



Providing Scholarships to Deserving Alabama Students

SMITH SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION Student Handbook 2026

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I. INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO THE SMITH SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION PROGRAM

Welcome to the Smith Scholarship Foundation (SSF or Foundation) Accountability Program. This handbook is designed to provide you with information about your SSF Scholarship, including expectations of recipients and guidelines. As you proceed through college, you may find that situations arise that could affect your scholarship. This handbook will address many of those situations, tell you who to contact when questions or problems arise. While providing guidance regarding many of your responsibilities within the program.

The Foundation has carefully chosen you to be a Smith Scholar based on a variety of criteria including academic potential, leadership, and financial need. The Foundation is committed to investing a substantial amount of money, time, and resources in your education.

Scholars should act within the spirit of the guidelines instead of attempting to avoid them using technical or trivial objections or arguments. These guidelines are to protect both the Scholar and the integrity of the Foundation while conserving expenditures when appropriate for future Scholar's education costs.

You were selected because we believed you embraced the ideals of the SSF Foundation. If you determine you no longer want to follow these rules, please resign voluntarily so new scholars can be moved into the program to take advantage of the opportunities provided.

II. HOW THE SMITH SCHOLARSHIP WORKS

There is a lot of important information to be aware of regarding a Smith Foundation Scholarship. This section will detail how funding the scholarship works.

A. Financial Information

The Smith Foundation Scholarship is a supplemental, last-dollar, need-based scholarship. What is a last-dollar scholarship? A last-dollar scholarship is funding that is provided AFTER all other financial aid has been awarded. This type of scholarship is designed to fill in the gap by funding a scholar's unmet financial need that is not covered by other sources, such as, grants or scholarships. Last dollar scholarships are designed to prevent award displacement by schools and other providers.

B. Authorization to Release Financial Information

1. FERPA form. It is required that each Scholar sign and return an Authorization to Release Financial Information.
2. List Smith Scholarship Foundation as an authorized third-party to contact your school's billing and financial aid to facilitate payments, if needed. SSF will never change your classes or modify student information.
3. Check your university student account at least monthly to keep it corrected.

NOTES:

1. Did you know your bill has a dorm charge for a chair thrown off a balcony? It happens.
2. Parking tickets often appear after students let someone "borrow" their car. SSF does not pay car decals or tickets.
3. Scholars should be aware of the charges, payments, refunds, and credits on their bills and take ownership in the responsibility for payment of their education.

C. Amount of Scholarship/Transparency of Available Funds/Institutional Scholarship Displacement

1. The Smith Scholarship is a supplemental, last-dollar funding program. Your scholarship is not a pre-set amount. To prevent your college awarded scholarships and financial aid from being reduced always indicate \$500 as the amount of your Smith Scholarship when filling out your school financial aid forms as this is the only guaranteed amount until your funding needs have been evaluated. Funding is evaluated annually and when a request for payment "RFP" is made by the Scholar.
2. Notify the Foundation if any changes occur in your financial situation. This includes new scholarships, loss of scholarships, parents' change in income or employment. These changes may impact the level of funding or other assistance the Scholar needs.

3. The Funding you receive from the Foundation is private and should be maintained as confidential. Each student's needs are carefully reviewed before awards are granted and are based on the financial information you have provided. Do not share your funding information with other Scholars or anyone outside SSF staff without strict written permission. Your money is your private business. KEEP IT PRIVATE. Create dissension among fellow scholars by discussing Smith funding and you may lose it.
4. SSF is not a welfare or entitlement program. Any attempted manipulation of funding by Scholars or their families will not be tolerated.

NOTES: FINANCIAL INFORMATION FORMS

1. Sign FERPA, fill in University form available online or at Financial Aid Office.
2. \$500 should be listed as amount of Smith Scholarship.
3. Individual Funding is confidential.

III. FUNDING

A. Unmet Need

How is unmet need determined? The Foundation calculates a student's unmet need by subtracting financial aid, Pell Grant, and scholarships from the student's bill for qualified expenses. Tuition, books, required fees, on-campus housing and meal tickets are covered. Transportation, car maintenance, parking decals, athletic tickets, fines of any kind, including late payment penalties, are excluded from unmet needs and are not eligible for payment by SSF.

Example:

Unmet Needs is the direct cost of attendance minus grants, other scholarships, so the unmet need may vary. The following is a good example of how unmet need is calculated:

Troy University Bill	\$17,663
Financial aid package (other scholarships and grants)	<u>\$(7,000)</u>
(Offered Loans and Anticipated Work Study are not Included in this amount)	
Unmet Need:	\$10,663
Smith Foundation Contribution:	\$10,663

Since the unmet need in this case is \$10,663, the amount of the Smith Foundation Scholarship would be **\$10,663** for the academic year. *Keep in mind the amount listed in your individual award letter (Ex. \$20,000, \$15,000, \$10,000) is the maximum annual contribution available from SSF for Fall, Spring, and Summer.* The total award is based upon the recipient's individual award letter.

However, due to the increasing cost of attendance at many schools, there may be gaps in student funding. It will be the Scholar's responsibility to pay these costs. We hope Scholars fill these gaps by securing additional scholarships and working during summer and holiday breaks. If you are unable to fill these gaps in this manner, then student loans will be a last resort option. It is Smith's mission for students to graduate debt free.

B. Student Loans:

No Scholar is permitted to use a student loan without written permission from SSF's Executive Director. Violation will result in partial or full termination of SSF aid. (See Student Loans, VII).

NOTES:

Unmet Need:

1. Total student bill reduced by other aid.
2. Deduct items not paid by Smith.
3. Add missing scholarship and/or aid not listed on student account.

Remaining amount due (subject to annual award) is the student's unmet need.

IV. Refunds

A. If a Scholar receives a **refund** because additional funding from financial aid or other scholarships are credited to their account after the Foundation has made a payment, that **refund must be returned to the Foundation**. This may occur when the university's billing department adds others grants or scholarships to your student account after you have submitted your RFP and bill to SSF, who paid the request. The university billing systems are notoriously bad about creating a bill before all financial aid has been applied to the bill. This is why Smith asks Scholars to review their bills before submitting RFPs.

B. **Refunds must be returned to the Foundation no later than 7 days upon receipt.**

Refunds should be sent via check, paper or online. Notify the Foundation **immediately** via email if you discover a credit or refund on your account. Be transparent and honest at all times.

C. **Scholars' accounts are audited each year by SSF.**

Audits will determine the level of funding increase, decrease, or termination of scholarship for non-compliance.

D. **Take ownership and control of your account.**

Check your bill and make sure the billing department is giving you all the funds you know you should receive. It is your funding, and you worked hard for it. Inform Financial Aid very politely, in person; and send a follow-up email to the Students Account Services/Financial Aid, that an error exists. Ask questions and find out what the problem is so it can be resolved. SSF will assist if you are unable to resolve. Keep copies of all correspondence so we can help.

Refund Example:

If a Scholar receives their Pell Grant distribution late and their student accounts bill has already been paid by SSF, the Scholar must return the refund to the Foundation. Also, if a Scholar drops a class and receives a refund, these funds must likewise be returned to the Foundation. Why? Because these funds represent payments advanced by SSF. It is money SSF paid to keep classes from being dropped or penalties imposed while the Scholar is waiting for other financial aid to be credited to the Scholar's account.

Notes:

1. Check student account each month.
2. Return Refunds within 7 days.
3. Return refunds via on-line electronic check/ACH/Bill Pay to Smith Student Payments Account as directed by staff.
4. **Penalties:** for non-compliance – deduction in funding, probation and termination.

E. Funds are not carried over.

There is no carryover of unused SSF aid from one school calendar year (Fall, Spring, Summer) to the next. The goal of the Scholar and the Foundation is to conserve the funds by obtaining other aid such as scholarships, grants, and personal conservation to provide available resources allowing additional students to attend college. Amounts not spent on behalf of a current Scholar allows the Foundation to fund additional scholarships in that year, as the Foundation operating budget for each year takes into consideration the total funds expended on behalf of all Scholars.

