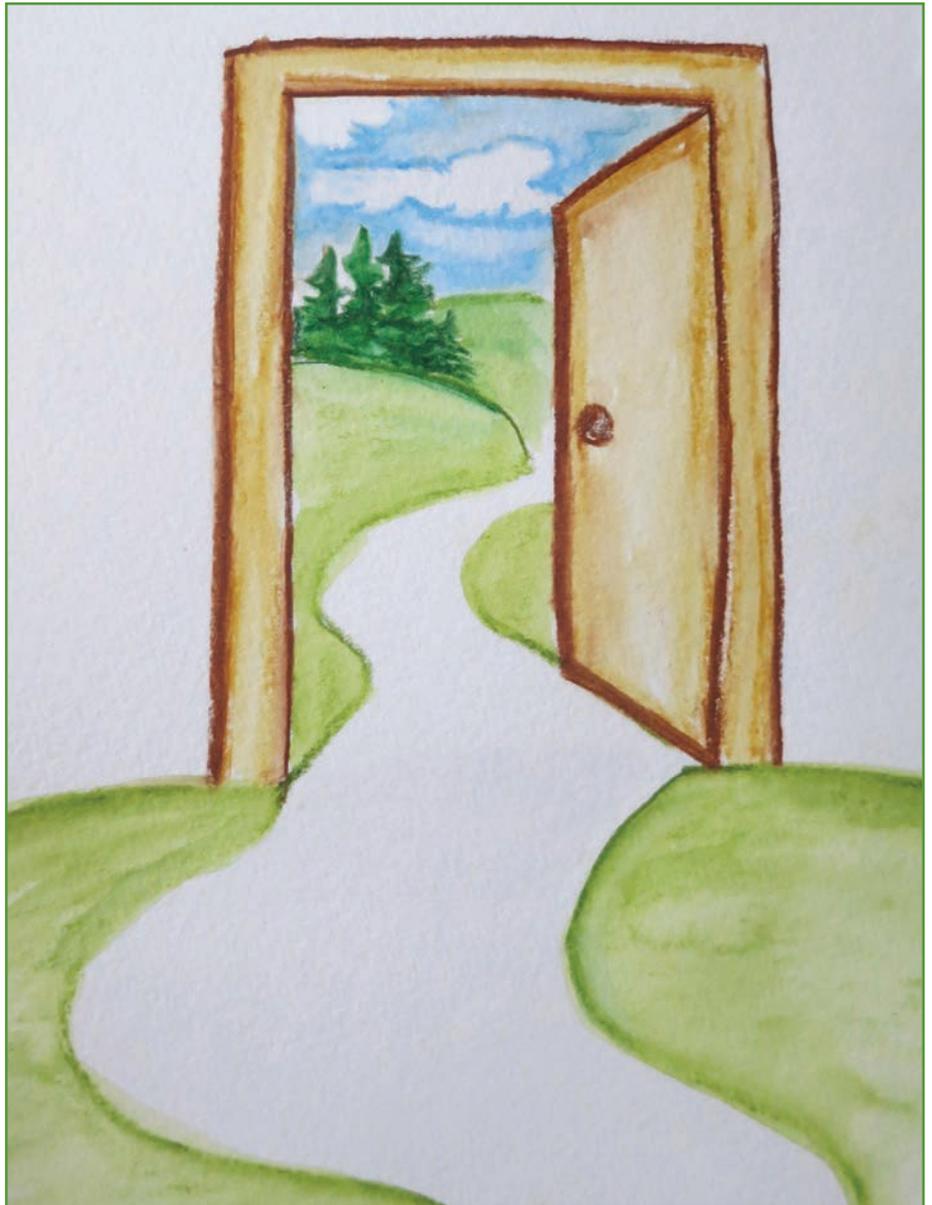


OPENING DOORS

A Best Practices Guide
to National Parks
Scholarship Programs



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to National Parks
Scholarship Programs



MAY 2015



The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in partnership with the National Park Service (NPS) is pleased to publish *Opening Doors: A Best Practices Guide to National Parks Scholarship Programs*. The guide is aptly named, for scholarship programs can truly “open doors” for young persons interested in science and parks.

In 2016, the National Park Service celebrates its Centennial and looks toward its second century. Stewardship of the nation’s natural and cultural heritage unimpaired for future generations is the mission of the NPS, and in this coming century depends on having the best available sound science to inform management decisions. This requires the best and brightest young scientists and scholars to apply their curiosity and skill to park-related challenges, from climate change to expanding relevancy to increasing our understanding of the nation’s cultural history.

In addition, the national parks are extraordinary scientific assets— invaluable for furthering our scientific understanding of ecosystems, wildlife, biodiversity, coastal geology, archeological resources, and much more. This also requires a new generation of young scientists and scholars working to advance science and serve society—the mission of the AAAS.

This commitment to creating the next generation of scientists and scholars is shared by both the National Park Service and the AAAS. We urge NPS employees, AAAS members, park friends groups, other scientific societies, and interested citizens to use the NPS Centennial as an opportunity to create new and expanded scholarship programs. *Opening Doors* provides an important, timely, and practical guide to this worthy endeavor on the 100th anniversary of one of our nation’s “best ideas”—the National Parks.

