COMMITTEE: Student Scholarships, Fellowships, and Financial Aid

MEETING DATE: March 28, 2022

PERSON PRESIDING: Ziwei Lin, Chair

REGULAR MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Ziwei Lin, Shirley Mai, Jonathan Dembo, Kelley Hulihan, Wendy Whisner

(Absent: Heather Kindl, Richard Baybutt, Denise Donica)

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Julie Poorman, Melonie Bryan, Gregory Lapicki, Chukwudi Ubah

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: none

MINUTES APPROVED: February's minutes unavailable; will be approved virtually

Agenda Item: Discuss proposals to improve the review process of applications

Discussion:

A. Baybutt's proposal which was submitted to Lin via email.

1. **GPA bar is high (3.8):** Lin stated that this would be difficult to lower. Bryan followed up with the fact that students apply within the system and the system auto matches the applications to the appropriate scholarships. There are approximately 11,000 different applications in the portal. The system filters the highest level of need and the highest GPAs.

2. **Memberships**: Bryan stated that we can change the value of items in the rubrics. Dembo expressed concerns about the accuracy of the information regarding service work provided by the students, as there is no effort to check whether the information is true and accurate. Students do not provide evidence and Dembo suggested we eliminate the service category unless we can verify the students' entries. Lin stated that we cannot remove a category from the system. Bryan added that the students sign a statement that all information provided is true and accurate prior to submitting their applications.

3. **Hours Contributed**: students should include the number of hours of service completed. Bryan added that this is part of the application question related to service and students are informed to include hours. Hulihan suggested that if student do not include hours, they get excluded. Lin noted that those who get a zero in service but have a high GPA aren't likely to move ahead of someone who have services points and high GPA. Dembo suggested we require the students to list the name and address for the supervisor/manager at the agency in which they complete the service hours. He noted that even if we do not verify, the students will think we may. For the students we

do select for scholarships, we could follow-up to verify the service information. Bryan commented that this would be difficult for her to mange considering the 100 committee reviewing applications. Lin suggested that the reference information be added to the application. Bryan stated that she could make the inquiry to edit the application to the campus wide scholarship development group.

4. **Irrelevant information provided by students on the applications**: Bryan stated that there are instructions on how to complete the application on the scholarship webpage. Some content may be irrelevant for our committee but that are 100 committees reviewing applications, so all field are open.

<u>Action Taken</u>:

Lin made a motion that Bryan ask the scholarship development group about whether it is possible to add information regarding service and leadership efforts to the application. Motion carried.

B. Lin's Proposal

1. PowerPoint Instructions

- state that the ECU Undergraduate GPA should be used when scoring applicants;
- state that service-based scholarships include the Probey scholarship, and academicsbased scholarships include the Jenkins scholarship;
- explain the point scale, the weighting, and the averaging procedures; for example, the service rubric gives 2x weight for the service component (e.g., Probey scholarship), while the academics rubric gives 2x weight for the grade component (e.g., Jenkins scholarship);
- write the GPA cutoff value used to narrow down the applicants for that year

Lin noted this had already been accomplished for this year.

2. **At the decision meeting (usually in February), show the number of total applicants under review; show the ranking and the three total scores (i.e., the total score from each of the three reviewers) for all applicants under review, which also helps to ensure 3 reviews for each applicant.**

Lin stated that this did occur this academic year but had not in the years prior.

3. **Is it possible to ask the system to flag the applicants that miss reviews (i.e., flag those who don't have 3 reviews)? Then we can make up the missing reviews before our final meeting.**

Bryan stated that the system does not flag. Bryan has to go into to each committee to make sure they have reviewed all assignments. She stated that we could check before our review meeting to make sure all reviews have been completed.

4. **We have realized that some applicants' final average score in the system do not match our committee scores; we later found that this is because some scores from other groups (such as scores from the "Biology Undergrad - Reviewer Group") have been included in the system's calculation. This should not be allowed for the SSC scholarships and needs to be fixed.**

Since the application is a general application that all students complete, this may not be able to be resolved automatically by the system. However, our committee can exclude those scores by hand and recalculate the average.

5. **Scoring the GPA: can it be made automatic in the system for consistency and efficiency?**

Bryan stated that the system does not allow this. A student's GPA is scored differently by different committees. The system utilized by ECU is a 3rd party product and cannot be modified by ECU.

6. **Committee members often receive one or more emails from the Office of University Scholarships with the Subject as "1 scholarship applications to review were assigned to you today". These emails are always or mostly incorrect and thus ignored; how can this bug be fixed**

Bryan explained that whenever a student updates their application the system sends it out for review even though our reviews have ended. There is no actual end date for general applications. If committee members receive notice to review an application during our review period, then members should review it. After the time frame of review, all other assignments can be ignored.

Additional comments:

Dembo stated that he did not see the applications of any of the candidates that the committee chose as recipients and was reluctant to vote. Lin suggested the committee could review applications of the candidates slated to receive scholarships prior to the meeting in which selections will be final.

Action Taken: Lin made a motion to accept items 1-4. Recommendations will be included in the annual report.

C. Lapicki's Proposal

A reviewer will have to see only 45 submissions which are about what each reviewer does now. The big difference from the current system: each reviewer 1) chooses from the same, instead of an incomplete and randomly assigned, pool of applicants and 2) contributes an equal number of points to the total---From the Research, Service, and GPA numbered lists, each reviewer submits a set of numbers equal to the limit is for a given Scholarship Award (for example, in 2021/22 this number was 15 for Probey). Each applicant gets 1 point for each number from the reviewer's set, the points from all reviewers are added and 15

applicants with the best total are awarded the given Scholarship Award. Whatever bias each reviewer might have, it will be washed out by the collective wisdom of all reviewers.

This will ensure that reviewers see the same down-selected applications (with number 45 as an example). Dembo inquired about the other applicants. Lapicki stated that the committee can decide how we rank research, service, and GPA. This will give assurance that the choices we make are not random. The committee can agree what points are awarded for each item, then put those numbers in the software and see the top 15 results.

Bryan reminded the committee that GPA and other categories cannot be automatically scored. Changes cannot be made to the way the system calculates as it is a 3rd party software and not an ECU product. Bryan stated that we can figure out a way to shrink the pool we review such as increasing the GPA.

Lapicki asked if we could contact the Advancement Team to ask if his suggestion could be done.

<u>Action Taken</u>

Lin asked Bryan to raise the question to the relevant committee and when we receive their answer, we will revisit the topic next academic year, if necessary. Lapiciki asked that she send his proposal via email for their review.

<u>Assigned additional duties to</u>: not applicable

NEXT SCHEDULE MEETING: to be determined for Academic year 2022-2023

ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED: Response from the Scholarship Development Committee regarding Lapicki's proposal on improving the review process.