

March 22, 2008

Martin O'Malley
Governor, State of Maryland

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.
President, Maryland Senate

The Honorable Michael E. Busch
Speaker, Maryland House of Delegates

Dear Governor O'Malley, President Miller and Speaker Busch:

The William Donald Schaefer Scholarship Advisory Council and Program was created by HB 1307 (Chapter 413, Acts of 2004) to provide financial assistance to Maryland residents attending a Maryland higher education institution to prepare for and pursue careers in public service. The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) is to provide, each year, a report to the Governor and General Assembly on the administration of this program. This letter is in response to this request.

The legislation took effect October 1, 2004, however, funds were not provided in the fiscal year 2005 budget to make awards during the 2004-2005 academic year. Instead, MHEC's Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) worked during 2004 and 2005 to develop an appropriate awarding structure to begin making awards in fiscal year 2006.

An Advisory Council was appointed in October 2004, comprised of 10 members, each serving two-year terms, representing the segments of higher education in Maryland and organizations that may employ individuals receiving the scholarship. The list of members is attached. The Advisory Council had its first meeting in November 2004, to discuss program guidelines, recipient selection criteria, and the possibility of raising funds for the program. OSFA finalized draft guidelines based on discussions that took place at the November meeting. Guidelines went to the Advisory Council for final review and then to the Commission for approval in March, 2005. Funds in the amount of \$60,000 were provided in the FY 2006 budget and the first ten awards were made during the 2005-2006 academic year.

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The criteria used by the Advisory Council to determine the recipients is (in order of importance): financial need; grade point average; application volunteer/public service experience; 1000 word essay regarding career goals and interest in public service; three letters of reference; and a resume. Additionally, the Council considered demographic information to ensure equal access for all eligible applicants. Each Council member reviewed the above listed information on each of 53 applicants and ranked them according to a standard form. A meeting was held where each Council member's top applicants were discussed in detail and the meeting continued until a consensus was reached.

Beginning with the 2007-2008 academic year, the William Donald Schaefer Scholarship was consolidated into the new Workforce Shortage Student Assistance Grant (WSSAG) program. The WSSAG program consolidated seven existing career/occupational programs into one program with a consistent application date, eligibility criteria, service obligation criteria and deferment options. While the majority of application requirements are the same for all eligible majors, the William Donald Schaefer (public service) portion of the program still has the additional requirements of a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), a 1,000 word essay, three letters or reference and a resume.

For the 2007-2008 academic year, the William Donald Schaefer Scholarship program applications were made available in January, 2007, and were accepted until June 1, 2007. The Office of Student Financial Assistance received 193 applications. Of the 193 applications received, 20 were received after the deadline and were not considered. Eighty-nine (89) of the remaining applications were incomplete; the applicants showed no need for assistance/had an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of over \$15,000; had not filed a FAFSA; and/or had a cumulative, unweighted grade point average (GPA) below 2.69. Although there were 65 eligible applicants, the 58 applicants with the lowest EFCs (\$0 to \$14,852) were considered by the Advisory Council.

During FY 2008, ten (10) students were offered an award, and four alternates were chosen. All alternates were offered an award in January, 2008. The award is \$2,000 per year if attending a Maryland community college full-time (12+ credits per semester) or \$1,000 per year if part-time (6-11 credits per semester). The award is \$4,000 per year if attending a Maryland 4-year institution full-time (12+ credits per semester for undergraduate; 9+ credits per semester for graduate) or \$2,000 per year if part-time (6-11 credits per semester for undergraduate; 6-8 credits per semester for graduate).

Below is a list of the 14 recipients' respective institutions, majors and degrees sought:

Anne Arundel Community College and Bowie State College – Social Work – B.S.

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Anne Arundel Community College – Special Education – A.A.
Towson University - Elementary Education - B.S.
Community College of Baltimore County Chemical Dependency Counseling – A.A.
Frostburg State University – Elementary Education – M.A.T.
St. Mary's College of Maryland – Public Policy – B.A
The Johns Hopkins University – School of Medicine – M.D.
University of Baltimore – Law – J.D.
University of Maryland, Baltimore – Nursing – B.S.N.
University of Maryland, Baltimore – Social Work – M.S.W. (2 students)
University of Maryland Baltimore County – Public Policy – M.A.
University of Maryland College Park – Kinesiology/Public Health - B.S.
University of Maryland College Park – Psychology/Philosophy – B.S.

All students accepted the Workforce Shortage Student Assistance Grant award and signed a promissory note agreeing to work in public service in the State of Maryland one year for each year they receive the award.

A recognition ceremony was held for the recipients and their families in July, 2007.

Should you have questions regarding the William Donald Schaefer Scholarship program or its implementation, please contact Elizabeth Urbanski, Associate Director, OSFA, at (410) 260-4561 or via email at eurbank@mhec.state.md.us.

Sincerely,

James E. Lyons, Sr.
Secretary of Higher Education

cc: Members, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Members, Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
Members, House Appropriations Committee
Members, House Ways and Means Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Assistant Secretary

Enclosure