Jonathan B. Jarvis
Director
National Park Service

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Science Family of Journals

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INTRODUCTION

2016 marks the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service (NPS). As the NPS moves into its second century, it is imperative that a younger generation of researchers develop their skills and expertise to help respond to the challenges facing the National Park System, from confronting climate change to expanding relevance to understanding our cultural history.

The NPS Call to Action is intended to prepare the NPS for its 2016 Centennial. As part of the Call to Action, the NPS in partnership with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) has developed this “best practices” guide to assist park staff, partners, and others interested in working with NPS to develop, fund, manage, and benefit from internships, fellowships, and other forms of scholarship programs.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is divided into six chapters:

Chapter 1 - Setting Scholarship Goals and Objectives – this section will help you identify the best practices used to set your scholarship program(s) goals and objectives.

Chapter 2 - Fundraising – this section will help you identify the best practices used to raise support for your scholarship programs(s).

Chapter 3 - Communicating Scholarship Programs – this section will help you identify key steps in developing communications for your scholarship program(s).

Chapter 4 - Financial Management – this section will help you understand the most valuable components of managing your scholarship program(s) finances.

Chapter 5 - Selecting Scholarship Students – this section will provide you with guidance in selecting your students in a meaningful and an appropriate manner.

Chapter 6 - Mentoring Students and Assessing Success – this section will offer key steps that you may want to consider in mentoring your students and assessing success of your program(s).

A Note on Terminology

To get the most out of this guide, it will help to have a common understanding of key terms. For purposes of this guide, please consider the following definitions:

Compelling – The term “compelling” is used several times to describe the work done by scholars and how to communicate about it. A “compelling” story should evoke interest, attention, understanding and/or admiration.

Donor – A “donor” is an organization or individual that is providing your scholarship program with funding, services, or other resources.

Call to Action #20: Scholarly Pursuits

Sponsor excellence in science and scholarship, gain knowledge about park resources, and create the next generation of conservation scientists.

AAAS is the largest general scientific society in the world, and the publisher of the *Science* family of journals. AAAS has a long record of collaboration with the NPS, and from 1997-2007 co-managed a major scholarship program for doctoral students studying in national parks, with over \$10 million in funding and 79 students receiving doctoral degrees.

Fairness – While fairness is a complex legal and ethical concept, at its core, it is treating people or groups in a way that does not favor some over others inappropriately.

Park scholarships – “park scholarships” include student awards, fellowships, internships, and other forms of scholarships with the National Park System.

Park – The National Park System includes 20 different kinds of parks—from National Parks to National Historic Battlefields to National Recreation Areas and National Park and Preserves. Therefore, when you see the word “park” or “parks”, it is intended to represent all units of the National Park System.

Partner – A “partner” is any individual or organization that works with your park to benefit scholars.

Scholar – A “scholar” is a student participating in a park scholarship.

Scholarship program – A “scholarship program” is the sum total of park scholarships offered by your park. Your scholarship program is not limited to one park scholarship.

Students – “Students” are primarily undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral scholars in accredited higher education institutions.

Building This Best Practices Guide

The NPS partnered with AAAS to develop this best practices guide. The NPS and AAAS invited 15 individuals to participate in a workshop. The participants represented the NPS, AAAS, academic institutions, foundations, the scientific community, current students, and more. All participants had experience in some aspect of student engagement with national parks.

The participants shared their knowledge and expertise in a series of focused dialogues, where they were encouraged to be creative as well as learn from and interact with their colleagues. This workshop collected information that has been used to create the basic core of this best practices guide.

In the weeks that followed the workshop, the meeting notes were refined and combined with examples of successful scholarship programs from across the NPS. The draft guide was then reviewed by willing workshop participants. The final version has been reviewed and approved by the NPS and AAAS.

The Murals

As you read through the guide you will notice murals that capture the main ideas of each chapter. These murals were created in real time during the workshop dialogue by visual facilitator, Claire Bronson. This kind of graphic facilitation engaged the group in visual thinking, which helped participants be creative, make connections, and think differently. To carry on with that visual theme, the murals are used in this guide to link best practices to the overall idea.

The Cover

During the workshop, there was a special session where two young students had the opportunity to address the group. The students were participating in the Yosemite Leadership Program through the University of California, Merced. The two students, Ale and Vera, had just finished their 12-week summer internships in Yosemite National Park. They were asked to speak about their experiences and what it meant to them.

Both students shared compelling personal stories that came alive with their emotion. They expressed how the program had created an opportunity to matter and make a difference. Ale probably put it best when she described this program as “a door that opened up possibilities” for her that she never thought she would have. Daughter of migrant workers who immigrated to California when she was young, Ale had only ever expected to be a migrant worker, too. Now she sees a very different future for herself.

To all the workshop participants the meaning was clear. Scholarships are a door that opens possibilities. Ale’s metaphor inspired the title, cover, and authors of this guide.

My internship with the Yosemite Leadership Program was a door that opened up possibilities that I never thought I would have.

- ALEJANDRA GUZMAN, YOSEMITE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM, YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Setting Scholarship Goals and Objectives



■ Introduction

Setting goals and objectives for your scholarship programs are important because they can...

- Help you develop and understand the broad ideas of your scholarship program.
- Help answer the who, what, where, why, and how of your program.
- Provide you with guidance on how to manage your program.
- Help your program meet your needs, and the needs of the potential donor, scholar, and other stakeholders.
- Enable you to identify the basis of your program.
- Help your program be effective and successful in providing scholarship opportunities.
- Enable you to evaluate your program to make improvements for the future.

