

# Support Beyond the Money: Partnerships with Universities to Create Learning Communities

Kellie Pickett, Director of Scholarships, Susan T. Buffett Foundation

Char Oehm, Coordinator of Scholarships, Susan T. Buffett Foundation

Kelli King, Director-William H. Thompson Scholars Learning Community, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

# Susan T. Buffett Foundation Scholarship Eligibility

- ▶ To be considered for a scholarship from The Susan T. Buffett Foundation, a student must:
  - Be an incoming freshman
  - Have graduated from a high school in Nebraska
  - Be a resident of the state of Nebraska
  - Be in need of financial assistance in order to attend school (an EFC below \$10,000)
  - Have achieved at least a 2.5 GPA in high school
    - 2.5 on a 4 point scale
    - 80 on a 100 point scale
  - Have applied for federal financial aid and have already received back the Student Aid Report that contains your Expected Family Contribution (EFC)
  - Must plan to attend a Nebraska state public school (UNK, UNL, UNO, UNMC, Chadron State, Peru State, Wayne State) or a two-year public college within Nebraska (Southeast Community College, Metropolitan Community College, Northeast Community College, Central Community College, Mid-Plains Community College, Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture, Western Nebraska Community College).

# Susan T. Buffett Foundation Scholarship Award Terms

- Students must keep a 2.0 cumulative GPA
- Students must take a minimum of 9 credit hours per term
- Students must earn at least 18 credit hours each calendar year
- Awards are good for 3 calendar years at community colleges and 5 calendar years at State Colleges and Universities

# Susan T. Buffett Foundation Scholarship Amount of Award

Institutions	Full Time (12+hours)	Three-Quarter Time (9-11 hours)	Half Time (6-8 hours)	Quarter Time (3-5 hours)	Less than Quarter Time (1-2 hours)
<b>Community Colleges</b>					
MCC and SECC	\$1,450.00	\$1,087.50	\$725.00	\$362.50	\$181.25
CCC and MPCC	\$2,000.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,000.00	\$500.00	\$250.00
NECC and WNCC	\$2,150.00	\$1,612.50	\$1,075.00	\$537.50	\$268.75
<b>Nebraska State Colleges</b>					
Chadron State, Peru State, and Wayne State	\$3,900.00	\$2,925.00	\$1,950.00	\$975.00	\$487.50
<b>University of Nebraska</b>					
University of NE - Kearney	\$4,350.00	\$3,262.50	\$2,175.00	\$1,087.50	\$543.75
University of NE - Omaha	\$4,500.00	\$3,375.00	\$2,250.00	\$1,125.00	\$562.50
University of NE - Lincoln and UNMC	\$4,800.00	\$3,600.00	\$2,400.00	\$1,200.00	\$600.00
NCTA	\$2,800.00	\$2,100.00	\$1,400.00	\$700.00	\$350.00

# Susan T. Buffett Foundation Scholarship Current Scholars

- ▶ Currently 4,100 scholars supported across the state
- ▶ 2,350 students participate in Learning Communities at the University of Nebraska campuses
  - ▶ University of Nebraska - Kearney - 418
  - ▶ University of Nebraska - Lincoln - 1,037
  - ▶ University of Nebraska - Omaha - 968
- ▶ [UNK Video](#)

# Administrative Structure

- ▶ Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Nebraska Central Administration Office
- ▶ Foundation funds staff, supplies, programming for all three campuses and for a Scholarship Specialist at the Central Administration Office
- ▶ Budgets approved annually are submitted by each campus to Central Administration Office
- ▶ Monthly meetings with Learning Community Directors via phone or face-to-face
- ▶ Annual Reports submitted

# Key Components of Learning Communities

- ▶ Campus Autonomy
- ▶ Learning Community Staff
- ▶ Common Classes
  - ▶ At least 2 each semester in the first year
  - ▶ At least 1 each semester in the second year
  - ▶ Small classes (25 or fewer)
- ▶ First-Year Experience Seminar
- ▶ Upper-class Mentor
- ▶ Academic and Social Programming
- ▶ Residence Hall Living (required at UNL, UNK)
- ▶ Academic Support (recognition receptions, mid-term grade checks, probation programs)

# Unique Aspects to each Program

- ▶ UNK
  - ▶ Annual Trip
  - ▶ Focus on Research
  - ▶ Residence Hall living
- ▶ UNL
  - ▶ Tutoring/Study Café
  - ▶ Study Abroad
  - ▶ Extend the classroom experiences
- ▶ UNO
  - ▶ Office space/location
  - ▶ Sophomore Seminar

# Communication Strategies

- ▶ Scholarship Specialist (housed at the University Central Admin Office) works with all students attending school at the University of Nebraska
- ▶ Monthly conference calls with Learning Community Directors
- ▶ Annual meeting with all three Learning Community staffs, Central Administration staff, and Buffett Foundation staff

# Reporting

- ▶ Annual Narrative Reports
  - ▶ Executive Summary
  - ▶ Demographics and Campus Specific Information
  - ▶ Goals/Student Learning Outcomes linked to Activities
  - ▶ Assessment
  - ▶ Goals for Upcoming Year and Assessment Plans
- ▶ Annual Budgets

# Questions?

- ▶ What other opportunities are available?
- ▶ How might your scholarship program or institution use some of these ideas?
- ▶ What partnerships do you have that link scholars to resources?