Graduate funding may be increased if the Scholar has utilized other sources of financial aid and conserved SSF funding in their undergraduate education.

All expenditures made on behalf of Scholars are subject to prior approval by the Foundation. The Foundation reserves the right to deny requests for expenditures to preserve and protect both the integrity of the program and further the mission of the Foundation. No Scholar is entitled to a specific numerical funding amount in any year or an overall total amount. This is why your respective award states “up to \$.” Scholars should be committed to helping other Scholars and the future Smith Scholars. Take pride in “giving back” and “paying it forward.” Minimize costs when possible.

NOTES:
1. Total Annual Funding <u>expires</u> each school calendar year. 2. <u>Annual Funding</u> is total amount available for Fall, Spring, Approved Summer education costs and any other cost paid or contributed by SSF.

V. FAFSA

Each Smith Foundation Scholar must file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as early as possible each year. The IRS tax retrieval option automatically fills in tax return information. After the FAFSA has been filed, The Federal Government issues a Student Aid Report (SAR) to the Scholar and to the college or university the Scholar is attending.

Assistance in completing this form, is provided by Student support groups, such as TRIO, which offer help at FAFSA styled events. Scholarships and financial aid are complex matters. If you have questions, please work with student support services and the financial aid office at your university for help before contacting Smith staff.

- A. Any Scholar who does not receive a Pell Grant or has a Student Aid Index “SAI” above \$5,000 reported by FAFSA will have their file audited by SSF to determine if an error has been made on the FAFSA application or if the student has been misclassified. If a Scholar is asked to supply additional information to FAFSA, their university, or the Foundation, they should do so immediately with transparency and full cooperation. FAFSA makes mistakes, consequently your priority attention is needed to make corrections or Pell delays, or even denials will result.
- B. Scholars must send FAFSA report to primary school and any other school such as community college for summer classes. Some community colleges do not accept Pell Grants for summer classes if the Scholar is enrolled as a “transient.”
- C. Those students who do not receive a Pell Grant due to parents’ income or their own income, and the Scholar is receiving no aid from the parents or is at risk of being homeless may be misclassified. Contact SSF staff for assistance.
- D. Scholars with a high SAI may have their funding reduced as SSF is a needs-based scholarship; therefore, tax reporting by the Foundation requires verification of actual financial need.

<u>FAFSA</u>
1. Fill out FAFSA ASAP; don’t procrastinate. 2. Respond to any request from FAFSA or university. 3. Meet with financial aid officer at school before asking SSF for assistance. 4. If issues still exist ask Smith Staff to help. 5. Income verification is required for needs-based scholarships. Smith may request verification to comply with IRS rules, if SAI exceeds \$5,000 or Pell Grant is not awarded.

VI. TUITION AND HOUSING

A. How to Get Bills Paid

1. RFP Form must be filled out completely every time it is submitted, with the required attachments. Account number must be legible. Returned payments resulting from inaccurate or illegible account numbers will result in a \$15 fee deduction per transaction. (This is what the Bank charges SSF for the error.)
2. Deadlines are:
 - a. August 15st for Fall Semester Payment
 - b. December 15th for Spring Semester Payment
 - c. April 15th to submit an RFP Request for Payment Form for Summer Semester tuition, fees, and housing. Approval is required for Summer or Mini Sessions.
3. Submit RFP with PDF attachments to Ahrian@smithscholarships.net, and Kim@smithscholarships.net.

B. Books and Supplies

1. Scholars receive a standard \$500 book stipend each Fall and Spring for use in purchasing books and supplies.
2. **The book stipend will be Eliminated Completely if books and course materials are included on your student bill.** If you want the stipend, please deduct these materials from RFP or no separate Book Stipend will be paid.
3. Payment of book stipend will be made to student via electronic check/ACH deposit to student's personal account.

C. Availability of Scholarship Funds – How payments are made.

1. Submit correct RFP with attachments.
2. Online electronic payment to student's account. Student then pays the invoice.
3. Student provides copy of paid invoice.

D. Disbursement of Funds

1. Payments are currently issued on Mondays.
2. Make a request 10 days before deadline. It takes several days to process.
3. Funds are not issued until RFP is reviewed and approved.
4. Summer funding: Request for Approval of summers classes, RFP and Re-App is required before disbursement, i.e. payment.

E. SSF is a scholarship provider run by a small staff of dedicated professionals. It is not a bank or ATM. Demonstrate patience, respect, gratitude, and accountability. Please make request early. Late fees are not eligible for SSF payment.

VII. SCHOLAR CHECKING ACCOUNT

- A. Each Scholar should have a personal checking account to receive all funding for school invoices, book stipends and other payments. The student's account must be a solely owned individual account. No other name but the Scholar's should be on this account. (You may designate a POD on the account when you open it.) Maintain enough funds (at least \$5.00) in this account to keep it from closing.
- B. Transactions and payments with the Foundation will utilize this account. This account should be the **only** account listed at your university for refunds. There are multiple reasons for this requirement that will be explained at Boot Camp. Any student who fails to establish an independent checking account will have all payments mailed to their university. This will result in delays, possible late fees or dropped classes.
- C. **No credit card payments.** SSF will deposit funds into your bank account. You will then pay your student bill using these funds. **Payment to your school should not be made on a credit card.** Schools impose credit card convenience fees (some charge debit card fees). SSF will not pay or reimburse this cost. Utilize online payment or electronic check from your account to pay your university.
- D. Scholars should review their checking account at least **monthly** for any refunds, unauthorized debits, and fraud. **Note: Debit cards are often hacked on campus and convenience stores near campus. Please monitor your account and immediately notify the bank.**
- E. It is a violation of the Guidelines for a Scholar to deposit any SSF payments into any account that is not in their sole name.
- F. Request for Reimbursement from SSF can only be made payable to the Scholar or your university.
- G. The Foundation will not make payments to any third-party apps such as Venmo, Pay Pal, or Cash-App.

The Foundation must abide by strict IRS guidelines and internal accounting procedures on disbursement and application of funds for the Scholar's benefit.



VIII. THIRD PARTY STUDENT LOANS – BAD

- A. Smith strongly discourages the use of these loans for undergraduate expenses.
- B. All loans are to be pre-approved by the Foundation. Failure to receive pre-approval will result in partial or full termination of your scholarship.
- C. Request Forms and debt counseling material must be completed before student loan requests can be reviewed. If loan amount exceeds actual need, SSF may deduct excess amount from the student's SSF funding.
- D. Student loans should only be used as financial gap funding for Scholar's education (i.e., tuition, book, fees, room, and board) not to supplement income for family living expenses or purchase of car, clothing, phone.

<u>NOTES:</u>
1. Checking account in Scholar's sole name. 2. SSF funding into Scholar's account only. 3. No credit or debit cards for payments to your university – fees. <i>Live like a student while in college to avoid living like a student after graduation.</i>

IX. FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO FAMILY

- A. Scholars must invest in their own education and work up to 15 hours a week, preferably on campus, during school to pay for their incidentals and expenses not covered by SSF. **Consequently, no Scholar is permitted to financially contribute to family expenses.** Scholars may pay for their individual needs such as off-campus food, phone, clothing, but no contribution should be made to family utilities or family housing.
- B. If a Scholar works to provide support to their family, then there is no reason SSF should pay for the Scholar's college education expenses because the Scholar can pay for it him/herself. **A Scholar's job is their education.** SSF funds educational expenses to alleviate the Scholar's stress created by working in excess of 15 hours while attending college. Scholars need to focus on academics.
- C. No funds provided by SSF, Pell Grant, work study, financial aid or student loans should ever be utilized by a Scholar or their family for non-Scholar expenses. Violation of this rule will lead to a reduction in benefits or scholarship termination.
- D. Scholar housing is provided while in school by SSF. Housing is also available at most colleges over breaks, if needed.

X. ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

- A. Failure to enroll for a fall or spring semester without written approval from the Foundation Executive Director will result in the termination of your scholarship.
- B. If your academic progress toward your degree is delayed due to dropping classes - poor academic performance or a change in major -- Scholars assume personal responsibility for funding educational expenses following receipt of 4 years of funding from SSF.
- C. Overall funding is also limited to total award of funds contained in the award letter, notwithstanding extensions past 4 years.
- D. Full-time enrollment is defined by Smith as – at least 12 credit hours per semester of undergraduate enrollment. (Most Scholars enroll for 15 to 16 hours depending on the difficulty of classes.)(Universities may classify less than 12 hours as full-time. This does not change the SSF minimum requirement.)
- E. Excessive class loads will not excuse students from maintaining ALL guideline requirements. If you need to take summer classes or add another semester, please make a request. SSF Scholars need strong grades and professional experience in their chosen career without burnout or undue stress.

NOTES:

1. Full-time enrollment is 12 hours minimum.
2. Smith Mentor must approve class schedule.
3. Continuous, consecutive enrollment required.
4. Summer, May, or Mini-term classes require approval.

XI. LENGTH OF FUNDING AND ANNUAL RENEWAL

A. Summer Funding

Funds for the summer term require Summer Funding Request Forms submitted by April 15th detailing special circumstances and review with written approval. (Pell rules provide Summer Pell Funding subject to program and university requirements). For a summer funding request an RFP is also required. Additionally, Scholar's Re-Application must be submitted and approved before funding can be **released** and actual payment made. Summer funding is limited to your annual award set out in your award letter.

B. Extending Funding

Although the SSF scholarship is renewable, a Scholar's unmet need (the scholarship amount) may vary from year to year. Students should plan to work during summer break and holidays to provide for their incidentals and gaps in available funding. Students undertaking majors that require an excess of 4 years may request summer and extended funding. Many majors now require an additional semester or clinicals, and internships with specialized training are anticipated. Such funding requests will be reviewed and approval is discretionary.

C. Non-Funded Status

If the Scholar has no unmet need, he or she will be placed on what is called **Non-funded Status**. Non-funded status means that a Scholar is entitled to participate in all Foundation functions and programs but will not receive scholarship funding for that particular school year except for the \$500 book stipend per term. Unmet need is reevaluated each year, and the Scholar may receive future funding if he or she is eligible in subsequent years. ***However, if a Scholar is listed as non-funded status for a particular school year, SSF funding will not be carried over.*** Even though a Scholar is placed on non-funded status he or she is still required to adhere to all Smith Foundation Scholarship requirements to stay in compliance to qualify for future funding. Non-funding status will be positively reflected in any graduate funding requested by the Scholar in recognition of the Scholar's efforts to minimize undergraduate cost.

NOTES:

1. Summer funding requires Request Form by April 15th with RFP.
2. Summer funding is not paid until after Re-Application has been approved.
3. Unused funding does not carry over to the next year.
4. Unused funding may increase your graduate scholarship award.

XII. GRADE POINT/TRANSCRIPTS

- A. If a Scholar's cumulative grade point (excludes dual enrollment classes for calculation) average drops below the **2.5** required minimum, the Scholar must request probation in lieu of termination for one semester and is required to assume responsibility for their own educational cost. (Limited and extremely rare exceptions may be permitted).
- B. If a Scholar receives a GPA in any semester that is less than 2.0, Scholar (See award Letter as GPA requirements may vary depending on scholarship and major) will be moved to probation status or terminated, regardless of the Scholar's cumulative GPA. If placed on probation, Scholar is required to assume responsibility for their own educational cost.
- C. Scholars placed on probation, for any reason, must fulfill requirements outlined in their probation letters. Requests for reinstatement should be made including all required documentation of student's compliance. Reinstatement can only be granted by the Executive Director.
- D. Upon reinstatement, SSF will continue funding based on per-semester limit. Scholar does not receive increase funding calculation for their payment of probation semester. Ex. Limits \$20,000/\$10,000 per semester. Probation student pays \$9,000 for Fall. Reinstatement: SSF pays \$10,000, not \$19,000.
- E. Scholars must submit unofficial or copies of transcripts within **7 days** after they are made available to the Scholar.

NOTES:

GPA requirement:

2.5 cumulative (excludes dual enrollment).

2.0 semester.

Or as otherwise specified in Award Letter.

Some awards contain incentive GPA for increase in funding level.

3.0 or higher is required for Study Abroad or graduate funding qualification.

XIII. DROPPING CLASSES

If you wish to drop a class, you must email your Foundation Mentor with a Drop Class Form to **request permission in advance**. (See Scholar Café for the Request to Drop a Class Form).

- A. If a class is not going well contact your campus Team Leader, SSF Mentor, and academic advisor. Do not wait until your only option is to drop a class. **Ask for help, do not be embarrassed.**
- B. Any Smith Scholar dropping below a full-time enrollment violates the terms of the Smith Scholarship and many other scholarships. Scholars with less than 12 hours are subject to probation unless a waiver has been obtained. Consult with your Mentor for medical withdrawal and other options available from your university.
- C. Dropping below full-time enrollment has serious adverse consequences to the timely completion of your degree plan and may jeopardize your Pell Grant and other aid.
- D. Dropped classes (made after drop/add period) that are not eligible for refunds from your university are ineligible for SSF payment upon retake without written approval.
- E. Approval of payment to retake a class is rarely granted and is discretionary. Scholar must request and supply documentation of substantial work to improve grade prior to drop; tutoring, communication with professor, and written approval of Smith Mentor. Dropping may be the only option to save your GPA, but it is always the last option.
- F. If you do make a bad grade in class, ask about GAP policies at your school to determine if you are permitted to retake and replace the grade. Both your academic college advisor and Smith Mentor can help.

NOTES:

Written approval from Smith Mentor needed prior to dropping a class.
Don't wait. Seek help early so you have more options.

XIV. TUTORING, STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES – TRIO – A TO Z, AND MORE.

- A. All incoming freshmen must sign up with their Student Support Services and tutoring center. Written confirmation of enrollment and attendance is required. Tutoring centers provide free tutoring, skill development, scholarships, study abroad programs, plus free printers, books to borrow and leadership opportunities. Contact your Team Leader for assistance in joining. Sign up as soon as possible. Students must participate in program all 4 years.
- B. Freshmen submit tutoring forms to your Campus Team Leaders monthly. Confirmation sheets to document your participation in tutoring are located in the Scholar Café. These documents must be filled out by your tutor and given to your Team Leader on a monthly basis. **Retain copies for attachments to your Re-Application.**
- C. Returning Scholars who receive a C or less are required to secure the services of a tutor (proof of tutoring will be required and must be attached to Scholar's Re-App). This mandatory requirement is designed to maintain your GPA and status within the program. If you make a C or lower, notify your SSF Mentor and follow-up with them on your tutoring plan. (Cs may get degrees but not jobs or entrance into grad school!).
- D. The Foundation understands that Scholars may encounter academic difficulties, but we expect you to seek assistance. If you have a bad semester, **do not be embarrassed about it** – seek appropriate help and let us know what you are doing or need from SSF to improve your performance. Communication is the key – if we do not know we cannot help.
- E. You should also contact your academic faculty advisor on campus and/or your student support organization or college's advising office. Ask your SSF Team Leader and Team Members for suggestions. Many Smith Scholars tutor other Scholars as part of their volunteer work. Whatever you do, **do not ignore the problem.**
- F. Tutoring is a two-way street. **Returning Scholars who are not taking tutoring should offer to tutor your fellow Scholars and sign up to provide tutoring.** Many colleges pay tutors. This is a great way to pay it forward, earn volunteer hours, make helpful contacts, and money.

NOTES:

1. Tutoring forms are located in Scholar Café.
2. Send completed forms to Team Leaders each month. Attach copies of your forms to your Re-Application.
3. Student Support Services are awesome; use them. Sign up ASAP.
4. Communication – Smith Mentor, Campus Team Leader, academic advisor.
5. Remember that time management is a key component to academic success.