As you read this chapter, take a moment to think about the following questions. *Are park scholarship programs important? What should be their goals and objectives? How should these goals and objectives be developed? Who should develop them?*

■ The Overall Idea

Ask why? Beginning with this question is a way to focus your thinking and will start you off in the right direction. Why should we have scholarship programs in the parks? Why encourage scholars? Why start a program now? Answering these critical questions in your development of goals and objectives can give your program a solid foundation.

Connect your program's goals and objectives to the mission of the NPS and your park. The NPS strives to sponsor excellence in science and scholarship, gain knowledge about park resources, and create the next generation of conservation scientists and scholars. Help maintain our excellence in these areas as part of the NPS legacy by incorporating these principles into your program.

Establish clear, concise, and measurable goals and objectives for your program. Clear goals are easily understood and avoid jargon. Concise goals are brief and to the point. Measurable goals can be evaluated systematically. Establishing your goals and objectives with these parameters in mind can ensure that your program can be implemented, is accountable, and is simple to evaluate. Be sure to create a clear and simple articulation of your program criteria and the desired outcome.

Ensure that your program's goals and objectives are compelling. Go big! A compelling goal may stretch beyond your park into a larger landscape. The parks, the donors, the scholars, and even the larger society are important stakeholders. Will the scholar have a continuing relationship with the park staff or resources after they have completed the program? Will they be able to contribute to a greater understanding of their field? Will they be able to have an impact on future scholars? Can they transfer their experience to a career or to the community or the world? Show the value of the work and the legacy it should leave for future generations.

Incorporate some flexibility into your program's goals and objectives. Allow for a program that has a flexible focus within certain appropriate limits. Flexibility from the start will help you explore new and old opportunities and will increase the value to the beneficiary. Putting too many limits on your program may reduce its accessibility and utility. For instance, your scholars could be students as well as employees - including concession or partner employees.

Create a network of key collaborators to develop your program's goals and objectives. Your key collaborators will be important points of contact from your staff and from partnering institutions. Having a variety of viewpoints and a wide knowledge base can help you develop goals and objectives that will help your program get off to a great start. Developing commitment among your collaborators during the first stage is critical. Their support will help your program reach its full potential.

This fellowship allows the best and brightest upcoming climate change researchers a chance to develop their skills on National Park Service lands. These fellows come from colleges and universities all across the nation, truly making this a national program.

— CLIMATE CHANGE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

■ At Your Park

Consider a cross division and cross discipline approach to building your program's goals and objectives. Engaging multiple divisions and disciplines will ensure that many aspects of your park can benefit from having scholars partnering with your park. Scholarship possibilities can include everything from biology and physical science to poetry or literature. Taking this approach will increase the diversity of research that could happen in your park.

Consider goals and objectives that will advance institutional capacity. Your scholarship program can expand the capabilities of your park and be a means to inspire your staff. Work with your staff to dig deeper into the research possibilities. Consider sponsoring scholarships that will fill holes in your current research capabilities.

Adapt the goals and objectives from existing scholarship programs. You may choose to simply modify your existing program to meet your new program needs. You can also consider adapting programs from other parks. The pre-existing framework of a program can provide a useful template to develop appropriate goals and objectives for your program.

Plan to give staff adequate resources. Staff need adequate resources, such as time, to build and operate a successful scholarship program. Your goals and objectives and budgets should reflect realistic expectations that you have for your staff. With this framework in place, the opportunities that you are presenting to your scholar and your park will increase.

Plan to give scholars adequate resources. Scholars need adequate resources, such as funding and time for completion, to succeed in their scholarship program. Your goals and objectives and the scholars' goals and objectives should reflect realistic expectations and provide the necessary resources to be successful.

Include a goal or set of objectives that creates a mechanism to get feedback. Reports or presentations that share the results of the scholarly work will help your park learn, grow, and manage resources better. Feedback from all participants involved (donors, scholars, and staff) can help improve your scholarship program in the future.

■ The Scholar

Design the goals and objectives to meet the needs of the scholar. By designing the program to meet the scholar's needs, you will increase the chances that it will be fully successful. For instance, consider allowing the scholarships to be part time or build the capacity to work with the scholar.

Connect scholars to possible career paths. Connecting your scholar to a possible career path may be another way to meet their needs. Supporting a transition from research to employment may allow the NPS to engage the best and brightest scholars and could produce professional advocates for parks that follow a different career path.

Do your best to ensure that the program is accessible to all persons.

All qualified candidates should have an equal opportunity to participate in your program. Making the program accessible to all has the potential to bring multiple points of view, fresh voices, and diversity to your park. In addition, your goals and objectives could target new groups that may help to fulfill your park goals.

■ Don't Forget

Revisit your goals and objectives. Revisit your goals and objectives regularly to adapt to the changing needs of your donors, scholars, and park. This will ensure that your goals and objectives remain relevant and improve the overall effectiveness of your program.

Negotiate the program goals with your donor. Negotiating your goals and objectives will help you find the middle ground between your donor's needs and the program's needs. Be prepared to alter your plans (or find alternative donors) if this brings you too far from your mission.

Remember that transparency is important. When the goals and objectives of your program are transparent, then your donors, scholars, and staff know what is expected.

