



## Office of Scholarships

#9 Plan cycle - 9

Plan cycle 2023/2024

7/1/23 - 6/30/24

## Introduction

The mission of the Office of Scholarships is to administer institutional, state, federal, and private scholarship programs to MSU students. The office staff provides information/services to students, prospective students, parents and the community regarding scholarship sources/application procedures.

The Office of Scholarships provides students assistance with: applying institutional/state/private scholarship awards to tuition/fee charges; identifying/awarding funds for which the student may be eligible; and providing information regarding college aid applications, costs, continued academic eligibility, TOPS, and non-resident fee waivers.

Services for distance education students are the same as described above. Services can be provided through email, electronic means, or by phone.

## **Performance Objective 1 Support enrollment of a highly qualified and diverse student population through the utilization of scholarship funding as incentive and reward.**

### **1 Assessment and Benchmark**

Benchmark: For first-time freshmen, achieve a scholarships offered to enrolled conversion rate [percentage of students offered scholarships that actually enroll] of 65%.

Prior to 2019-2020, the benchmark was a scholarships offered to enrolled conversion rate of 75%.

#### **1.1 Data**

Fall	Offered	Enrolled	Conversion Rate	Average ACT	Average GPA
2017	1,144	734	64.2%	24.4	3.69
2018	798	503	63.0%	25.7	3.75
2019	815	495	60.7%	25.3	3.78
2020	1,025	624	60.9%	25.0	3.75
2021	792	426	53.8%	24.4	3.78
2022	543	276	50.8%	25.1	3.82
2023	662	337	50.9%	24.7	3.82

#### **1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement**

2019-2020:

- The Offered to Enrolled Conversion Rate was 60.7%, below the revised desired benchmark of 65%.
- The average ACT of enrolled recipients remained stable with the average GPA increased slightly.
- Combined financial aid/scholarships award letter was completed.

Plan for improvement:

- Increase the number of scholarship awards offered by expanding the ACT categories in an attempt to increase enrollment (based on RNL discussions).
- Continue collaboration with RNL to devise/implement appropriate award values and strategies.

2020-2021:

- The Offered to Enrolled Conversion Rate was 60.9%, although increases from prior year, was below the desired benchmark of 65%.
- The average ACT and GPA of enrolled recipients declined slightly.
- COVID19 and Hurricane Laura greatly impacted the effectiveness of scholarship offers.

Plan for Improvement:

- Implement award strategies (lower award amounts and delete lower ACT category) recommended by RNL.
- Implement award strategies to increase revenue that may cause minimal negative impact to enrollment.
- Implement RNL TruCost Calculator.

2021-2022:

- The Offered to Enrolled Conversion Rate was 53.8%, below the desired benchmark of 65%.
- The average ACT of enrolled recipients declined slightly following a nationwide downward trend due to COVID19 situations.
- The average GPA of enrolled recipients increased slightly.
- COVID19 and Hurricane Laura continue to impact the effectiveness of scholarship offers.

**Plan for Improvement:**

- Revise award strategies recommended by RNL to bolster awards for higher credentialed student applicants.
- Implement award strategies to increase revenue that may cause minimal negative impact to enrollment.
- Implement a lower Non Resident (Out of State) Fee for domestic and international students while lowering the number of allowable waivers.

**2022-2023:**

- The Offered to Enrolled Conversion Rate was 50.8%, below the desired benchmark of 65%.
- The average ACT of enrolled recipients increased slightly.
- The average GPA of enrolled recipients increased slightly.
- As predicted, implementing the award strategies to increase revenue may have caused a negative impact on enrollment.

**Plan for Improvement:**

- Revise award strategies to increase awards for higher credentialed face-to-face applicants aimed at increasing enrollment.
- Work with Marketing to devise strategies for marketing the low non-resident fee.
- Develop award strategies aimed at increasing enrollment of non-resident domestic students.

**2023-2024:**

- The Offered to Enrolled Conversion Rate was 50.9%, below the desired benchmark of 65%, but a slight increase from the prior year.
- The average ACT of enrolled recipients decreased, but follows national/state trends enrolled first time freshmen.
- The average GPA of enrolled recipients remained the same as the prior year.