XV. COUNSELING

- A. Smith Scholars are chosen not just for their academic achievement, but for their ability to overcome obstacles that other students use as an excuse for failing to continue their education. The transition to college is stressful for all students today. For Smith Scholars it is often the first time Scholars can focus on their own lives. Their role in the family must change from caring for family, working to support family, to using their energy and talents to better their own lives and future by obtaining an education.
- B. To help treat the stress of college and manage past events that have shaped each Scholar, the Foundation requires Freshmen Scholars to actively engage in counseling. Most schools and county health clinics, as well as many faith-based or minority support organizations, offer free counseling. (Scholars must sign up and participate in counseling and continue therapy as prescribed or attend sessions a minimum of once a month the entire Freshman year.)
- C. A contact booklet has been created listing available university counseling services. This list is posted on Forms in Scholar Café. If the Scholar cannot obtain needed services at school, community, faith-based, private treatment, using student's medical insurance and needs to arrange for alternative care contact a Smith Staff member quickly. Currently, Pathway now offers Counseling at no cost to Smith Scholars who have been unable to secure appropriate assistance.

SSF currently contracts with Pathway Healthcare, an independent third-party provider to pay the cost of each participant's sessions, but Pathway Healthcare maintains the patient/client confidential relationship with the students.

- D. The personnel and staffing of these offices have extensive experience working with students and will discuss your situation with you and offer suggestions that will help keep you on track. Academic success is dependent on many factors and an honest conversation with a professional therapist/counselor and your academic advisor should help you analyze areas in which you may be experiencing trouble.
- E. All Freshmen Scholars must submit counseling forms as instructed. These forms should include confirmation of your attendance and the non-case specific, general goals and recommendation of the counselor/therapist on a counseling attendance plan. (**Note:** If your counseling plan states "as needed," Scholars are required to attend at least one session each month). All Scholars must agree to counseling as a condition to receiving the scholarship award. (See Scholar Café for Proof of Counseling Form).

NOTES:

1. **Requirement.** Sign up for counseling as soon as you can and begin participating in your fall freshmen semester.
2. Submit proof of attendance and general goals of your plan.
3. The provider will ask why you need counseling. Do not put that it is required by SSF. Instead, be honest and list reasons personal to you; test anxiety, first generation college student, past negative experiences that impact you, abuse, abandonment, illness, parental issues, depression, lack of self-confidence, even anger and procrastination issues, are real reasons to seek assistance. All of these experiences affect your mental well-being and academic success.
4. Scholars are responsible for obtaining counseling. Smith will assist, but ultimately, it is the Scholar's individual **responsibility** to obtain and continue therapy.
5. After completion of the Freshman year counseling attendance is voluntary. Scholars are encouraged to continue attending counseling. Students on probation may be required to return as part of their reinstatement plan.

XVI. CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC EXPERIENCES (Expand your world view and appreciation of art, food, religion celebrations, and more!)

SSF encourages its Scholars to take advantage of the many opportunities on or near their campus. College is more than academics. To make sure Scholars take the time to engage in these meaningful activities, attendance requirements are included as part of scholarship renewal.

- A. SSF maintains a program to enhance your educational experience by exposing you to a broad range of cultural and artistic events. Exposure to art, dance, religious celebrations, cultural, and social interactions aid you in understanding others who are different from you. Teams are encouraged to attend such events together and to support fellow Scholars who are engaged in the arts programs.
- B. Cultural Events Directors – To assist in expanding opportunities for Smith Scholars to engage in new experiences, Cultural Events Directors may be utilized to engage and increase both Team and Foundation sponsored events.
 - 1. Directors will work with Team Leader to arrange cultural and ethnic celebrations events on or near campus.
 - 2. Foundation-wide special events will also be planned by the Directors. These events typically include Broadway plays, Art Exhibitions, International Dance Shows, and interactive or immersive experiences.
 - 3. Scholars must respond to Team Leaders, Staff and Directors in a timely manner. Respond to the individual who sent the email, text, or phone call.
- C. Scholars must attend (in person) **3** of the following events. If the event is a major cultural event sponsored by the Foundation attendance may be mandatory to ensure student involvement for Foundation pre-purchased tickets. Pick 3:
 - 1. Music performance.
 - 2. Dance performance.
 - 3. Theater performance.
 - 4. Multi-cultural event.
 - 5. An Art exhibition.
 - 6. Attendance at a religious celebration outside your own faith.

******* REQUIRED *******

- D. Document your attendance by preparing a short-written evaluation about the event and how it affected you.
- E. This requirement continues for each year a Scholar receives funding from SSF.

NOTES:

1. Enjoy Cultural and Artistic Opportunities
2. Attend 3 of the listed 6 required events, individually or with your Team.
3. Attend Team Events at your university.
4. Attend Foundation sponsored events.
5. Studying is important, but to be well-rounded, Scholars must socialize and explore cultural opportunities.
6. **Penalties:** Failure to complete these requirements will result in deductions from funding, probation or termination.

XVII. PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM

- A. Freshmen are encouraged to attend the Professional Seminar, skills clinics, and workshops offered by their respective schools and begin exploring business training skills necessary for securing employment.
- B. By the sophomore year, Scholars must complete career evaluation at their college career center. If this is not available, SSF will work with you to obtain this evaluation.
- C. By the junior year, all Scholars must complete an internship, co-op, student teaching or approved intensive shadowing prior to the first semester of their senior year.
- D. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors who desire to participate in the SSF/ Internship Assistance Program should sign up for the Smith Professional Program. Only those Scholars who successfully complete the Internship Program requirements will be eligible for suits, stipends, internship, and job placement assistance. (See Sign-up Form in Scholar Café). Participants will follow a set of best practices to prepare for Internships and entrance into a professional career field.
- E. Only those Scholars who voluntarily comply with these requirements will be eligible for assistance in obtaining internships, co-op, and job placement or financial assistance for living and travel expenses incurred in interviews and non-paying positions. The Director of Internships and Staff expend a lot of time and effort in both preparation training and using their professional contacts to enhance students' skills and obtain opportunities for employment. They put their hard-earned professional reputation on the line with every recommendation they make or position they secure for a Smith Scholar.

The program is voluntary, but once a Scholar requests admission to the program, they should maintain their commitment consistently through graduation.

NOTES:

Sign up for Professional Program to take advantage of skills coaching, workshops, and more. Universities and Business and NFP organizations offer free training.

XVIII. VOLUNTEER WORK

1. Volunteer work enhances a Scholar's experience with people who need our assistance and is primary in Smith's mission to "pay it forward."
2. Teams are encouraged to participate together in volunteer activities.
3. Your selected community service must be approved in advance by SSF Staff if you are NOT volunteering for a charitable not-for-profit organization. Also obtain pre-approval for volunteer work-related to major for juniors and seniors. (See Scholar's Café for Volunteer Pre-Approval and Documentation Form).

How Many Hours?

- A. Freshmen must complete 5 hours of volunteer work each semester (10 annually). All other Scholars must complete 10 hours of volunteer work during the fall and 10 hours during the spring semesters for a total of 20 hours per year. These are minimum hours. Smith encourages Scholars to find volunteer work they are passionate about and become engaged in meaningful activities to help others.
- B. Beginning your junior year, 10 of your 20 volunteer hours should be related to your major or career path. Submit the Volunteer approval form to make sure your intended volunteer work fulfills this requirement. This requirement will assist in networking and creating opportunities to meet others in your work field while serving those who need your talents.
- C. Documentation of your volunteer work should be attached to your Re-Application. Collect the documentation when you engage in the work monthly. Several on-line trackers are available, but a form is located in Scholar's Café.
- D. Complete all volunteer work before **May 15**. Re-apps are due June 1st with all attachments. Students are not allowed to make up missing hours after May 15th cutoff date. **Penalties:** Avoid deductions from funding for failure to complete.

