



WHITMAN COLLEGE FROM THIS MOMENT...

Aspirations for Whitman College's Future



This issue of *From This Moment* continues our series of newsletters about Whitman's plans to build on the strength of more than 125 years of academic excellence and to reinforce the value of a liberal arts education in the 21st century.

At this point in our history, the cost of higher education has risen beyond the means of many families. While Whitman cannot control many of the factors responsible for the escalating cost, in order to preserve the quality and competitiveness of our programs we must do more to meet the demand for greater technological resources, expanded depth and breadth in our academic program, and an increasingly hands-on and highly personalized student experience. These changes, however, cannot come at the expense of our collaborative learning community. If talented students are priced out of our market, everyone loses.

Increasing scholarship aid is crucial to Whitman's future — and the futures of students who dream of earning a Whitman degree.

— George S. Bridges
President

Scholarships: Creating Access and Maintaining Affordability

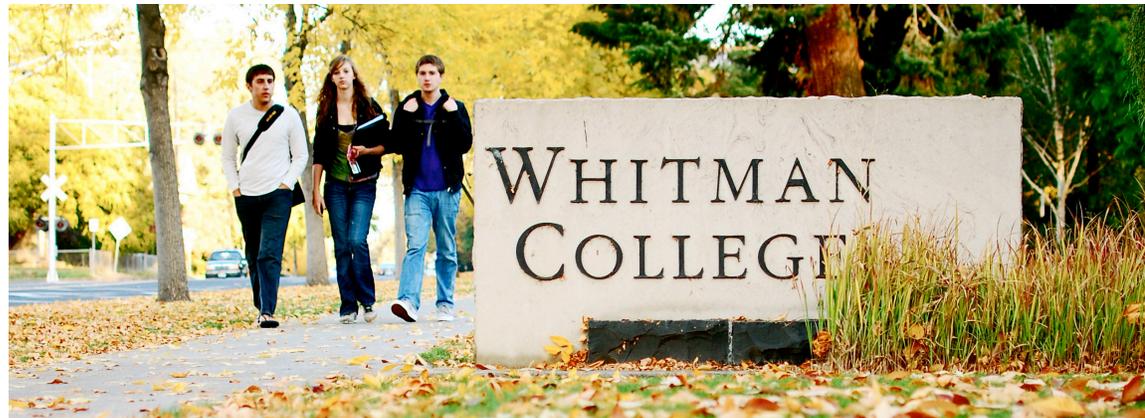
As Whitman's national reputation has flourished, our applicant pool has grown dramatically. Today, fewer than half the students who apply for admission are offered a place in the entering class. For many of the highly accomplished students who receive a coveted offer of admission, an even greater challenge remains — determining whether they can afford a Whitman education.

More than any other factor, the availability of financial aid, particularly scholarships, profoundly influences students' decisions about which school to attend. Indeed, more than one out of four of the students who are admitted, but who choose to enroll elsewhere, cite the lack of financial aid as a primary deciding factor. In order to recruit, enroll, and retain talented, high-achieving, and diverse students, Whitman must aggressively build a comprehensive financial aid program that ensures a Whitman education is accessible to all who are offered admission.

In response, Whitman has increased institutional scholarship awards significantly over the past decade. In 2010-2011, Whitman awarded over \$23 million in scholarships and the average need-based

award climbed to about \$25,000. Historically, scholarships have provided vital support for deserving students who would otherwise be unable to attend Whitman. But in an increasingly competitive market, prospective students from all backgrounds have more options and can often find greater funding at other schools. Scholarships now represent the second highest expense for Whitman — just behind the cost of providing a top-notch faculty and staff to support the education our students receive.

The need for scholarships will continue to grow in the future. Increasing Whitman's scholarship endowment will not only ensure stable assistance for deserving students, but will also mean that funds otherwise needed for scholarships can be directed to support greater depth and breadth in the curriculum and to expand other student services. We seek to increase donor support of scholarships in order to ensure that a Whitman education remains affordable.



A recipient of the First Opportunity Scholarship describes what it meant to her to receive this need-based aid:

“From the first time I visited Whitman I knew it was exactly what I wanted in a school — a beautiful, small, creative community. My parents saw that I was in love with it, but told me not to get my heart set. Without significant financial aid, Whitman simply wasn’t an option. Thus, it is because of this scholarship that I am at Whitman today. Thank you for giving me the chance to attend the school that I love.”

Need-based scholarship

Whitman has a proud tradition of supporting students from middle and lower income families. Alumni often cite the importance of the scholarship support they received and how it enabled them to complete a Whitman degree, while setting them on a course for future achievement personally and professionally.

