Annual Scholarship Selection & Distribution Process

Committee Formation
The Scholarship Selection Committee is formed each spring quarter and consists of at least eight (8) individuals: Foundation staff, representatives from BTC’s Student Services Department, and representation from the Foundation Board of Directors (three or four members is the desired amount). Other persons that are deemed suitable to participate may serve on the committee as determined by the Foundation Executive Director.

Scheduled Meetings
The committee schedules at least two meetings to review and award scholarships based on criteria set forth by the donor. (See “Scholarship Selection” below for detailed information).

Application Review
In order to thoroughly and equitably review each scholarship application, two or more committee members will read and score each personal essay. The number of committee members reviewing each essay will depend on the number of committee members and number of applications received. Essay review typically takes place between one and three weeks after scholarship applications close, which is the end of Spring Quarter.

Essay Scoring
Essay scores are weighted to reflect the following: Overall Essay (40%), Program Alignment (40%), and Community/Volunteer Service (20%). An average score of combined readers is calculated to determine the final “Essay Score”. Realizing that not every student is a good writer, we ask committee members to score based on effort and content (committee members are encouraged not to focus on simple grammar and punctuation errors). The weighted scoring percentages may be adjusted from time to time, and can be done so at the sole discretion of the Scholarship Selection Committee. Scoring is based on a uniform rubric used by each committee member (see rubric below). Students are notified of essay expectations by Foundation staff, the Foundation website, and on scholarship application materials.
**Scholarship Essay Scoring Rubric**

Overall Essay – 40%
0 Points: No essay
1 Point: Very little effort (a few sentences; very little substance)
2 Points: Some effort (long or limited paragraphs; describes some relevant essay pieces)
3 Points: Good effort (multiple paragraphs; displays knowledge of program area and goals)
4 Points: Outstanding Essay (complete 4 - 6 paragraph essay, makes outstanding case for support by addressing critical program, career and community work - a complete package)

Program Alignment w/ Career Goals – 40%
0 Points: No mention of program alignment or career goals
1 Point: Does not match (it is clear they are not in the right program)
2 Points: Limited alignment (They like their program but another program seems like a better fit)
3 Points: Good Program Alignment (makes case for appropriate program but lacks emphasis)
4 Points: Excellent program alignment (makes an excellent case for program success and career path)

Community/Volunteer Service – 20%
0 Points: No mention of service
1 Point: No service (but mentions it in the essay)
2 Points: Limited service - helps family/friends
3 Points: Limited involvement with community organization(s) (church, nonprofit, school, ASBTC, etc.)
4 Points: Active or significant past involvement in community organization(s)

**Selection Process**
Scholarship selection is directed by the criteria specified by each scholarship or endowment agreement. When criteria is not provided or when more than two students qualify for a scholarship, the committee may, at its sole discretion, use some or all of the following criteria to make selections: essay score, demonstrated financial need (Expected Family Contribution from the FAFSA application), GPA, and essay score. The scholarship award process and award selections are based solely on the discretion and oversite of the Bellingham Technical College Foundation Board of Directors and the Scholarship Selection Committee.

**Student Notification**
Students are notified of their application status by letter mailed to the address provided on the application. Letters to awarded students include the amount of the award and the donor’s name, along with a scholarship agreement and information about the scholarship awards ceremony.

**Student Requirements** *(must be met before funds are disbursed)*
1. Return signed scholarship agreement
2. Provide personal thank you note or card for each donor
3. Enroll and register for classes
4. Commit to attending the scholarship awards ceremony (with few exceptions)
Yearly Scholarship Timeline

- April – June (Spring Quarter)
  - Online applications are available approximately the first day of spring quarter through June 30th
  - Scholarship committee is formed
- Month of July
  - Early – applications/essays are assigned to committee members to read and score
  - Mid – committee meets to make selections
  - Late – students are notified as to the committee’s decision (whether awarded or not)
    - For students receiving awards, their letter includes; a) the name of the donor; b) the amount of the scholarship; c) a scholarship agreement they must complete and return (including a requirement to attend the Scholarship Awards Breakfast in October/November).
    - In this letter, students are told that their funds will NOT be released through financial aid until they have completed and signed the scholarship agreement and brought it with their donor thank you letter to the Foundation Office.
- August – September
  - Students have until approximately the beginning of Fall quarter to turn in the paperwork that was included with their award letter (exceptions are made for students who communicate their circumstance).
  - When a scholarship exceeds $600 the money is disbursed in thirds for each academic quarter (Fall, Winter, and Spring). Exceptions are made on a case-by-case basis.
  - Foundation Staff send letters to donors identifying the students who received their contributions, the personal thank you notes from the awardees, and an invitation to the scholarship award ceremony.
- Late Fall (date varies)
  - All scholarship recipients are required to attend the scholarship awards ceremony, which is traditionally a breakfast that takes place in October.
  - This event provides an opportunity for donors and students to meet each other.
  - Donors and students are strongly encouraged to attend. They receive written notification/invitation and email and phone follow-ups.
- Ongoing (at the discretion of Foundation staff in consultation with Financial Aid)
  - Scholarships awarded through this process may be increased or reduced based on student attendance and credit load
  - Additional scholarships may be awarded throughout the year on a case-by-case basis (outside this regular process, based on student need and fund availability)