NOTES:

1. Pay it Forward. Volunteer.
2. Document monthly and
3. Complete all volunteer hours by May 15.
Freshmen 10 hours;
Sophomore 20 hours;
Juniors 20 hours with 10 in major/profession
Senior 20 hours with 10 in major/profession
4. **Penalties:** Students who do not fulfill requirements may be placed on probation, have funding withheld in whole or in part.

XIX. COMMUNICATION - A TOP PRIORITY – CHECK EMAIL EVERY DAY!

- A. Email Address. You will receive regular emails during your college career from the Foundation. Some of these communications will relate to important administrative matters requiring your immediate response. Forward your school email to your personal email or even your texting function. The Foundation will monitor your receipt of emails. *It is imperative that you Acknowledge and Respond if necessary to these communications. **Communication is the number 1 guideline violation.*** We know you love your phone! Use it to check emails before watching Instagrams, cat videos, or X.
- B. Team Leaders/Mentors. It is required that all Scholars communicate with their SSF College Team Leader on a weekly basis and Foundation Mentor at least monthly. Make contact with Leader/Mentor to share good news, bad news, ask for help, or brag a little. Team Leaders need to make certain you are attending classes, tutoring, counseling, healthy or sick. They can help if you need assistance. It is their job to support you and identify any needs for Smith.
- C. Use the Update Form and Mark Changes in email, phone number, address, etc. on RFP.

NOTES:

We will ask college police to make a welfare check if you repeatedly fail to respond because we want to know “you aren’t lying dead in a ditch somewhere.” We actually care that you are healthy, safe, and have what you need. For some of you this is a new concept...get used to it!

XX. KEEP IT CURRENT

1. Financial Information Updates to SSF: Financial aid – amounts, changes; scholarships – new or lost; financial circumstances impacting you; and checking account information.
 2. Email address.
 3. Personal cell phone number and provider (for texting) and permanent (usually hometown) phone number, a separate contact.
 4. On campus address.
 5. Permanent (usually hometown) mailing address or the SSF office. If you do not want information or items delivered to your home address, please advise when listing it or list only your school contact.
- A. All Scholars may use the Foundation Office address of 400 Caldwell Trace, Birmingham, AL 35242, as their permanent or home address for school notifications. We will send the mail to you or scan it, so it remains secure and not lost.
- B. Respond. **Please acknowledge receipt of emails and communication sent by Staff to the Staff member who sent the email or correspondence.** Do not respond to a different staff member. It will be lost, forgotten, miscommunicated, or mutilated. You may cc: or copy others on your response. Urist is not a personal secretary. You may copy him, but please do not tell him something and expect him to send the message for you.

NOTES:

1. Update contact information
2. Update financial information
3. Respond to emails promptly. Check daily.
4. Respond to sender of email. cc: Mentor

Penalties: Failure to respond to sender will lead to reductions in funding.

XXI. CONTACTING THE FOUNDATION

- A. If you need assistance, please contact the Foundation office by email. Your communication will receive a response within three (3) business days. If you have received no response within that time, call the Foundation office to confirm that your email was received. It is important that you monitor your email for confirmation that the Foundation actually received your communication.
- B. If the need is **urgent**, call the Foundation office during office hours at 205-202-4076 (9:00 am – 5:00 pm).
- C. Emails should contain information so Smith can understand what you need. Be sure to include: who, what, where, why, and any steps you have taken to address the situation. List names, dates, and phone numbers to help the staff respond.
- D. Mentors are devoted, kind people. Please do not abuse them. Be considerate of their time. Mentors are not your assistants or personal secretaries. Be self-sufficient, be bold. Do not ask Mentors to do things you should do yourself as an accountable, young adult. Make the phone call, visit the person, respond promptly to inquiries from your school or the Foundation. It is not your Mentor's job to fill out your forms. Asking for advice, after you have put forth effort, is encouraged, but Scholars must learn to do many new things themselves. Welcome to the adult world of Red-Tape.
- E. Happy News: We encourage phone calls and emails to celebrate honors, awards, good news, or just happy day items. There does not have to be a problem to communicate. It is nice to just have a hello or update.
- F. Visits to the Foundation Office are welcome! Please let us know you are coming so we can provide you with uninterrupted attention.

XXII. PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Welcome to the Adult World. The Foundation does not accept telephone calls or emails from parents, guardians, caregivers, uncles, aunts, pastors, mailmen, etc. Unless an emergency situation exists, we expect to communicate with you directly. This will be a time of transition for you from high school to college. You will need to take responsibility for your education.

XXIII. HOUSING

- A. Due to safety and budget concerns, all Scholars must live on campus all four years of undergraduate study. SSF Scholars are required to live on campus to receive funding for housing and meals. Students at JSU and Troy must reside in the Smith Scholar designated accommodations. Request assistance from SSF if needed. Student's delay or "unavailability" letter from college does not waive residential requirement.
- B. Apply each year at the first available opportunity for on campus housing.
- C. Serving as a Residence Assistant ("RA") is an excellent way to ensure you have dorm accommodations. It is a strong leadership position and often provides single room accommodation. SSF encourages Scholars to apply for this position as it pays for your housing and is a valuable leadership experience. Scholars serving as RAs will qualify for leadership stipends through their university in recognition of their unpaid student work.
- D. Multiple or double occupancy in lowest cost dorm. Single rooms or high-cost dorm options are not eligible for Smith funding.
- E. SSF does not pay for single room cost outside ADA accommodation without a written document or medical prescription situation. Registration with Student Services for accommodation at your university is required. Cost exceeding student's award must be covered by student.
- F. Off-campus housing will be at the Scholar's personal cost, and the Scholar will still be limited to working no more than 15 hours per week.
- G. Living Off Campus
 - 1. Students participating in co-ops or internships away from their school area outside of reasonable commuting distances. Request for Internship Assistance can be made, but stipends are limited and discretionary.
 - 2. Students who live off campus will automatically give up their housing portion of the Smith Scholarship.

***NOTES:**

- 1. On-campus, multi-occupancy, lowest cost dorm.
- 2. Several universities do not guarantee on-campus housing. It is the Scholar's responsibility to determine if adequate housing is offered. This is a necessary consideration if the Scholar plans to use Smith funding for housing cost. Smith Foundation has negotiated guaranteed housing with JSU and Troy.

XXIV. WORKING WHILE IN SCHOOL

- A. Scholars are required to work up to, but no more than 15 hours per week. The Foundation's policy is to have all Scholars maintain good grades and experience campus activities offered by the Scholar's university such as newspaper, yearbook, broadcasting, performing arts, political clubs, intramural athletics, and professional organizations. Studies show part-time jobs 15 hours actually help students organize and manage time more successfully.
- B. There is no limit or prohibition on working during summer break or holidays. SSF Scholars are expected to work during these breaks to provide funds for incidental expenses. Funds generated by Scholars should only be expended for a Scholar's support and benefit and may not be used for support of family expenses. Save these funds for Study Abroad and unexpected expenses.
- C. On Campus Employment
1. All Scholars are required to apply for work study or campus jobs as soon as possible at your Financial Aid Office each year. Even if you do not meet the requirements for work study, there are usually other on campus jobs available if you apply early. Be persistent, check job boards, for updates.
 2. On campus jobs allow more flexible hours than commercial jobs. They also provide spending money for incidental expenses while helping you make contacts with department heads and staff. Always befriend the department secretary. She is the real gate keeper.
- D. Off Campus Employment
- Off campus jobs during the semester are discouraged as these jobs require transportation and can lead to working conditions that are not conducive to the Scholar's safety and studying.
- E. Audit
- SSF reserves the right to audit student's work hours by requiring copies of documentation to determine if student has exceeded limits. Penalties or reduction in funding will be made if student exceed approved workload. Students who work Summer positions that reduce Pell Grant amounts may have reduction in funding.

Notes:

1. All Scholars work up to 15 hours on campus.
2. Scholars cannot exceed 15 hours while school is in session.
3. No limit during breaks.
4. Do not send money home. This can result in loss or reduction of scholarship.
5. **Penalties:** For exceeding 15 hours, reduced funding, probation, termination.

