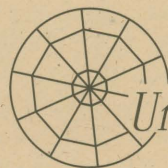


Gatherings

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University Libraries

WESTERN
MICHIGAN
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A Library Scholarship

By Sara M. Volmering, Education Library

Whether it is a dash for some last minute research, a quiet place to study before exams, or a place to relax with a good book, the University Libraries is an integral part of most students' academic lives at WMU. Many people are needed to keep the library operating, some working behind the scenes and others working directly with the public. Student employees make up a large part of the University Libraries workforce. In twenty-four departments at four different locations across campus on day and night shifts, weekends and even holidays, over 100 student employees support library staff and faculty and keep the Libraries running smoothly.

As an essential academic service, the WMU Libraries is heavily engaged in the education of students enrolled at WMU. Articles in this and earlier issues of *Gatherings* describe the library staff and their services that directly and indirectly supplement and complement the WMU academic programs through many forms of information literacy. In other words, one of the primary purposes of the Libraries is to enhance each student's skill in locating and evaluating information—in the pursuit of degrees as well as in future endeavors. At the same time, library staff members also wish to offer a more tangible support of WMU's students. As a result, in the spring of 2010, the University Libraries Student Employee Scholarship program was implemented and first awarded to two student employees of the

Libraries. Each scholarship that is awarded is a recognition and appreciation of the "good work" that has been completed as student employees and is used to support, with actual dollars, their classroom endeavors.

Initial planning for the scholarship began in November 2009 when the idea was submitted to the Library Staff Advisory Board (LSAB). After working with various departments outside the library and researching the logistics of creating such a scholarship, LSAB also met with the Executive Committee of the faculty to involve the library faculty and gain input. Additional strong support came from many areas of the Libraries.

LSAB then defined the basic eligibility requirements for the scholarship and formulated a proposal.

After receiving approval from the WMU Development Office and the Libraries' administration, the scholarship proposal was presented to the Friends of the University Libraries. The Friends of the University Libraries lent their support with a generous financial contribution and promised future funding to the scholarship. In addition to this founding contribution, donations from staff and faculty throughout the University Libraries and the related University community made it possible to offer the first two \$500 awards.

Twenty student employees in various library departments applied for the first scholarships. In order to apply, students needed to meet several eligibility requirements:

- Must be a University Libraries student employee.
- Must have completed 24 weeks of student employment at the University Libraries.
- Must be enrolled at WMU in the semester following application submission (excluding summer I/II).
- Must be in "good standing" with the University.
- Must be enrolled full-time.

Although the scholarship awards will help ease the increasing cost of higher education, the applicants are evaluated on their performance as an employee rather than their performance as a student. Because the focus of the scholarship is on performance as an employee rather than on academic success,



2010 Library Scholarship Winners: Staci Stutzman and Maria Benson.

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A Library Scholarship

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there is no minimum GPA needed to apply. However, students must be in "good standing" and not on academic probation; a 2.0 GPA is required.

A selection committee comprised of representatives from library staff, faculty and administration, and the Friends of the University Libraries reviews the applications and evaluates the essays and letters of recommendation in order to determine the recipients of the awards.

2010/2011 AWARDS

On April 22, 2010, the University Libraries and the Friends of the University Libraries hosted a reception to recognize the first two scholarship recipients, Maria Benson, from Technical Services, and Staci Stutsman, from Rare Books and Special Collections.

Stutsman, a senior English major, said that receiving the award was an honor and it will be helpful in her next semester. "Having the extra money will go a long way with purchasing books for next semester."

Benson, a senior English major, said that the scholarship would help ease some of the financial worries about her final year. "By being awarded this scholarship, I can focus fully on my studies without the need to compromise on buying the books required for my courses."

In addition to meeting the basic requirements noted above, applicants were required to submit a short essay and a letter of recommendation from their supervisors. The essay topic is focused on how employment at the Libraries has impacted the student's pursuit of his or her degree. The first two winners clearly articulated the value of their library experiences on their future endeavors.

"My favorite parts about working at the library are the networking opportunities it presents, as well as the incredible access to information on a daily basis," Stutsman said.

Benson said that employment at the library is great preparation for a future career and [that it] has created an interest in the book industry. "I love that my job at the library gives me responsibilities that value me as a serious employee, while at the same time respecting my needs as a student."

On Wednesday, December 8, 2010, the Friends of the University Libraries and the University Libraries hosted another reception to honor the second set of award winners of the Student Employee Scholarship, Jessica Beach of Science Reference and David McNish of Stacks. Both Beach and McNish will receive a \$500 scholarship for the spring 2011 semester.

"I feel very honored and grateful for this opportunity," said Beach, a junior interdisciplinary health major. "Working at Waldo Library is honestly my dream job. I love the quiet, the smell and the fact that I can help people use the library efficiently and hopefully change their minds about coming more often."

McNish, a senior chemical engineering major, also expressed an appreciation for the people that he meets on the job.

"My favorite part of working at the library is the people. Everyone is so nice and helpful—a better group of people couldn't be found anywhere."

With ongoing financial support from the Friends of the University Libraries, as well as other donor contributions, the University Libraries will continue to award scholarships to student employees. Although the number and amount of the scholarship may vary, the scholarship will be awarded biannually, during the fall and spring semesters.

For further information about the scholarship, please contact the University Libraries administration office at (269) 387-5202. Donations to the scholarship can be made online at: www.wmich.edu/foundation/.



2011 Library Scholarship Winners Jessica Beach and David McNish; Sara M. Volmering, LSAB.



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