■ The Overall Idea

Consult and follow the procedures and policies of the NPS. Consult *Director's Order #21: Donations and Fundraising* to learn how you can be involved in helping to raise funds for the scholarship program and the important limits on government employees fundraising activities. These policies serve as the framework for appropriate conduct in relation to donation activities and fundraising campaigns that benefit the NPS.

Be prepared to show the donors a compelling and inspiring purpose for the scholarship. Sharing the compelling idea will generate excitement around being a part of the program and encourage the donor's participation. It is important that your case statement include the parameters of the expected outcome of the donation.

Showcase the value of previous research findings and projects. Showcasing your previous work will help your staff and donor see that your scholarship program is applicable to the management of your park. Make it clear that donors are supporting work that could be used to decide how to manage the parks, not routine park management activities.

Work with your Regional and the Washington Partnerships Office. Your Partnerships Office is a great starting place because they may have advice on potential partners as well as technical expertise and other key aspects of fundraising.

■ At Your Park

Identify staff who can work with your fundraising partner. This advocate should be willing to dedicate their skills with passion and ability to write grants, scout for other agency funds, and coordinate with potential donors. Providing the time necessary for these activities is vital to the success of your scholarship program.

Learn from and coordinate with existing fundraising efforts. See your scholarship program as an opportunity to work with your partners to reach out to new and varied donors. Try to avoid taking funding from other park program funds and be cautious of limiting yourselves to the same set of donors.

Create some form of outreach that touts your scholarship program. Communication will be very important to fundraising for your program. Use examples of scholarship success stories or the future plans of your program to raise awareness. Be visible in your community and show that donating is an option for citizens interested in the park. Networking like this will help you expand your resource base and increase your visibility.

Our program shares the costs of the fellowship with the scholars. Tuition costs are covered by GW out of funds raised by the Friends of Roger Kennedy group. The number of students admitted depends on the level of funding available from year to year. Students are responsible for University and course fees.

—ROGER KENNEDY FELLOWS PROGRAM

■ Working with a Donor

Think like the donor to attract willing donors. If the donor sponsors a scholarship, what is in it for them? Try tailoring your program to attract specific partners or matching a project to a specific donor. Does the potential impact of the program resonate with the philosophy of their giving? It is often useful and appropriate to collaborate with your donors and work within their themes. Your friends group or other fundraising partners can help you look for these synergies.

Be prepared to provide your donor with an assessment of success. An assessment will be an evaluation of measurable results that will keep your scholarship program accountable. Communication with the donor will help them stay engaged and see the significance of their involvement in the program. Budget appropriate funds for creating this assessment.

Create a plan to recognize and thank your donors. Recognition needs will vary widely from donor to donor. Make sure you customize your recognition methods to the specific donor you are working with. For instance, show what was accomplished by in-kind giving or what was achieved within the scholar's experiences and studies. Director's Order #21 has information on how to develop a donor recognition plan and provides guidance on ways to recognize donors.

Practice good stewardship of your donors. The relationship between your park, the scholars, and the donors requires trust and will take time to build. Your park and partners should be involved with keeping the donors included in the process and engaged in the scholarship program. Strengthening the relationship with the donors will only enhance the longevity and effectiveness of the program.

■ Funding

Ensure that your budget includes enough money to achieve the desired outcomes. Providing adequate funds to the scholars directly influences their ability to succeed under the expectations of the program. Adequate funds should also account for administrative costs and any publications or deliverables that will result from the scholarship. Calculating a certain amount of buffer funding allows you to manage unforeseen setbacks, which will inevitably happen in the reality of scientific and scholarly research.

Allow the funds to be used in ways that provides the scholar benefits. The scholar may need to go on a field trip or attend an educational workshop or program. Flexibility here will allow the program to adapt quickly and provide the scholars with the best possible opportunities.

Carefully consider the type and strategy of funding that will meet your needs. There are many different types of funding sources that have merit for different types of programs: endowments, ongoing funding, matching funds, donations in-kind, combining funds from multiple sources, bequests and other donations that you did not expect. Create a fundraising plan for obtaining adequate funding and periodically reevaluate the plan based on your success in fundraising.

Embrace alternative forms of fundraising. Crowdsourcing by partners, or engaging a private corporation through their social responsibility program, are legitimate means to meet your fundraising goals. Be sure to consult Directors Order 21. There may be other options, so keep an open mind and wide view.

Allocate the funds in a way that will make the most impact. Optimizing the timing of the funds distribution can make a big difference to the students. Ensure that the funds are allocated in such a way that the student can accomplish the objectives of the program.

■ Don't Forget?

Participate in a community of practice that focuses on funding. Sharing information and experiences will help you learn from others. This type of interaction with your colleagues across the Service and with partners can be useful at all levels. We are attempting to create a Service that is willing to listen and learn from a partner or a community who are working toward similar goals.

We fund at least two Park Break sessions to be offered each spring. One session, underwritten by the National Park Service, focuses on cultural resources. The second, underwritten by the US Geological Survey, focuses on the physical or biological sciences.

—GEORGE WRIGHT SOCIETY PARK BREAK

Communicating Scholarship Programs



■ Introduction

Communicating your scholarship programs is important because it will...

- Provide the necessary knowledge for the community to learn about the program.
- Increase the awareness and visibility of your program.
- Recognize current donors and the important work being done by the scholars.
- Attract potential donors and help increase the longevity of the program.