XXV. SUMMER SCHOOL – SUMMER CLASS FUNDING FORM REQUIRED

April 15th is the deadline to make request.

- A. SSF does not typically provide summer funding unless there is a reason related to the Scholar's major for taking the class in the summer, improve GPA, prerequisite class, only time class is taught. (See Scholar Café for Request for Summer Funding Form).
- B. If you need to attend summer school these classes can be taken at a community or junior college to reduce cost **if classes will transfer**. If the Scholar receives a Summer Pell, the cost may be offset at the primary college. Calculate the options. (Currently 6 hours of classes are required for Pell).
- C. Summer funding is limited to total annual funding. Approval of Re-Application is also required before disbursement of payment is made.
- D. Approval of summer classes does not obligate Smith to provide housing accommodations or funding.

NOTES:

Summer School Requires:

1. Pre-Approval Form with attachments; April 15th is deadline for Pre-Approval Form.
2. Schedule approved by Urist;
3. RFP; Use of Summer Pell, if available;
4. Funding limited to remaining annual funding limit.
5. Re-Application Form must be submitted and approved before funding is disbursed.

XXVI. TRANSFERS TO ANOTHER COLLEGE

- A. Students accepting a scholarship must use their Smith Scholar award at the university for which they were assigned during their initial year in the SSF program.
- B. Scholars may request transfers upon completion of their freshman year. Approval for such requests is at the **sole discretion of the Foundation**. Factors that will be considered include:
 - 1. GPA of 3.0 or higher.
 - 2. Major or concentration in degree availability.
 - 3. Research, and internship opportunities. (See Scholars Café for Request to Transfer Form.)
 - 4. Funding from Smith Foundation will be limited to cost paid at initial college.
- C. Scholars will be responsible for complying with requirements for admission and entrance to the new institution. Students are responsible for all academic procedures and obtaining verification that credits will transfer. Any delay in graduation due to changing schools or loss of school scholarships will be economic costs assumed by the student. Requests for exemption from this policy will be made but are rarely granted unless the transfer is due to academic requirements.
- D. Scholars are given greater latitude in Graduate School selection.

NOTES:

Example: if a student attends school A and receives a Smith Scholarship payment of \$5,000 and has a \$2,000 school scholarship then transfers to school B that provides no school scholarships, the Scholar's Smith Scholarship is still limited to \$5,000. Budgets are adopted when a Scholar enters a college program based on the cost of attendance at that college.

XXVII. FOUNDATION PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

- A. The Foundation hosts seminars aimed at providing support for new college scholars, and professional and career-oriented workshops. At these programs, the upperclassmen have a chance to meet new Scholars and give practical suggestions on classes and volunteer opportunities. New Scholars also receive valuable information about the nature of Smith Scholarship and what is expected from them to continue their scholarships.
- B. When SSF hosts an event, it is our hope and desire that the Scholars will use this time to their advantage and use it as an opportunity to network with other Scholars, Directors, Trustees, and Alumni of the Foundation. Since these events attract a large number of our Scholars, plus 1, family and friends are not allowed at these functions. If guests are allowed, the invitation will specify and request RSVP.
- C. Your attendance at select functions may be **mandatory**. These dates will be published in advance. Request for waivers or to arrive late or leave early must be made to the Executive Director in writing. Please note exceptions will not be made for work, sorority, fraternity functions or vacations. (See Scholar Café for Waiver Request Form). Only the Executive Director is authorized to grant a waiver.

XXVIII. BEHAVIOR AND ATTIRE AT PROGRAMS, SEMINARS AND EVENTS

A. Behavior

1. Scholars are reminded to show professional respect to program speakers. **Ear-pods, laptops, iPads, electronic readers, or other similar devices are not allowed at Foundation events unless they are utilized as part of a seminar activity.**
2. Do not study or do other homework during Foundation events.
3. Any Scholar or their guest who appears under the influence will be asked to leave notwithstanding legal age.
4. Texting or phone use is prohibited to allow Scholars to concentrate on in-person interaction with other Scholars physically present.

B. Attire

Appropriate attire at these events will be indicated in the information you receive. Even if the attire states casual, please do not wear clothing that is revealing. Cover up and pull your pants up. No booty shorts or midriffs, see-through or provocative clothing. No “wife beater” shirts or slogans, pictures that are disruptive or disrespectful. No hats, visors, do-rags, or curlers are permitted.

Ethnic headwear or hairstyles are acceptable. You are a Smith Honor Student, and that makes you a Foundation representative.

NOTES:

T-shirts are often provided at events. If you need appropriate attire for any Smith or school event, do not hesitate to ask the Foundation staff.

C. Alcohol & Illegal Drugs

1. No person may have or consume alcoholic beverages, or any intoxicating substances, at any Smith event, seminar, or team activity (marijuana, mushrooms, illegal drugs).
2. Possession of alcoholic beverages or illegal substances at events including in a Scholar’s or guest’s car, no matter where the vehicle is parked, is prohibited.

D. Smoking/Vaping/Chewing

Smoking any type of tobacco product intended to mimic tobacco products or the smoking or vaping of any other substance is not permitted at or near any event site, including balconies, porches, etc. This includes, but is not limited to cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, smokeless tobacco, electronic cigarettes, pipes, bidis, and hookahs.

XXIX. ORIENTATION/BOOT CAMP

- A. The Foundation holds an orientation session, affectionately known as “Boot Camp” where freshmen Scholars receive valuable information about the SSF program:
1. How to request funding, compliance requirements and extensive review of guidelines.
 2. At the same meeting, Foundation representatives, as well as educational professionals, discuss development of effective study skills to help a Scholar make the most of the educational opportunity offered by the Foundation.
 3. Attendance at the orientation is mandatory for freshmen, Team Leaders, Scholars and upperclassmen when instructed. Upperclassmen and graduate students are often required to present or assist in the program.
- B. No waivers are granted for boot camp freshmen.
- This is a requirement and the date for this event is included in the application, interview, and acceptance materials.
- C. All attendees should bring a set of mismatched socks and a wooden clothespin to Boot Camp.
- D. If a Scholar is late, fails to attend or demonstrates poor, combative or negative attitude or fails to participate in the program, the Scholar's scholarship may be terminated. The SSF scholarship and accountability program is not always a fit for students even when they have been carefully selected. If it becomes apparent that the student is not following rules or actively participating with enthusiasm, SSF reserves the right to modify or event terminate the student's award.

NOTES:

1. Boot camp is fun, not scary.
2. Officially no hazing.
3. Lots of good information and friendly Scholars.
4. No excused absence for freshmen. Arrive early.

XXX. HOLIDAY PARTY – Celebrate together

A holiday party is typically held each year during December. This is an opportunity for you to meet and mingle with the Directors, Team Leaders, Foundation staff, other Scholars, as well as SSF alumni. This event often includes an Ugly Sweater competition with prizes and awards and includes a large array of food.

This gathering is unlike any other event and ranks as one of the favorite events of alumni.

XXXI. WAIVERS

If you anticipate a conflict with any mandatory Foundation event, you must obtain a Waiver to excuse the absence from the Foundation.

- A. Your written request must be submitted to the Executive Director. Remember that decision regarding an excused absence can only be granted by the Executive Director; this decision will take into account input from you, Team Leader and Mentor and will always be communicated to you in writing. You may be required to make up your time or substitute an activity as part of the waiver. (See Scholar Café for Waiver Form).
- B. Scholars' attendance at events is very important. Your interaction builds social skills for professional networking. Other Scholars depend on your presence as well. You are important to the success of each event.

NOTES:

1. Waivers required for Mandatory Foundation or Team events.
2. Executive Director makes determination in writing.
3. We need your attendance at events! You make the party! You are important to the success at each event.