**Plan for Improvement:**

- Revise award strategies to increase awards for higher credentialed applicants and reinstate awards for those with high GPA but average test scores.
- Work with Marketing/Recruiting to increase the number/quality of communications to scholarship awardees.
- Develop marketing strategies outlining the educational costs utilizing scholarship awards.

**2 Assessment and Benchmark**

Benchmark: For transfer, international, and graduate students, achieve a scholarships offered to enrolled conversion rate of:

- 80% for transfer students.
- 25% for international students.
- 70% for graduate students.

Prior to 2019-2020, the benchmark was a scholarships offered to enrolled conversion rate of:

- 30% for international students.
- 80% for graduate students.

**2.1 Data**

Transfer:

Fall	Offered	Enrolled	Conversion Rate
2014	60	52	86.7%
2017	37	25	68.0%

2018	46	37	80.4%
2019	70	55	78.6%
2020	53	42	79.2%
2021	19	15	79.0%
2022	31	25	80.6%
2023	52	39	75.0%

## International:

Fall	Offered	Enrolled	Conversion Rate
2014	45	16	35.6%
2017	68	15	22.0%
2018	44	6	13.6%
2019	94	36	38.3%
2020	100	31	31.0%
2021	69	16	23.0%
2022	86	15	17.4%
2023	211	35	16.6%

## Graduate:

Fall	Offered	Enrolled	Conversion Rate
2014	78	64	82.1%
2017	54	37	69.0%
2018	34	23	67.6%
2019	57	45	78.9%
2020	51	41	80.4%
2021	33	26	78.8%
2022	39	29	74.4%
2023	43	34	79.1%

**2.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement**

2019-2020:

- The conversion rate for transfer students was 78.6%, slightly below the established 80% benchmark. This benchmark will be maintained.
- The International conversion rate was 38.6% exceeding the updated conversion rate of 25%.
- The Graduate conversion rate was 78.9% exceeding the updated conversion of  $\geq 70\%$ .

Plan for Improvement:

- Continue to concentrate and increase award efforts for transfer students.
- Collaborate with International Student Office to identify high quality students with a likelihood of enrollment and concentrate award efforts there.

2020-2021:

COVID 19 and four natural disasters impacted enrollment/retention.

- The conversion rate for transfer students was 79.2%, a slight increase from the prior year and only slightly below the established 80% benchmark. This benchmark will be maintained.
- The International conversion rate was 31% exceeding the updated conversion rate of 25%. Relaxed federal immigration regulations due to COVID19 allowed international students to enroll in online classes.
- The Graduate conversion rate was 80.4% exceeding the updated conversion of  $\geq 70\%$ . Increased online availability and increased federal funding due to COVID19 may have helped our graduate enrollment.

Plan for Improvement:

- Collaborate with Transfer Process Improvement team to streamline the transfer evaluation process.
- Collaborate with the Billing Process Improvement to evaluate the out of state fee/waiver policies.

2021-2022:

- The conversion rate for transfer students was 79% which remained the same from the prior year and only slightly below the established 80% benchmark. This benchmark will be maintained.
- The International conversion rate was 23%, below the benchmark conversion rate of 25%. Effects of COVID19 and the lifting of relaxed immigration regulations significantly affected the opportunities to increase/maintain the international student population.
- The Graduate conversion rate was 78.8% exceeding the conversion rate of  $\geq 70\%$ .

Plan for Improvement:

- Collaborate with International Programs to implement a new International Scholarship award policy.
- Implement the new Out of State Fee Policy.

2022-2023:

- The conversion rate for transfer students was 80.6% which meets the established 80% benchmark. This benchmark will be maintained.
- The International conversion rate was 17.4%, below the benchmark conversion rate of 25%. Students still have difficulty in securing Visa interviews which significantly affected the opportunities to increase/maintain the international student population. A new scholarship award policy was implemented but results will not be available until Fall 2023 enrollment.
- The Graduate conversion rate was 75% exceeding the conversion rate of  $\geq 70\%$ .

