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News Release

UW System announces Wisconsin Regents Opportunity Scholarship

MADISON, Wis.—The new Wisconsin Regents Opportunity Scholarship will provide up to $10,000 to underrepresented and underserved undergraduate students who have overcome adversity, exhibited financial need, and demonstrated merit, Regent President Andrew S. Petersen announced today.

The scholarship program will take effect in the 2021-22 academic year and be offered to students who are admitted to or currently attending a UW System university. Awards will be given to students who are entering a university, progressing with their education, and near graduation.

Regents have committed to providing $1 million for the scholarship annually.

“The new Wisconsin Regents Opportunity Scholarship demonstrates the Regents’ commitment to serving underrepresented and underserved students,” Petersen said. “Our universities, the UW System, and the Regents recognize how important it is to help all students succeed.”

The number of students who will receive a scholarship each year will depend upon the size of each award, but the number is expected to be several hundred annually. Scholarships will range from $3,000 to $10,000 each year. A Regents Opportunity Scholarship Committee made up of Board of Regents members Edmund Manydeeds III, Corey Saffold, and Eve Hall, UW System staff, and university representatives and chaired by the UW System’s Senior Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer will select the recipients.

Eligible students will first be nominated by their universities. There will be three categories: 1) Recruitment, for students who have been accepted to a UW System university; 2) Retention, for students enrolled in a UW System university, have maintained good academic standing, and are making progress toward a degree; and 3) Completion, students in the final semester of completing their degrees.

Awards will be divided among each of the UW System’s 13 universities resulting in roughly $77,000 for students at each university.

“My office is proud to partner with the Regents to provide these scholarships,” said UW System President Tommy Thompson. “There’s no better way to improve your life, your community, and your state than with a UW System degree, and I’m glad we are making this opportunity available.”

While financial need, merit, and overcoming adversity are key criteria for the Regents scholarship, universities will be able to establish their own nomination criteria and process.
The University of Wisconsin System serves approximately 170,000 students. Awarding nearly 37,000 degrees annually, the UW System is Wisconsin's talent pipeline, putting graduates in position to increase their earning power, contribute to their communities, and make Wisconsin a better place to live. Nearly 90 percent of in-state UW System graduates stay in Wisconsin five years after earning a degree. The UW System provides a 23:1 return on state investment. UW System institutions also contribute to the richness of Wisconsin's culture and economy with groundbreaking research, new companies and patents, and boundless creative intellectual energy.

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