XXXII. TEAM LEADERS

- A. It is an honor to be selected as Team Leader. A team leader or co-leaders will be selected for each university. Team Leaders are the first level of support within the SSF Foundation. Let them know if you need assistance for tutoring, study advice for specific professors, finding or sharing books, organizing ride shares to travel to Foundation Events or home.
1. Team Leaders are responsible for mentoring and encouraging team cohesiveness.
 2. Team Leaders will notify team members of opportunities or planned events to fulfill cultural and volunteer requirements.
 3. Team Leaders will also contact each Scholar each month to establish the Scholar's well-being both academically and physically.
 4. Team Leaders are also responsible for reporting Scholars' attendance at tutoring and counseling for freshmen.
 5. Selection for Team Leader is a Leadership Role with advisory responsibilities and leaders are eligible to receive leadership stipends based upon the fulfillment of their duties (See Team Leader Handbook).
 6. Scholars must maintain contact and communication with their Team Leader(s). Team Leaders can assist in providing advice and follow-up if you need guidance or help.
 7. Scholars must communicate and respond promptly to Team Leaders. Interaction is necessary to plan events and make reports on team members' well-being.

NOTES:

1. Respond to Team Leaders promptly.
2. Failure to respond or participate in required Team Events is a violation of guidelines. **Penalties:** Repeated failure may result in deductions from funding.
3. Your Team needs your interaction!

XXXIII. STUDY ABROAD

Scholars are encouraged to obtain scholarships and other funding to participate in Study Abroad Programs. Many are available through university departments and Student Support such as TRIO. Scholars may travel using these other scholarships at any time and are still eligible for Smith Study Abroad Funding.

- A. Juniors and seniors who have a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA and desire to study abroad are eligible for \$4,000 Smith Study Abroad Scholarship. Internships in the Scholar's major or mission work for medical/healthcare majors may also qualify.
- B. Sophomores – Nurses/Health Studies. Nurses and health students have the option to engage in medical mission or volunteer work abroad or in lieu of study abroad classes. Plans for these trips need to be made before required clinicals commence in your junior year.
- C. The Foundation awards an additional payment of up to \$4,000 for Study Abroad expenses.
Example: \$20,000 award – Annual Smith Award Limit
 \$15,000 used for fall/spring
 \$5,000 remaining applied to Study Abroad
 + \$4,000 Additional funding from Smith.
 \$9,000 funding for summer study abroad

This payment is combined with any remaining annual award or if the program extends for a semester Scholars may also use their semester funding.

Scholars must request approval for Study Abroad and complete request and budget forms. Start early and submit your request with supporting documentation as early as possible.

NOTES:

1. Study Abroad is a major opportunity – use it.
2. 3.0 or better GPA.
3. Approval by Mentor/Executive Director
4. Experience of a lifetime!

XXXIV. SELECTING A MAJOR

- A. All SSF Scholars are encouraged to pursue general studies during their freshmen year. Even if you have selected a career, it is important to learn all the classes, labs, clinicals requirements for their major and confirm it as something you desire to pursue.
- B. Stick to general requirements to avoid taking unnecessary classes that may not be required once you select a major. Be open-minded and prepared to re-evaluate your initial choice of major.
- C. Weed out classes exist for many majors. Even good students find these classes to be a stopping point. Expect to encounter these classes and simply modify your original plan as needed. These classes are intended to redirect students to other occupations that are a better fit for the student's own skills and talents.
- D. Most colleges do not require a declaration of major until the second semester of sophomore year.
- E. Consult career services early in your academic studies. Just because everyone expects you to be something does not justify you being miserable.

NOTES:

The record for changing majors is 10.

Scholars often have a preconceived idea of their major.

By exploring other careers, you may discover a better fit.

Everyone wants to be a doctor until they take organic/inorganic chemistry.

XXXV. DEGREE AUDIT

- A. Second semester Sophomores should submit a degree/graduation audit form, degree checklist, (each school has different names for this form or online program).
- B. Have it signed by your college academic advisor and must confirm that the Scholar is on track for graduation within the prescribed time allotment or will need to take an additional semester or summer sessions.
- C. Degree audits for your junior and senior year are also required and should be submitted with Scholar's reapplication.

NOTES:

Degree Audits have multiple titles depending on your school. Graduation checklist is another common name.

XXXVI. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- A. Once you have entered college, it is anticipated that you will be physically in attendance each consecutive semester, except summers, until you utilize all your Smith Foundation award or complete your degree, whichever comes first. If a Scholar is absent from school for a school-approved activity such as volunteer or learning experience, study abroad, or internship program that does not last longer than one year, the scholarship will remain available for the full remaining award and the time absent does not count against the scholarship when the Scholar returns. A Co-Op/Internship Form relaying such information should be filled out and your ongoing schedule discussed with your SSF Mentor.
- B. If you find that some extraordinary circumstance makes it necessary for you to leave college for a period of time, you may request a leave of absence from the Smith Foundation. You should make your request in writing to your Smith Foundation Mentor **AND** the Executive Director. You should state in your written request the reasons why you need to leave school, how long you will be away, and when you plan to return. If your request is granted by the Executive Director, you will receive a written reply that provides you with information regarding the reinstatement of your Smith Scholar award when you return to campus.
- C. It will be the Scholar's responsibility to complete the necessary forms with their university for the leave of absence and obtain approval for other scholarship extensions.

A leave of absence form is located in Scholar Café (See Scholar Café for Leave of Absence Form).

XXXVII. GRADUATE FUNDING

- A. Graduate Funding may be available but only to select Scholars with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0. (Most respected programs require 3.0).
- B. Scholars may apply for Graduate Funding after the end of their Junior year, **but not later than April 1st** of the year in which funding is requested for Fall enrollment.
- C. Graduate funding depends on a number of factors:
 - o The current and anticipated SSF overall budget;
 - o The nature of the Scholar's academic program;
 - o The diligence with which the Scholar has pursued their course of study;
 - o The total cost of funds expended on the Scholar's undergraduate studies, and
 - o Leadership and enthusiastic participation in SSF programs.
 - o Compliance with guidelines and Foundation mission.
- D. Applications for Graduate Studies are available in the form section of the Scholars Café. Graduate Funding is discretionary, and applications will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Seniors submitting Grad Applications must complete a Re-App. (See Scholar Café for Graduate Application Form). Re-Applications must be submitted as directed by award letters.
- E. Graduate funding and expectations will be outlined on Award Letters.
- F. Grants and scholarships may be made for educational expenses. If a Graduate Scholar is employed, grants, or forgivable loans will only be considered if the demonstrated financial need is documented.
- G. All Graduate Scholars are required to contribute to their own expenses by utilizing their own funds, third party loans, other scholarships, and/or Smith zero-interest, forgivable loans.
- H. Scholars receiving Graduate Funding are considered Smith Scholars for all purposes and must attend mandatory functions and comply with the Foundation's rules and procedures throughout the Graduate Funding period. Graduate scholars must submit a Graduate RFP at the start of each semester for funding payment and assist the Foundation in leadership roles when requested.
- I. Graduate/Professional School Test Costs: Scholars with high GPAs of 3.0 or more who have been outstanding and enthusiastic in their participation with SSF programs and maintained full compliance with all requirements are eligible for payment of these tests. Pre-approval is required, and a cost budget must be approved.

XXXVIII. FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES

Smith Scholars are not allowed to pledge to social fraternities or sororities during their freshman year. This rule has been implemented by request of previous Scholars. These organizations require extensive financial and time commitments. SSF does not pay initiation fees or dues for Scholars to be members of social fraternities or sororities.

XXXIX. HONOR SOCIETIES/PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Smith Scholars are encouraged to join professional and honor societies that will assist in networking and job placement. Request for assistance in paying dues for these organizations should be made with an RFP. Investigate any nominations received to ensure the organization is credible and will actually prove beneficial. Ask your professor/advisor about the group before requesting payment from SSF. Pre-approval of all such costs is required. Scholars should utilize remaining book or other SSF stipends before RFP is made.