Plan for Improvement:

- Update/streamline the International Scholarship award policy for better efficiency and competitive awards.
- Collaborate with departmental Graduate programs to determine scholarship/marketing needs.
- Collaborate with Recruiting to revise Transfer scholarship award opportunities and procedures.

2023-2024:

- The conversion rate for transfer students was 75%, below the established 80% benchmark.
- The International conversion rate was 16.6%, below the benchmark conversion rate of 25%. Students still have difficulty in securing Visa interviews which significantly affected the opportunities to increase/maintain the international student population. A new scholarship award policy was implemented which hopefully will show positive results in Fall 2024 enrollment.
- The Graduate conversion rate was 79% exceeding the conversion rate of  $\geq 70\%$ .

Plan for Improvement:

- Collaborate with the International Programs and International Compliance Office to update /streamline the International Scholarship award policy for better efficiency and competitive awards.
- Collaborate with departmental Graduate programs to determine scholarship/marketing needs.
- Collaborate with Recruiting to implement additional transfer recruitment activities especially with community colleges.

**Performance Objective 2 Ensure timely and accurate monitoring and reporting to maintain compliance with all regulators.**

**1 Assessment and Benchmark**

Benchmark: 95% audit compliance (no material audit findings) on legislative, TOPS, Foundation, and internal audits.

**1.1 Data**

2019-2020:

- The annual McNeese Foundation audit revealed no deficiencies in the scholarship programs - representing 100% compliance.
- The annual NCAA audit revealed no deficiencies in the scholarship programs - representing 100% compliance. Suggestions were made to streamline the GIA award language.

2020-2021:

- The annual McNeese Foundation audit revealed no deficiencies in the scholarship programs - representing 100% compliance.
- The state (Legislative Audit) revealed no deficiencies in the scholarship programs - representing 100% compliance.
- The annual NCAA audit revealed no deficiencies in the scholarship programs - representing 100% compliance.

2021-2022:

- The annual McNeese Foundation audit revealed no deficiencies in the scholarship programs - representing 100% compliance.
- The state (Legislative Audit) revealed no deficiencies in the scholarship programs - representing 100% compliance.
- The periodic LOSFA/TOPS audit revealed no deficiencies in the TOPS/Rockefeller Programs - representing 100% compliance.
- Although no material findings were issued, the NCAA audit revealed inconsistencies in the calculation of some scholarship percentages.

2022-2023:

- The annual McNeese Foundation audit revealed no deficiencies in the scholarship programs - representing 100% compliance.
- The state (Legislative Audit) revealed no deficiencies in the scholarship programs - representing 100% compliance.
- No LOSFA/TOPS audits were performed this year.
- The annual NCAA audit revealed no findings in the calculation of scholarship equivalencies/application of payments-representing 100% compliance.

2023-2024:

- The annual McNeese Foundation audit revealed no deficiencies in the scholarship programs - representing 100% compliance.
- The state (Legislative Audit) revealed no deficiencies in the scholarship programs - representing 100% compliance.
- No LOSFA/TOPS audits were performed this year.

- The annual NCAA audit revealed no findings in the calculation of scholarship equivalencies/application of payments-representing 100% compliance.

### 1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2019-2020:

100% compliance on all audits was achieved.

Plan for Improvement:

- Closely monitor the Compliance Assistant software and compare with actual Banner information

2020-2021:

100% compliance on all audits was achieved.

Plan for Improvement:

- Continue to review/update policies that were modified/implemented due to Covid19 and hurricane disasters.

2021-2022:

The benchmark was exceeded with no material findings in any audits.

Plan for Improvement:

- Collaborate with Athletics and Administrative Accounting to verify data prior to initial submission of NCAA data.

2022-2023:

The benchmark was exceeded with no material findings in any audits; 100% compliance on all audits was achieved.

Plan for Improvement:

- Review best practices/procedures for program guidelines and reconciliation with Scholarship Administrators.

2023-2024:

The benchmark was exceeded with no material findings in any audits; 100% compliance on all audits was achieved.

Plan for Improvement:

- Review best practices/procedures for program guidelines and reconciliation with Scholarship Administrators.

## 2 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: 95% of institutional/state reports completed by required and self-imposed due dates.