As you read this chapter, take a moment to think about the following questions. *Why communicate scholarship programs? What does it mean to promote a scholarship program, and how should this be done? Who are the essential audiences? What should be communicated? Are there particular techniques for reaching potential scholarship applicants?*

■ The Overall Idea

Know your audiences. Communication is most effective when it takes into account the intended audience. Adjusting the message to meet the needs of a particular group makes it easier for that group to understand and act on the message.

Keep the reading level appropriate. Clear and concise descriptions of the program, its goals, and the application process will make the scholarships more accessible to potential scholars.

Make sure the flow of information is effective to both internal and external partners. Your team and partners need to have the opportunity to learn about and share new information. Your external communications should include all parties involved in building the scholarship program, in addition to mainstream media, personal outreach, and web communication.

Make use of the full range of available communication tools. Consider alternative ways to deliver the scholarship announcements to all audiences. Utilize all available communication tools including press releases, print media, website, blogs, video, and social media. This variety will help your program reach the highest number and diversity of people possible.

Branding your scholarship program can have advantages. Using available branding tools, such as the NPS Graphic Identity Program (when appropriate), can raise the visibility and credibility of your program.

■ At your Park

Identify an advocate for communication. This person should be willing to dedicate their skills and time to ensure widespread distribution of communication materials. They may be from your park staff, your park friends group, or some other qualified partner.

Utilize NPS offices of communication. The Public Information Office, Office of Public Affairs, or other similar offices have the training and expertise to help polish your message. Their contacts may allow for a wider and easier distribution of the scholarship program announcement.

Leverage your existing partnerships to reach new audiences. Your partners will help expand your reach in recruiting scholarship candidates and new partners.

Have a structured review process for communications. Your communication materials should be reviewed by your team as well as by outside evaluators that include representatives of the target audience. These 'new eyes' will

We communicate our program to parks via Inside NPS, to previous supervisors of the program, and by word of mouth. Our partners communicate to prospective participants via campus representatives, advertisement in journals, staffing booths at conferences, through relevant organization's newsletters, on their website, and by word of mouth. We also actively maintain program intranet and internet sites.

—DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE'S GEO-SCIENTISTS-IN-PARKS

have a fresh view of the material that will allow them to critique its content and assess its utility.

Create a local outreach program. Encourage your staff to promote scholarship opportunities to park visitors. For example, military veterans on your staff can be invaluable for reaching out to veterans not working in the parks. Be present in the local communities, and especially around the organizations associated with your university partner(s). These activities may take more effort but they have the potential to brand your program as friendly, open, and easy to work with.

Design opportunities to track and measure program success. You could consider a survey question (if federally funded, such a survey may require OMB approval) on the scholarship application as an effective way to measure your program success. Understanding the effectiveness of your program is valuable to help determine which communication techniques were most effective, and it will help to improve your future communication.

■ To the Scholar

Communicate with higher education institutions in an equitable way. The opportunities presented in your scholarship program should be equally available to all qualified candidates. For instance, notifications about your scholarship program need to be simultaneously communicated to small colleges as well as large universities. Include focused communication to minority groups (Hispanic, tribal, African American, etc.) at the same time as all others.

Announce your scholarship program in a timely manner. When announcing your program, be sure to take the academic calendar into account. Providing potential scholars with ample time and several reminders to complete the application process will increase your candidate pool. Also, the prompt arrival of acceptance letters to the successful candidates is important, as it will help them begin planning for the future.

Make the scholarship program available to non-traditional students. Reaching out to single parents, persons with disabilities, and park employees should make it clear that the program has been adapted to the fair and reasonable expectations of those participants. Accounting for non-traditional student needs will help make your scholarship program accessible to all.

Encourage current park staff to participate as scholars. When communicating to your staff, make information available about how to manage work, school and personal life, and avoid conflict of interest. The timing of the scholarship program deadlines should consider for park staff schedules in their exit or entrance into the program.

Capitalize on your success. Use the success stories of scholarship recipients to

We advertise our internship positions on the website volunteer.gov, which can be linked to from our NPS webpage. We also speak to a number of classes at Middle Tennessee State University about the park and career options.

—STONES RIVER NATIONAL
BATTLEFIELD

inspire your potential future scholars. Sharing your past success with donors can generate a favorable reputation for your program and will help attract great candidates. Consider showcasing your success stories using multimedia tools such as video.

■ To the Donor

Include communication costs in your budget. Some of the money spent on communication techniques can be viewed as an investment in acquiring future funding. Raising the awareness of the impact of the scholarly work will encourage new and current donors to support the program. Don't forget to include a budget for communicating your program into a donor agreement.

Use compelling storytelling to communicate to potential donors. Stories of recipient successes, important issues, and work accomplished will inspire new donors to contribute. These stories should make an impact and help the potential donor realize they can make a difference.

Share the results of your program and include recognition of your donors. When you measure the success of your scholarship program and publicize the success of your program widely, the associated donor will benefit. Positive publicity is an advantage that many (but not all) donors expect and positive publicity can attract future donors.

Use communication techniques to maintain the stewardship of your donors. Communication is vital to building the relationship between your park, the scholars, and the donor. Your park should be involved with donors included in the process. Engaging donors with the success of the scholarship program can improve the relationship and may enhance the longevity and capacity of the program.

Make it easy to donate. Include information on how to support the scholarships. For example, include the link to the partner's donation page. Making it easier for supporters to donate in a clear and simple way may result in a higher return.