XL. COMPUTERS

- A. SSF Scholars may be assigned computers by the Foundation. Computers are for academic school use and **SUBJECT TO MONITORING BY YOUR UNIVERSITY AND SSF**. Scholars who do not complete 2 years of the SSF Program will be required to return the SSF computers.
- B. Scholars whose computers are damaged or stolen will be responsible for repairs or replacement if the student's actions were negligent. Contact SSF immediately if your device experiences malfunctions to enable warranty repairs. Repairs not covered by warranty are at discretion of SSF. Password protection and malware software should remain installed at all times.
- C. Protect your computer like it is your phone. Do not let others use it or carry it. Always pack it with care and do not let the overzealous "move in" volunteers touch it!

XLI. CIVILITY AND COURTESY AND GOOD MANNERS

The staff and volunteers of the Smith Foundation are dedicated to providing assistance and encouragement at all levels of your college experience. Treat all university instructors, school administrators, financial aid staff, and members of the Foundation with civility, courtesy, and respect. Attitude is important in the professional world. Please practice politeness and demonstrate maturity in all communications whether verbal, email, and even text. Honesty, integrity, and complete disclosure are required of every Scholar. Manipulation of the guidelines or funding process, school rules, or taking unfair advantage of those who are assisting you will not be tolerated.

XLII. INTEGRITY/CREDIBILITY

Each Scholar represents the Smith Foundation. Your individual actions reflect on the entire Foundation and its credibility with both the academic and professional community. Think before you speak and conduct yourself with pride and dignity. Never compromise your integrity because you are accountable for your own actions. Failure to exercise civility, courtesy, integrity, or lying, and/or misleading, intentionally or by omission, Foundation staff or university staff can lead to loss of scholarship.

Please remember being a Smith Scholar is about something more than just you.

XLIII. SMITH SCHOLARSHIP AWARD AND THE IRS

- A. Under current tax law, certain portions of grants and scholarships may be taxable as income if a student is required to file a tax return. To assist with this calculation, your university may provide you annually with a 1098-T form. SSF is not required to provide a 1098-T or report amounts distributed to individual Scholars other than information discussed in its annual 990 PF filing.
- B. All recipients of Smith Scholarship award can obtain IRS Publication 970 or its equivalent each year for governmental guidance. You can obtain this publication via the internet (www.irs.gov).
- C. Throughout the year, you should save receipts from all tuition and fee billings from your university, along with receipts for all supplies that are required. If you have any questions about the tax status of your scholarship, you should contact a tax professional. Neither the Foundation nor the financial aid office at your university can answer questions or provide advice regarding tax matters.

XLIV. ADHERENCE TO GUIDELINES

- A. Scholars who try to manipulate guidelines for their personal benefit or try to use guidelines as justification for asking for additional funding or changes to requirements (grades, housing, re-application) or failure to comply with requirements will not be tolerated. Argumentative, threatening, abusive, or demanding conduct concerning application of guidelines to student can result in probation or termination.
- B. Personal interpretation to justify actions, requests, or demands will not be viewed favorably. Genuine request for further explanation is welcomed when appropriate; however, SSF will not and is not required to justify its guidelines.
- C. Scholars agreed to accept and abide by these rules, as amended, in accepting their award. This program of accountability is not for all students. If you determine you cannot or will not follow the guidelines, please resign and allow another student their opportunity to participate.

XLV. RE-APPLICATION PROCESS

Scholars must submit a re-application at the end of Spring semester **no later than June 1st**. Scholars will be provided with a fillable form or online form to be completed. Guideline requirements provide details on the items contained in the Re-Application. Distribution of summer or mini-term funding cannot be made until the Re-Application is approved to confirm Scholar is in compliance with annual requirements.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Scholars participating in the Professional Program should submit additional documentation outlined for completion of additional grants or services offered under that Program.

I have received and reviewed the Policies and Guidelines of the J. Craig & Page T. Smith Scholarship Foundation, Inc. d/b/a Smith Scholarship Foundation, Inc. **(revised May 2026)**. I agree to abide by the terms and conditions of the Foundation Guidelines.

Date: _____

Scholar Signature

Scholar Name Printed

These guidelines are subject to change as determined by the Foundation's officers in their sole discretion to continue to uphold the policies, goals, and standards of the Foundation. Scholars to abide by **current guidelines** containing updates and changes made subsequent to the Scholar's original execution. Current guidelines are posted on the Foundation website and copies can be obtained from the Foundation office (See Scholar Café).

XLVI. ANNUAL RE-APPLICATION CHECK LIST

Deadlines for submission of re-application will be issued each year but must be submitted no later than **JUNE 1ST** of each year (unless extended by the Director).

Checklist for Re-Application.

- _____ proof of participation in student support group, TRIO, A to Z, etc., all 4 years;
- _____ self-evaluation Letter;
- _____ transcript illustrating GPA (Summer, Fall and Spring)(excluding dual enrollment);
- _____ proof of volunteer work; general and related to major;
- _____ proof of cultural and ethnic diversity events (3), including short descriptions;
- _____ proof of tutoring, if required; (all freshman and if upperclassmen if you make a "C")
- _____ proof of counseling, if required; (all freshman or if required by SSF)
- _____ list of all Foundation events attended with a short-written description;
- _____ provide proof of attendance at required Team activities and list of all Team activities by providing a short-written evaluation;
- _____ proof of dorm registration for subsequent Fall semester;
- _____ Completed FAFSA and Student Aid Report with SAI;
- _____ What is the SAI amount? _____
- _____ sophomores must declare major; update changes to major;
- _____ All sophomores, juniors, and seniors include a copy of their Degree Audit/Graduation Check List signed by their academic advisor.
- _____ Scholars participating in the Professional Success Program should submit separate documentation or evaluation forms.

Commonly used forms are available at:
<https://smithscholarships.com/home/scholar-cafe/>

XLVII. GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING THE MANDATORY ANNUAL SELF-EVALUATION LETTER

A. What is the purpose of these self-evaluation letters?

The primary purpose is to encourage Scholars to develop the habit of setting goals, developing specific plans to achieve those goals, and evaluating whether or not they have been achieved, and if not, why not. In addition, these letters enable the staff to keep up with what each Scholar is doing on an ongoing basis. Many Scholars have told us that this simple exercise is one of the most beneficial parts of the Smith Foundation Scholar Program.

B. What should my letter contain?

Generally, the letter should set some specific goals for the coming year (both academic and non-academic) and outline an action plan for how you intend to meet the goals. In addition, if this is not the first such letter you have written, you should review the goals you set in your previous letter and candidly evaluate how well you achieved those goals. If you failed to meet certain goals, it should include a discussion of why and how you intended to improve or changes you have made to original, prior goals. Many Scholars describe the activities they participated in during the school year and also tell us about awards they received or leadership activities in which they were involved. Some also include their summer plans. Include experiences that have been instrumental in your education whether personal or academic. Upperclassmen should include both a plan and steps taken to prepare for graduate school, professional school, and job searches for post graduate employment.

C. What should not be in a self-evaluation letter?

Please do **NOT** put in your self-evaluation letter information about changed financial circumstances or scholarships that have been supplemented or lost. These types of communications are important but should not be included in this letter; instead, this information should be listed in other specified areas.

D. How long should my self-evaluation letter be?

Your letter should be a minimum of two double-spaced pages. There is no maximum length, as the length of the letter may depend upon the number of individual goals and each Scholar's writing style. However, you should organize your thoughts and strive to be complete and concise. Our experience is that the requirements described above can rarely be met in less than 2-3 pages.

E. Are graduating seniors required to submit a letter?

No unless they have applied for SSF graduate funding. Although graduating seniors (or Scholars who have completed the program's undergraduate funding are not required to submit a self-evaluation letter, the Foundation certainly enjoys hearing from you. We welcome a letter from you, updating us on your recent achievements and/or future plans. Remember Alumni are important participants in assisting SSF in internships, shadowing, and job opportunities. Alumni are needed as volunteers to continue the mission of the Foundation.