### 2.1 Data

Project Management Timeline:

Project or Report	Target Date	Completion Date		
		2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021*
TOPS Billing (Fall)	10/1	9/20/18	9/26/2019	10/7/2020
TOPS Billing (Spring)	3/1	2/25/19	2/18/2020	3/10/2021
TOPS Grades (Fall)	1/8	12/17/18	12/19/2019	12/21/2020



TOPS Grades (Spring)	6/10	5/30/19	7/7/2020*	6/8/2021
TOPS Grades (Sum)	8/10	8/1/18	8/5/2019	8/4/2020
BOR-5	7/31	7/31/18	7/30/2019	7/31/2020
Rockefeller Status Report (established by agency)	10/15	10/11/18	9/18/2019	10/23/20
Rockefeller Grades (established by agency)	7/15	—	7/11/2019	7/15/2021
Initial Scholarship Awards	10/15	9/24/18	10/7/2019	11/4/2020
Recipient Thank-Yous	12/01	11/24/18	12/2/2019	Ongoing
HC Drew Report	7/15	7/15/18	7/15/19	—
Foundation Donor Notification	12/16	12/14/18	12/16/2019	Ongoing

\*Originally submitted—problem with PGP password.

Project or Report	Target Date	Completion Date		
		2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
TOPS Billing (Fall)	10/1	10/1/2021	9/28/22	9/20/23
TOPS Billing (Spring)	3/1	2/17/2022	2/27/23	2/28/24
TOPS Grades (Fall)	1/8	12/17/2021	12/16/22	12/13/23
TOPS Grades (Spring)	6/10	5/25/2022	5/21/23	5/18/24
TOPS Grades (Sum)	8/10	8/2/2021	8/1/22	7/27/23
BOR-5	7/31	7/29/2021	7/29/22	7/26/23
Rockefeller Status Report (established by agency)	10/15	10/11/2021	N/A	N/A
Rockefeller Grades (established by agency)	7/15	07/06/2021	N/A	N/A
Initial Scholarship Awards	10/15	10/09/2021	10/6/22	10/15/2023
Recipient Thank-Yous	12/01	12/01/2021	12/1/22	12/1/23
HC Drew Report	8/1	07/15/2021	7/15/22	7/31/2023
Foundation Donor Notification	12/16	12/01/2021	12/15/22	12/8/2023

### 2.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2019-2020:

Due to COVID19, the spring TOPS grades were not submitted by the deadline due to grade modification programming required by TOPS.

Plan for Improvement:

- Update timeline
- Revise/update staff duties

2020-2021:

Due to COVID19 and four natural disasters, several deadlines were unable to be met.

Plan for improvement:

- With full staff now employed, additional training and staff meetings will assist in monitoring deadlines.
- Collaborate with the Billing Process Improvement to update payment process that could help to streamline timeline deadlines.

2021-2022:

100% of all deadlines were met exceeding the benchmark. As there were no Rockefeller Scholarship recipients for 2022-2023, no reports were required/submitted.

Plan for Improvement:

- Review/Update reporting dates on timeline.

2022-2023:

100% of all deadlines were met exceeding the benchmark.

Plan for Improvement:

- The HC Drew Reporting deadline should be moved to August 1. The current July 15 deadline is extremely difficult to meet with the fiscal year closing of June 30.
- Review/Update BOR-5 deadline depending on UL System/BOR deadlines.

2023-2024:

100% of all deadlines were met exceeding the benchmark.

Plan for Improvement:

- The BOR-5 deadline should be updated to August 1, depending on UL System/BOR deadlines.

### **Performance Objective 3 Maintain appropriate information/services to the University community and the SWLA community at large.**

#### **1 Assessment and Benchmark**

Benchmark: Meet with a minimum of two different focus groups during the upcoming year.

##### **1.1 Data**

2019-2020:

Meetings with various University personnel provided the following information:

- The combined financial aid/scholarship award letter has caused confusion when the student actually owes more than what was indicated on the award letter.
- Some parents are surprised by the 2.75% credit card fee.