■ Don't Forget

Use social media! Social media is a great way to reach certain audiences. By including a link to the scholarship program website, you can make the information readily available and streamline the application or donation process. Use of social media should be consistent with an organization's social media policy.

Leverage historical milestones to bring attention to your scholarship program. Use the publicity that comes with high profile events to bring attention to your program. Integrating the theme of high profile events into your program can add to the compelling argument that you are building for your program. There are many important anniversaries coming up for our nation's heritage (both national and local) - use these as leverage to promote your scholarship program.

Financial Management



■ Introduction

Financial management for your scholarship program is important because it will...

- Guide the distribution of program funds.
- Ensure the proper use of program funds.
- Provide accountability and the ability to track the program funds.

As you read this chapter, take a moment to think about the following questions. *How should your scholarship program's finances be managed, and who should be responsible? What rules and guidelines are necessary for sound financial management? How much flexibility in spending funds should be provided to scholarship recipients? What restrictions should be imposed? What financial reporting is necessary and effective?*

■ The Overall Idea

Identify the fiduciary agent. Identifying your fiduciary agent should be one of your first steps. Ensure that your fiduciary agent, or the persons who will program your finances and authority, have the capacity to accept and distribute direct funds. Once the agent is identified, work with them to develop a process to make the financial management aspect of your program effective and efficient.

Consider the simplest model of financial management that meets the program needs. This system should include checks and balances and use the least reporting necessary to be financially responsible. By making it simple you are encouraging compliance and may prevent problems later on.

Establish clear and transparent accounting standards. Transparent accounting standards may include some form of disclosure of how the funds were spent. When your program funds are accounted for openly, it ensures that all parties involved are aware of how the funding is being spent.

Define the elements of your program budget. Make sure to account for your overhead, administration, staff time for mentoring, and the application and review process in the program budget. This will help ensure that your program can meet the goals and objectives you have set.

Establish a consistent pay and benefit structure for your scholarship. Having a structure in place will assist you in distributing the funds in a fair and equitable way. Your structure will also allow the scholars to plan their research.

■ At your Park

Seek technical assistance for your financial management. Granting scholarships requires technical expertise. Acquire information about available technical expertise from your colleagues who have sponsored scholarship programs, such as Cooperative Studies Ecosystem Units, your Regional Office, or the Washington Partnerships Office.

Consult human resources and your ethics office if a federal employee will be a recipient. Federal employees can be eligible for most programs, but protections are necessary to avoid conflict of interest or other policy constraints.

Identify and coordinate with one contact at the institution of higher education. Ask the university or office of sponsored programs to assign a knowledgeable person that you can work with to manage the finances of the scholarship program. Having a point of contact for financial management will help to keep your information and files consistent.

To get our program started, the first year the National Park Foundation handled the internship awards for the park. In the upcoming year, money will be transferred to a university to cover the award and administrative fees. Interns receive a flat stipend. The park provides housing and uniforms.

—CAPULIN VOLCANO NATIONAL MONUMENT

■ For the Scholar/School

Involve the university and scholar in creating a budget for expenditures. Normally, the stipends should not exceed those allowed by the university structure. For budget based funding, include the scholar in creating the budget for their research. This is an opportunity to develop an important skill for the scholar and will help keep the scholar accountable. Even if the scholarship has a set amount, it may be a good idea to have the scholar produce an itemized budget. However, unforeseen circumstances (for example, natural phenomena like fires, or human interference like vandalism) could make it important to allow some flexibility in funding expenditures. Keep in mind that the donor may want to see how the money is allocated.

Be timely with distributing program funds. Funds need to be dispensed as promised and in a timely manner. This will maintain the credibility of your program and support the scholars in the best possible way.

Make it a priority to discuss financial responsibilities with the scholar. Your financial management must account for ways to keep the scholar out of financial trouble as a result of the scholarship. For instance, you should inform the recipient that there may be tax implications connected to the acceptance of program funds.

Anticipate the need for an appropriate policy about parental leave. Scholars may need to request parental leave during their program. Will the scholar continue to receive funding during leave? Will deadlines need to be revised? Building this flexibility into your program will make it more accessible to non-traditional students and help all participants live their lives, in addition to being scholars.

Have the scholars agree to a reporting plan that will be tied to the scholarship funds. Structure a reporting plan within the agreement at the beginning of your scholarship program. Make sure the scholar knows that their funding is dependent on the regular communication of progress. Annual progress reports may work the best to keep everyone up to date without being a burden on the scholar.

Require the scholar to report any changes in research plans or university enrollment. Changes in the scholar's research plans or enrollment may affect the available scholarship funds.

■ For the Donor

Ensure that your partners have financial management skills and abilities. Financial management skills and abilities include the capacity to handle any necessary auditing in regards to the scholarship program. Establishing these skills will keep your program in good financial standing.

Be aware of and follow the requirements of the donor. The expectations of the donor should be clearly stated in your agreement with them.

■ Don't Forget

Trust the relationships with your program partners and scholars, but verify their compliance. To build lasting relationships with the program partners and scholars you must have trust. To protect your park and the scholarship program reputation you must enforce the program requirements. Creating a financial management plan will allow for both.

Selecting Scholarship Students



■ Introduction

Selecting scholarship students is important because...

- Scholars are the program recipients and their development is the reason for your program.
- Scholars will represent the success or failure of your program.
- You want the best possible candidates to benefit from your program.

