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UA3/10/2 New Scholarship Program

WKU President's Office - Caboni

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Faculty and Staff,

For the past year and a half, WKU has worked to refine its scholarship offerings and increase its institutional aid through an extensive analysis of our student population. With the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) opening on October 1, we know that financial considerations are currently at the forefront of students' minds. Because of this, today we are excited to reveal a new scholarship program that allows WKU to be a larger part of the higher education conversation with students and families. I would like to share with you some of the details before making these plans public.

Below are a few highlights, effective for incoming WKU freshmen beginning fall 2020:

- We removed the ACT requirement from almost all merit-based and targeted academic scholarships.
- We increased the minimum merit scholarship award by \$1,000 to \$2,500.
- We reduced the minimum GPA requirement from 3.3 to 3.0.
- We created additional scholarship opportunities for underrepresented minority students through an expansion of the Cornelius A. Martin Scholarship.

Through these changes, WKU is making an additional \$5.2 million in scholarship funding available – an approximate 20% increase from last year. As a result, we estimate that nearly 80% of our incoming freshmen in fall 2020 will be eligible for some type of institutional scholarship aid. By comparison, that number was 39% this fall, so we are more than doubling our reach.

WKU is committed to remaining an institution of access and opportunity. With these new scholarship offerings, we increase access by decreasing cost, and we reward students' hard academic work during high school, not just their performance on a single test. WKU's own retention analyses and national research show that GPA is the best indicator of a student's likelihood of success.

By taking the bold step to expand our scholarships, we not only will increase student access, retention and graduation rates, we also will grow our university's net tuition revenue. More students will choose WKU as their higher education partner, and fewer will leave due to financial burden.

Today's scholarship plan announcement is a significant milestone for WKU. I want to thank all those who worked on this project, including leadership from the Division of Enrollment and

Student Experience, as well as partners from across campus. This important work serves as a critical component of our 10-year strategic plan, *Climbing to Greater Heights*, and supports WKU's core mission to transform the lives of students and elevate its community. For more details, please visit: <https://www.wku.edu/financialaid/scholarships/freshmen.php>. GO Tops!

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy C. Caboni".

Timothy C. Caboni