Meetings/information from students/prospective students/parents provided the following information:

- The combined financial aid/scholarship award letter has caused confusion when the student actually owes more than what was indicated on the award letter.
- Can we add Cowboy Cash to our account without having to come in person to fill out a form?

2020-2021:

Meetings/Surveys with University personnel provided the following information:

- Why aren't housing charges on the bill?
- They receive numerous questions from students and parents who don't understand the bill.

Billing Survey of other universities provided the following information:

- All institutions surveyed included housing charges on the general fee bill/student account.
- Most institutions allow installment plan options.
- Most institutions provided periodic bill/statement notifications.

Student surveys/interviews provided the following information:

- What is the "refund" under the charge column?
- Most students only "view their bill" when prompted by an email or "Hold" email.
- Why don't housing scholarships show on the bill?
- Students don't read all of the "words" at the top of the bill.

#### 2021-2022:

Weekly EM Staff and Stakeholders meetings provide a continual evaluation of office services and processes.

Examples of items identified for modification include:

- Office hours
- Staff training
- Award letter verbiage
- Content/schedule changes to Preview Day, Academic Signing Day, high school visits

Focus groups associated with the planning of new facilities provided the following information:

- a significant number of students indicated they chose McNeese due to scholarship offers.
- students believe that they are provided a "personal touch in campus offices".
- students like the idea of a "one-stop" for support services.

Billing Process Improvement Team Workings:

- Increased informational "buttons" on the bill are effective.
- Less verbiage on the bill is pleasing to students.
- Confusion still exists regarding the separate housing bill.

#### 2022-2023:

Weekly EM Staff and Stakeholders meetings provide a continual evaluation of office services and processes.

Inclusion of faculty/staff outside of EM has expanded the information gathered from these groups. Examples of items identified for modification include:

- Staff training
- Award letter verbiage
- Content/schedule changes to Preview Day, Academic Signing Day, high school visits

Focus groups (faculty and staff) associated with the Future Search (Focus on the Future) initiative provided information for change regarding:

- Content/schedule changes to Preview Day.
- Additional opportunities for high school campus visit days.
- Opportunities to include recruiting, scholarships, financial aid in departmental/camps/community events on campus.
- Suggested recruitment opportunities for dual enrollment students.

#### 2023-2024:

Weekly EM Staff and Stakeholders meetings provide a continual evaluation of office services and processes.

Inclusion of faculty/staff outside of EM has expanded the information gathered from these groups. Examples of items identified for modification include

- Include scholarship staff in recruiting activities.
- Include additional EM staff to participate in high school award/graduation ceremonies.
- Staff training.

Focus groups (faculty and staff) associated with the EAB initiative provided information for change regarding:

- Suggested opportunities for emergency funding solicitation and disbursement.
- Review of current funds established for student emergency funding.
- Review outstanding student balances to determine if eligible funding is available to assist students.
- Investigate opportunities to honor dual enrollment/scholarship recipients.

### 1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2019-2020:

Plan for Improvement:

- Additional education regarding Electronic Check payment option.
- Additional staff training to explain the billing process.

2020-2021:

Plan for Improvement:

- Continue work with the Billing/Scholarships Process Improvement Team.

2021-2022:

The quasi "focus groups" continue to provide outstanding feedback for identifying areas for improvement.

Plan for Improvement:

- Continue to monitor the indicated groups for identification of modification opportunities.
- For additional information, include teams identified by the Focus on the Future Initiative.

2022-2023:

The "focus" groups provided many ideas for improvement which have been implemented.

Plan for Improvement:

- The current "focus" groups should continue and expand to include the newly established Faculty Engagement in Recruiting Group.
- Student and prospective student focus groups should be added to provide student feedback on the scholarships/admissions processes.

2023-2024:

The following staff/focus suggestions were implemented:

- Updated verbiage on scholarship award letters
- Changes to Preview Day and Academic Signing Day (Cowboy Commitment Day)
- Additional events to honor/recruit dual enrollment students

The staff and focus groups provided a number of ideas for improvement which are listed above in the Data section of this plan. These items will be investigated/implemented in the upcoming year.

Focus groups as well as informal anecdotal data gathering will continue to collect information regarding services/activities.