As you read this chapter, take a moment to think about the following questions. *What criteria (merit, diversity, need, opportunity, creativity, value to park, and more) are important and effective? How should the application process be managed, and what information and/or materials should be included in an application? How should the review and selection process be managed? Who should be involved? How best to avoid conflicts of interest?*

■ The Overall Idea

Strive to establish an efficient selection process. Make your selection process as simple as possible and as complicated as necessary. While developing your selection process, consider that it needs to identify the best candidates and that it should not be cumbersome for the applicants or the selection committee.

Ensure the application process is easy to navigate. A straightforward process can reduce the burden on your applicants. This will help increase the number of completed applications. Remember to also offer a hard copy option for those that do not have internet access.

Follow a process in the selection of your scholars. A formal and transparent process of selecting your scholars will give your program credibility. Be sure to share the standards you are requiring for participation, as this will also allow you to evaluate all qualified applicants in a fair way.

Make fairness apparent throughout the selection process. The scholarship opportunities that your program presents should be accessible and available to all. Most specifically, the criteria and selection process should be transparent and easy to understand for all interested applicants.

■ At Your Park

Create a selection committee made of diverse and relevant people.

Ideally, qualified committee members would represent a variety of expertise and backgrounds. Diversity on this team has the potential to bring multiple points of view and fresh voices, allowing the selection committee to choose the best candidates.

Designate a selection committee lead. This committee member will help to ensure continuity and consistency for the program. They should also function as a point of contact for applicants to seek information about the program or selection process.

Allow for the time that is required to review the program applicants. A successful program will receive many applicants. Therefore, reviewing the applications to find the best candidates will take time and resources.

Select your participants in an objective manner. To do this, your committee should have at least three members. Qualified committee members could be found from the NPS, park partners, or third parties. Establish a conflict of interest policy for the committee to help maintain the committee's objectivity and fairness.

My summer at Denali National Park and Preserve was a once in a lifetime opportunity. I learned invaluable computer programming skills, practiced communicating with scientists and the general public, and networked with prominent paleontologists. Participating in Geo-Corps/GIP was one of the best choices I have ever made and I would recommend the program to any earth science students.

—AMY ATWATER, DENALI NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE

Ensure that the timing of your selection process makes sense. Consider the academic calendar while advertising your program. Reply to applicants promptly when a decision has been made, allowing them to plan accordingly. Follow through and keep your promises to remain credible.

Create an annual report about your scholarship program. An annual report will contribute to the institutional memory of your program, allowing the program to survive personnel changes. A record of your selection process and history will be a valuable tool for future committees and promotion of the program.

Account for government records reporting requirements. If the NPS is distributing applications and making decisions in selecting students, the documentation will need to comply with several policies, including the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, and the Paperwork Reduction Act. Be sure to consult NPS policy and legal experts, as appropriate.

■ Criteria

Derive your selection criteria from the program goals and objectives. The overall program goals and objectives should guide what you are looking for in a candidate. Make sure your selection criteria support the goals of the program. Your selection criteria could include many different factors. A few examples are: aspiration, merit, diversity, need, opportunity, creativity, value to park, and potential for future achievement.

Make your selection criteria explicit. The details of your criteria will help potential scholars provide applications that will be useful for the selection committee to evaluate. The selection criteria should match the information provided in the initial promotion of the scholarship.

■ Selection Process

Standardize your way of evaluating program applications. Make your method of evaluating program applications available to the applicants so they know how their applications will be evaluated. The selection committee should use this method of evaluating during the selection process so that each application is reviewed using the same process and to the same standards.

Consider accommodating learning disabilities in your selection process. Building your application process in a way that is universally accessible from the start will ensure that everyone has access to apply for your program.

Decide how you will implement your application process. There are many different ways to organize your application process. Perhaps require a written narrative describing the candidate's motivation. Consider the value of having personal interaction with the applicants when possible - or consider a two-step process where there may be personal interaction with a smaller number of finalists.

■ Don't Forget

Strive to have diversity in your program applicants. It may be beneficial to select from a diverse group of candidates, especially when your region includes a wide range of socioeconomic conditions. Your program outreach can have an impact on who applies.

Consider actively recruiting candidates. As long as the application materials are still accessible to all, active recruiting may help achieve your program's diversity goals. Incorporate this into your program outreach.

Interested candidates submit proposals that are evaluated by a technical panel of three PhD scientists outside Grand Teton National Park who submit a short list of finalists; the final decision on the grant is made by a committee representing the park and the Grand Teton Association.

—BOYD EIVSON GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWS, GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

Mentoring Scholars and Assessing Success



■ Introduction

Mentoring scholars and assessing success is important to your scholarship program because...

- Mentoring will provide a support system for your scholars.
- Mentoring will help meet the needs of the scholar, encourage a sense of community, and guide scholars to achieve the program goals.
- Assessment will allow you to gather feedback necessary to improve the program in the future.
- Assessment will provide the information necessary to communicate the results of your program.

As you read this chapter, take a moment to think about the following questions. *Is mentoring an important and effective part of park scholarship programs? If so, what levels and forms of mentoring are most effective? Who should be responsible for mentoring? How should student and/or program success be assessed?*

■ Mentoring Scholars

The Overall Idea

Consider mentoring an essential element of your scholarship program. A well-executed scholarship program can use mentoring to meet some of its overall goals and objectives. Mentoring, and the communication that it brings, can be a real benefit to your scholars. It provides them with access to insight and knowledge from more experienced members of the program community.

