OSFA Scholarship for You

Ask students if they want cheaper food and more variety they will say yes. Ask them if they want more shade after experiencing the grueling desert heat and they would be crazy to say no. However, if you ask students what they are short on, it wouldn’t be cheaper food or shade. You can bet it would be time and money. The lack of time arguably is a constant for students, but even to experience the frenetic pace of college life, one needs money. It is unquestionably the largest obstacle facing college students today; dreaming to start and now hoping to finish. Financial aid and jobs on campus make a massive contribution, but with ever increasing costs, scholarships once maybe only considered a supplement of funding are now becoming the last hope for affordability. Every day students and parents contact our office inquiring about scholarships. The university’s scholarship website is second in most hits only to visitors to the university’s website inquiring about admission information. All demographics are demanding scholarship service.

Outside of the University’s own scholarship offerings, UA students bring in 160% more outside scholarship dollars than our in-state competitors ASU or NAU. That’s impressive and a credit to the type of students the UA draws in, but the system in which students are able to do this is archaic considering the technology and innovative possibilities available that could double that percentage bringing in upwards of $20 million outside scholarship dollars over the next ten years. Outside scholarship dollars are already measured and reported in the UA’s annual report to the Arizona Board of Regents.

What the UA scholarship department is proposing is a two phase model that will provide students more for their dollar and some spare time to enjoy the shade.

Phase 1: Streamline awarding of scholarships exclusively available to UA students.

Develop a system that combines admissions data, an online scholarship workbook profile, and financial aid data to match exclusive UA scholarships with UA students.

a. Admissions data may include: gender, ethnicity, residence, high school, etc.
b. Online workbook profile: students manage their own profile allowing students to market themselves by uploading; recommendation letters, resumes, personal essays, papers, accomplishments, pictures etc, for the viewing of scholarship awarders.
c. Financial aid data: to determine financial need through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) if a scholarship requires it.

Phase 2: Connect students with scholarships that are not exclusive to UA.

Using the same data from Phase 1, we seek out and automatically notify students of scholarship opportunities not designated exclusively for UA students.

a. Students are notified automatically of outside scholarships they are eligible for by links added to their profile with deadlines as well as statistics on how many other UA students were notified about the same scholarship.
b. The profile not only serves as a tracker of vital statistics, it serves as an online workbook serving multiple purposes for students, one being a place to store data that can easily be pasted into outside applications saving valuable time of starting from scratch.

Benefits:

a. More scholarship dollars translates to less student debt.
b. Students could afford to work less allowing time to improve academic performance.
c. Students could be considered for multiple scholarships without actually applying to one.
d. Profile would allow a more in depth look at students under scholarship consideration.
e. Non-automatic awards would invite a select number of students to continue the process in turn giving the students a fair and known probability of being selected. Additional process may be an email invitation to an interview or to load additional information to the student’s profile for donor viewing.
f. We can track trends helping to learn where most scholarships come from and what helps students the most when acquiring those scholarships.
g. Previous scholarship offerings could be added to profile to prevent other scholarships from being stacked to one student in a given year or years in financial need if a prerequisite.
h. Departments including financial aid, UA Foundation and outside donors could award scholarships faster to students. Information will be accessible online in real time from basic information such as major, GPA, units enrolled, financial need to essays about a student’s goals or top accomplishments.
i. Outside dollars could help grow local economy creating more student jobs.