



UA Recommendations:

Outside Scholarship Allocation Initiative

47th Session

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BACKGROUND

Overview

A student who receives an outside scholarship experiences a reduction in their Penn Grant rather than true additional funds given through the outside scholarship. This has historically disadvantaged students financially and disincentivized the pursuit of outside scholarships, and all of the universities within the Ivy League utilizes a similar system. Kyong plans to find a method to adjust this system or at least improve the transparency of Penn Student Financial Services monetary and financial policies. Penn there has been a general push to increase sensitivity training for all faculty across departments. Issues of racial, gender, and income insensitivity by faculty members have repeatedly been brought forward to the Undergraduate Assembly over the past year. The lack of faculty diversity in departments has also contributed to students' concerns in the classroom. The ultimate goal of this initiative is to create a more inclusive environment on campus for all students and faculty.

Current Status

UA cabinet and Kyong met with SFRS and Elaine Varas a couple months ago. SFRS agreed that they were not very transparent about their policies and need to do a better job enhancing their accessibility and understanding of their policies to Penn students or prospective applicants. To provide further context of the issue, please view the example:

1. I am a student who has to pay Penn's ~\$80,000 tuition.
2. Penn Grants \$40,000, leaving my family and I to pay \$40,000 to attend the university.
3. I receive a \$10,000 outside scholarship, expecting my Penn Grant to remain \$40,000 and my family and I now paying only \$30,000 to attend the university.
4. Instead, Penn financial services takes this \$10,000 and reduces Penn Grant, instead of my parental/student contribution. In other words, Penn grant is now \$30,000 and my family and I must still pay \$40,000.

What is the point of applying for outside scholarships if simply Penn grant reduces? It would be best if that \$10,000 would go to parental/student contribution, or if a certain percentage went to both Penn Grant and contribution.

If this policy is unable to change, it is inevitable. However, Penn should at the least do their best to be transparent about their policies and advocate for being honest, not secretive and illusional. The UA advocates for putting up outside scholarship allocation policies on the Financial services website. Therefore, no student should be surprised by Penn's policies and have to face any confusion during their journey. This situation affects both students at Penn and students who want to apply to the institution in the future.

UA RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

The Undergraduate Assembly recommends the following in order to address financial transparency:

1. Change financial policies so that it results in a compromise between students and the university
2. Be completely transparent about Penn's financial policies and make that information easily accessible and noticeable to anyone
3. Stop discouraging students from applying for outside scholarships. Students who get used to Penn's policies realize that applying for outside scholarships and receiving them does nothing, unless it includes an \$80,000 annual scholarship. Penn needs to change its policies so that students will be more encouraged and motivated to reach out and find outside scholarships. Financial struggle should not be a part of a student's time at Penn. No student should have to go through worrying about funding their own education especially when he/she is bright, brilliant, and capable of changing the world.