Identify the difference between supervision and mentoring. Mentors can be supervisors, but they don't have to be. Understanding the difference between the two roles can help your program be successful. Mentors can also be from outside the division or scope of interest of the scholar.

Utilize existing mentoring resources. There are many mentor programs that you may have access to within your agency or with your partner agencies or friends groups. Connect with your Regional Partnership Office to learn more about existing programs.

■ Your Program Mentors

Select and train your mentors. Providing professional development on mentoring gives you the opportunity to standardize your expectations for the mentors, create boundaries, and provide advice.

Use your program alumni as mentors. The experience alumni gained in your program can benefit the current class of scholars. The success represented in your former program participants can be a powerful tool. Talk to previous scholars about their mentoring experience, as their input can be helpful in improving the program.

■ Mentor/Scholar Relationship

Ensure that your mentors create a 'safe space'. A safe space gives the scholar the ability to talk about any concerns or challenges in confidence. Mentoring can attempt to address the whole person, but clear boundaries do need to be established and agreed upon by both the mentor and scholar.

Establish a system of communication between the scholar and the mentor. Ensure that your scholar and mentor have a consistent communication system. This will prompt the scholar to bring up any difficulties and encourage the mentor to be responsive. The form of communication may depend on the situation, but both parties should agree upon the preferred communication methods.

My coworkers and supervisor endure my endless string of questions and have given me so much more than a crash course in archeological work and historic preservation in the NPS – they are helping me soak in all of the information that I can about life in this milieu.

—VERONICA VERDIN, ZION NATIONAL PARK, CULTURAL RESOURCES DIVERSITY INTERNSHIP

Public history, for me, is about making what we do as scholars interesting and accessible to a wider audience. Most of us students were approaching this material for the first time. I think that newness gave us a sense of wonder about the stories these objects could tell, and that came through in the text.

—MARC CARPENTER, FORT VANCOUVER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Encourage mentoring to be a ‘two-way street’. Both mentor and scholar can learn from one another. This style of mentorship will help to maintain an active mentor and scholar relationship.

■ Don't Forget

Provide opportunities for the scholars to get together. Providing opportunities for your scholars to get together will enable a community among your program participants. This approach may also foster peer mentoring by making it easier for the scholars to talk to one another about their experiences.

Attempt to create a community among your selected scholars. Support the camaraderie of the scholarship class by presenting opportunities to connect through orientations, gatherings, award ceremonies, conferences, and other means of socialization or communication.

Work with your local tribal sovereignty. As appropriate, learn about your region's tribal governance and culture and be sure to engage the appropriate tribal members in your program.

■ Assessing Success

The Overall Idea

Closely align your program assessment with your overall program goals and objectives. The evaluation should be able to measure program success against the goals you set in the beginning. Evaluation will inform you about what the program is achieving and give you insight to what adjustments to make in the future.

Budget time, resources, and expertise for effective assessment. Just like the scholar's research, a proper assessment takes time and money. Program assessment can produce many opportunities for outreach and fundraising. An independent institution may be useful in providing the expertise to conduct your program assessment.

Incorporate exit interviews into your assessment. All participants and supervisors should have the opportunity to give feedback at the end of your scholarship program. Recent scholars will have valuable insight on how to improve the program for future scholars. These reports can be in any form you desire, however, a simple and straightforward process should increase your response rate.

■ Program Accountability

Report the results of your program. The information in the assessment

can be used to help donors understand what was produced by their donation. Sharing your assessment will build your relationship with the donor, ensure expectations are being met, and keep them engaged in the program. Assessment can also help NPS and partners to assess their contributions to the program.

■ Program Assessment

Conduct your program assessment annually and produce a report.

Share the results of your program assessment with your scholars. Sharing the report will encourage pride in being a part of a larger project with similar goals. Consider embracing other types of reporting media to keep it interesting and to reach a wider audience.

■ Don't Forget

Learn from the assessments of existing or similar programs. The methods used to assess a similar program can be a useful model for your assessment. Using an existing program's assessment may allow you to learn the most effective method and questions that you can ask your scholar.

CONCLUSION

This guide has provided many suggestions on how to develop and manage a scholarship program at your park. You may have noticed several common themes throughout the chapters. Remember to provide adequate resources necessary to accomplish your goals. Identify a lead contact for each aspect of your scholarship program. Ensure the accessibility of your scholarship program. Plan for periodic program assessments to adapt your program and keep improving. These common themes will help you to have a successful program.

As we noted at the start, there are many compelling reasons to develop your scholarship program. Much of the inspiration for this guide came from students like Ale and Vera. Scholars remind us how important it is to connect with the future generations that will work in our parks. We can all see the impact that doing research and scholarship in parks have on scholars, donors, partners, park resources, and park staff. Above all, we realize that these scholarship opportunities create possibilities that are sometimes greater than the sum of the research produced.

Scholarship programs in national parks are possibilities that open the doors to the future!

Our program is designed to promote the transfer of scientific knowledge to National Park Service managers and to the public. Researchers are required to submit a written report, submit content for a research project webpage, and present their work at a suitable public forum such as the Desert Institute's lecture series.

—ROBERT LEE GRADUATE STUDENT
RESEARCH PROGRAM

