Kameryn Rome

Public Affairs

Scholarship money

Words: 1,140

 Freshmen and continuing students at Nicholls are awarded about $10 million in scholarships every semester.

The different types of scholarships offered are academic, athletic, private and those offered by the university. Scholarships awarded through Nicholls during the 2013-2014 academic school year totaled $1,720,632 in the operating budget.

Scholarship funding comes from university money and third parties that contribute scholarships to the university through endowments or private funding. “At Nicholls, the dollar amount awarded to a student through a scholarship is directly credited onto a student’s Banner account,” explained Dr. Eugene Dial, vice president for Student Affairs & Enrollment Services.

Some of the major scholarships at Nicholls are the President’s Scholarships, academic scholarships, the TOPS scholarships and athletic scholarships.

“The President’s Scholarship is the highest scholarship awarded at Nicholls because a student has to have an ACT of 30 or higher and a GPA of at least a 3.0 to qualify,” said Dial.

According to the Nicholls’ financial aid and scholarship website, the scholarship is about $1,710 each semester and can be awarded for a maximum of four years as long as the student has a minimum of a 3.0 each semester and is a full-time student. This scholarship has a value of $13,680 over a four-year period.

As stated in the Nicholls’ 2013-2014 Nicholls Operating Budget, the Presidential Scholarship has $177,000 in the budget for this year. As of October 7, 2013, $79,135 has gone to recipients of the Presidential Scholarship for the fall semester and there is $97,865 left in the budget for the for the remainder of the 2013-2014 school year for this scholarship.

The President’s Scholarship, like many other academic scholarships, are offered to incoming freshmen. “When the incoming freshmen apply to get into Nicholls, the computer is set up to identify everybody that has a 24 to 30 ACT score or higher and a GPA of a 3.0 or higher in high school,” Dial said. “All those students receive an invitation to Scholars Night where they are offered scholarships for their academic achievements,” he added.

Some of the academic scholarships awarded to incoming freshmen are the Dean’s Scholarship at $3,078 per academic year, Academic Excellence Scholarship at $2,565, Nicholls State University Scholars Scholarship at $1,710, Nicholls State University Achievement Scholarship at $1,368 and Valedictorian Scholarship at $450 per semester for one year. According to the Nicholls’ financial aid and scholarship website, all of the scholarships except the Valedictorian Scholarship can be awarded to a student for a maximum of four years as long as the student keeps a 3.0 and stays a full-time student.

The funding for the athletic scholarships are different than other scholarships offered at Nicholls because the money comes from an auxiliary budget. “Athletics as a unit according to the way the state is set-up has to budget an auxiliary unit,” Dial said.

 Nicholls Athletic Director Rob Bernardi explained that “money for the operation of the athletics department comes from several sources including university funds, student fees, game guarantees, ticket sales, National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Revenue Distribution and fund raising.” He added, “We actually raise about 40 percent of our budget.”

 The athletic scholarships account for about $2.5 million or 37 percent of the athletic department’s auxiliary budget. Out of about 320 student athletes in the department, about 65 are on a full-scholarship and about 80 are on partial aid because NCAA limits the amount of scholarships the department is able to give out, Bernardi said.

“The purpose of scholarship limits is to make for a ‘level playing field’ so that each team has the same number of scholarships as their opponent,” Bernardi clarified.

The Taylor Opportunity Program for Students, commonly known as the TOPS Scholarship, is worth $4,983,959.25 and was awarded to 2,165 Nicholls students for the 2013-2014 academic school year, according to Brandi St. Pierre, assistant director of university scholarships.

 “The money that comes from the TOPS Scholarships is not really money going into the university and is put into a restricted fund so the money cannot be used for anything,” said Dial. “It’s not income to the university but rather income for the students,” he added.

The TOPS Scholarship provides Louisiana high school graduates meeting specific eligibility requirements with a scholarship if they choose to attend a Louisiana public college or university, according to the university financial aid and scholarship website. At Nicholls, TOPS pays the following amounts per semester: TOPS Opportunity Award $2237.50, TOPS Performance Award $2437.50 and TOPS Honors Award $2637.50.

“A student must have a 20 on their ACT and a 2.3 GPA to get the TOPS Opportunity Award, a 23 to 26 on their ACT and a GPA of 3.0 for the TOPS Performance award and a 27 or higher on their ACT and a GPA of 3.0 to get the TOPS Honors Award,” Dial explained. “All students must have 24-hours for an academic year, maintain a minimum of a 2.5 GPA for the TOPs Opportunity, and maintain a 3.0 for the TOPS Performance Award and the TOPS Honors Award,” he added.

To receive a TOPS scholarship at Nicholls, students must fill out Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) every academic school year. The scholarship is available to a student for a minimum of four years as long as the student meets the requirements, as explained on Nicholls’ scholarship and financial aid website.

There are over 200 third-party scholarships on the university financial aid and scholarships website, explained Dial. “They range anywhere from $50 to a couple of thousand dollar,” he said.

“So far for the Fall Semester, Nicholls students have received $458,694.07 in scholarships from third-party contributors,” said St. Pierre.

Some of the third-party scholarships are specific to majors, to residents within particular parishes, to certain classifications, to financial need or with a certain GPA, Dial said. “The scholarships are regularly posted in the *Inside Nicholls* email updates,” said Dial.

Some of the organizations on campus, such as the Student Government Association (SGA), offer several scholarships that assist students on campus. “Any student may receive the SGA scholarships except the SGA Senator Scholarship, awarded to an SGA senator, as long as he or she meets the requirements,” explained SGA president Mellissa Cloutet. The scholarships range from $100 to $500 and $6,500 is awarded each academic school year.

The money for these scholarships are included in the Nicholls Operating Budget and are handled and processed in the scholarship office, explained Cloutet.

There are several different scholarships given by each major or college. Students can look online for scholarships offered through the department’s website or by asking the secretary of the department which scholarships are available.

The scholarship office, located in Otto Candies Hall, is open to help Nicholls students in the best way they can be assisted. “If a scholarship is continuously unapplied for, I will get with the donor or department associated with the scholarship to work up a pool of eligible students to contact to apply for the scholarship,” said St. Pierre. “We try very hard to utilize the funds donated to help assist our students,” she added.

#