Today, tuition, fees, room and board, books, and the additional costs of daily living can overwhelm many families — and government assistance programs have not kept pace with need. Twenty-five percent of our students come from families with incomes of less than \$50,000, and more than 80 percent of our students require financial assistance to attend Whitman.

Once a student has enrolled, we want them to grow, to thrive, and to graduate. Whitman seeks to eliminate the barriers to their graduation by not only offering compelling coursework in the liberal

arts and sciences with support from faculty mentors, but also by insuring that financial aid concerns do not derail their educational journey. Despite our policy to continue financial aid annually, about half the students who do leave Whitman prior to graduation cite financial concerns as a reason for choosing to go elsewhere.

For Whitman to continue to attract, retain, and graduate outstanding students, we must better meet our students’ financial need and reduce the amount they must borrow to attend. A Whitman education is too important and too valuable to be available only to those who have the means to attend. Increasing our resources for need-based scholarship will build a program of comprehensive financial aid that affords access to a Whitman education for all those to whom we offer admission.



Merit-based scholarship

Merit-based scholarships help us recruit and recognize students who bring particular talents or exemplary leadership skills to campus. Academic scholarships help ensure that Whitman’s small classes are filled with the brightest students. Competitive scholarships like the Garrett and Sherwood awards allow us to recognize potential leaders. Scholarships for musicians, debaters, and actors and theatre technicians attract students who will build upon Whitman’s tradition of excellence in these outstanding programs.

Among the current student body, approximately 30 percent of our students receive some portion of their financial aid package through merit scholarships. The average merit-based award was \$8,600 in 2010-2011. Merit scholarships are particularly important in Whitman’s efforts to compete for students. On average, a student admitted to Whitman is also admitted to seven other schools. It is not uncommon for these talented students to receive merit scholarships from many or all of the other schools. Today’s students often associate merit scholarship awards with how much a college wishes to have them on their campus. While we are able to demonstrate

the academic and co-curricular strength of Whitman positively in comparison with almost any school in the country, the inclusion of a merit scholarship is often influential in students’ decisions about whether or not they attend Whitman.

Percent of tuition revenue dedicated to scholarship aid

1981-82	23.1%
1991-92	30.5%
2001-02	34.4%
2011-12.....	39.5%

A theatre student studying abroad describes what his merit-based award has meant to him:

“Every day brings new challenges and new breakthroughs, causing this to be the most enriching and important experience of my life. I would not be able to attend a school such as Whitman, or to study abroad, without this scholarship, and I greatly appreciate the opportunity.”



A More Diverse Campus

Whitman College seeks to bring students to our campus whose backgrounds and experiences offer varying perspectives on living and learning in a multicultural world. That diversity — socioeconomic, ethnic, geographic, cultural and experiential — is an important part of the Whitman experience. At Whitman, first-generation students, students from small towns, and students from metropolitan districts come together to create a unique learning community. Whitman’s recent success at enrolling a more socioeconomically and ethnically diverse student body has involved a significant increase in our commitment to scholarship aid. To maintain and build upon this success, we must endow scholarships that provide access to students who contribute to our diverse community.

“Diversity is fundamentally important to the character and mission of Whitman College. Diversity enriches our community and enhances intellectual and personal growth. We seek to provide a challenging liberal arts experience for our students that prepares them for citizenship in the global community. By sustaining a diverse community, we strive to ensure that all individuals are valued and respected and that intellectual and personal growth are enriched because of our differences.”

– Whitman College Board of Trustees, 2005



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Endowment provides stability and growth for the scholarship program

Of the impressive \$23 million in scholarships awarded by the College to Whitman students last year, only 30 percent came from endowed funds. While some current-use gifts contributed to the effort, the majority of scholarship support came from the College's general operating budget. Increasing the proportion of scholarship aid that is permanently endowed is of paramount importance to the stability and growth of Whitman's scholarship program.

Endowing our scholarship program will also help level the playing field between Whitman and the schools with which we compete most frequently for students. In addition, it will allow us to direct funds to other important aspects of Whitman's innovative education in the liberal arts and sciences.

We must make Whitman more accessible and affordable. The world needs people with the skills and values like those cultivated by the liberal arts education offered at

Whitman. Investments in Whitman College students will pay dividends for years to come through our graduates' leadership in business, education, the arts, science, non-profit organizations and government service.

Stay informed about our initiatives and our progress on the Whitman website, in the Whitman Magazine, and through future issues of this newsletter. You, our alumni and friends, are our partners in achieving our vision for Whitman, including the plan to ensure access and affordability for current and future Whitman students.

Questions or comments:
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