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Service Scholar Family Guide



Center for Leadership & Service

Division of Student Affairs | Florida State University

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What is the Service Scholar Family Guide?

This guide is intended for parents and family members of students interested in applying for the Service Scholar program. The guide also contains information relevant for parents and guardians of current Service Scholars.

The limitations of what we can share with families, as set by FERPA policies, do not in any way suggest that your contributions to the development of students are less than pivotal in contributing to their success. Your support and guidance of your student is recognized daily within our program. This guide is just one of the many ways we hope to engage you in the Scholar Family and your student's experience with us.

About the Service Scholar Program:

The Service Scholar program is designed to recognize students entering Florida State University with an outstanding record of service and to promote service as an integral part of the liberal arts education at FSU. Scholarships are awarded to incoming first-year students who have demonstrated excellence in service to the community and who have an interest in continuing to enhance their learning through service. Service Scholar financial awards may be renewed for up to four years, contingent upon a student's desire and their successful completion of published criteria. Aid is awarded in fall and spring terms; no aid is available for summer terms.

Service Scholar Program History:

The Service Scholar program started in 1997, when five students were awarded scholarships aimed at helping close the gap in cost of attendance otherwise unmet by financial aid for students who had a passion for donating their time to the community through intentional service efforts. Each year, the Service Scholar Program evolves and matures as new Scholars and fresh ideas are introduced. Scholars feel a sense of pride and ownership over their initiative and involvement on-and off-campus through the Service Scholar program. Scholars have developed and maintained various community outreach projects, have held leadership positions in on-campus departments and organizations, and have endeavored in service overseas.

General Requirements (for 2023-2024 Academic Year):

Once awarded the Service Scholar Scholarship, students will have their funds automatically renewed for a period of four years (eight fall/spring semesters) so long as they successfully complete the requirements below. To continue receiving scholarship funds and to successfully complete the Service Scholar Program, Service Scholars are expected to:

- maintain an academic course load that will lead to graduation in four years (i.e., the duration of the financial award);
- complete 45 hours of service during the fall semester of the first year and 75 hours of service each fall and spring semester thereafter;
- maintain a semester GPA of 2.75 or greater;
- attend all monthly Service Scholar Evenings (yearly schedule provided each August);
- participate in the annual Scholar selection process;
- attend the fall and spring Service Scholar Orientations; and
- complete all cohort-specific curricular components.

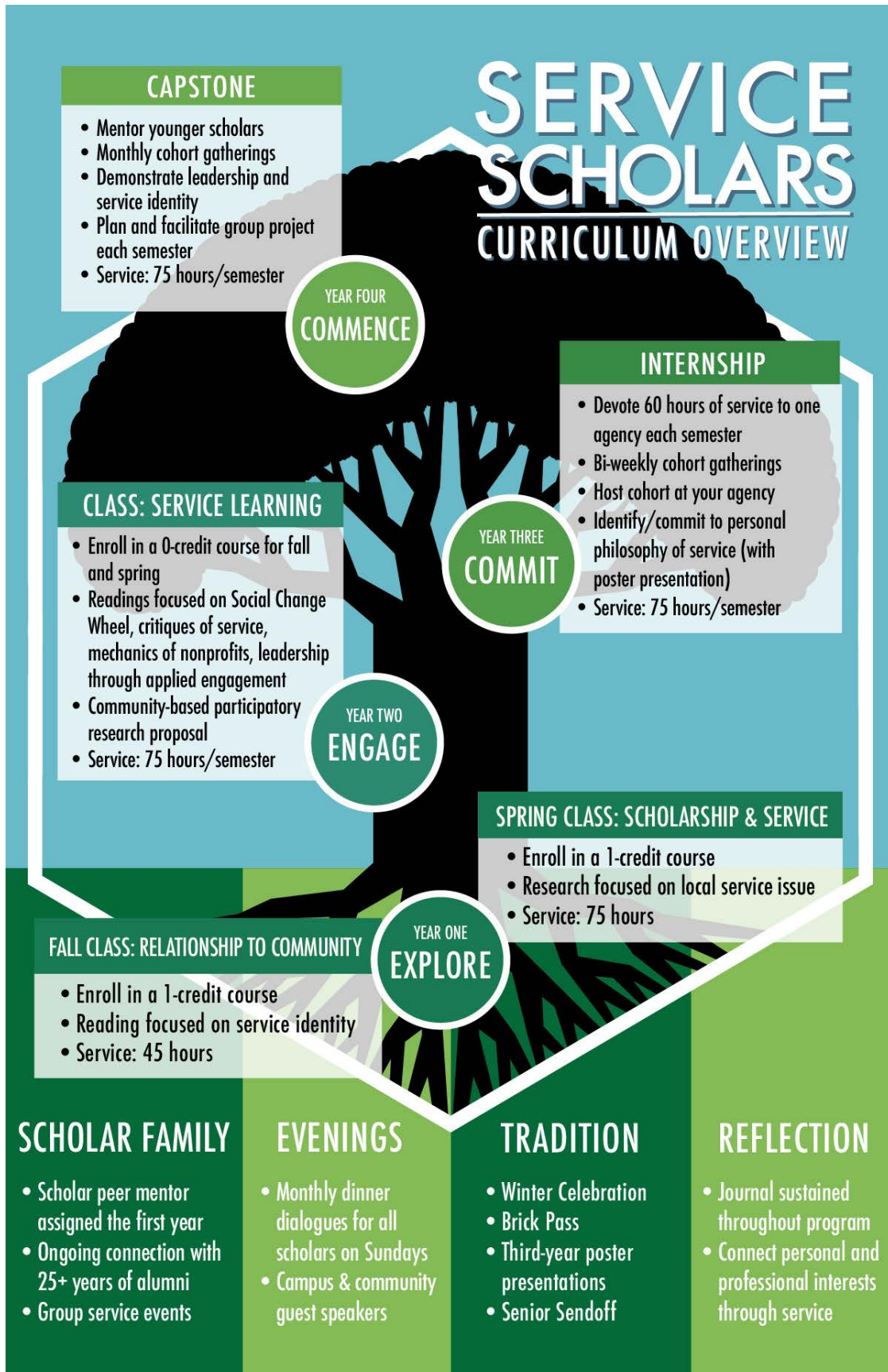
Service Scholar Program Curriculum:

The mission of the Service Scholar program is to integrate service, scholarship, and leadership, empowering Scholars to become life long active citizens. This is accomplished through curricular and co-curricular components that educate Scholars on a variety of community issues, promote learning in a supportive,

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family-like atmosphere, and provide opportunities for group and personal reflection. Scholars work together to overcome obstacles and celebrate successes, to integrate service into daily life, and to shift from potentially harmful service to advocating for sustainable community-led social change. The Service Scholar curriculum is designed help students learn to respect multiple perspectives, empathize with others, espouse a commitment to lifelong service and social responsibility, articulate the essential practices of effective leadership, develop the ability to observe and analyze community needs and the causes of social injustices, build collaborative working relationships with others and put knowledge and values into action.

- The first year of the program focuses on exploring community needs and building relationships within the community while engaging in a variety of service issues.
- The second year encourages students to engage in Service Learning by learning about the Social Change Wheel, critiques of service, mechanics of nonprofits and leadership through applied engagement.
- In their third year, students are asked to commit to a service area of interest and engage in an internship-level of depth within their chosen non-profit or community program.
- In the fourth and final year, Scholars engage in commencing their experience by paying their knowledge and skills forward to others as they serve as mentors and ambassadors of service within the program and across campus. Fourth Year students engage in personal reflections and develop a personal philosophy of service which we hope they will carry beyond their time as an FSU student.





Frequently Asked Questions:

- **How much is the financial award?**
 - Each Service Scholar receives up to \$18,000 over the course of their time in the program. This sum is disbursed as \$2,250 per fall and spring semester. Students who leave the program early do not receive their remaining undisbursed funds.
 - Note, there are no summer awards or disbursements, as such there are no summer program requirements.
 - Students are not allowed to defer awards or admittance to the program.
 - If students study aboard or take a semester leave of absence, they are not expected to complete program requirements and therefore do not receiving funding during that leave.

- **Will accepting the Service Scholar Scholarship impact my student's Financial Aid eligibility?**
 - Possibly. For students who are receiving financial aid to include loans, grants, college work study, scholarships and/or additional private awards, this scholarship could impact your other financial aid awards. Any student's total aid eligibility will only be impacted once their awards exceed their federally defined financial need, at which point, their federal, state, or university awards could decrease. No student is awarded financial aid over the cost of attendance.
 - For additional assistance, please have your student contact the Office of Financial Aid for personal advisement about your specific financial aid awards and scholarships.

- **What academic courses are Service Scholars required to take?**
 - During the first year in Service Scholars, all students take SOW1054. This is a one-credit hour course that is graded as pass/fail or S/U. Service Scholars take it in both the fall and spring semesters.
 - During the second year in Service Scholars, all students take SOW1054 as a zero-credit hour course that is graded as pass/fail or S/U. Because this is zero-credit hours it does not count against their financial aid or count towards their total credit hours accumulated or GPA points. Scholars take it in both the fall and spring semesters.
 - During the third and fourth year in Service Scholars, there are no required courses, just required group meeting times with cohort faculty. These meeting times happen less frequently than courses in the first and second years and are scheduled with the students to complement their ongoing service experiences, courses and other campus activities.
 - Course instructors handle enrolling students in these courses, so students do not need to worry about finding them during Orientation or during subsequent course registration periods.
- **I see that this is a four-year Scholarship Program, but what if my student plans to graduate in less than four years?**
 - As mentioned above, our curriculum is a four-year model. In order for students to fully benefit from their experience in the program, four years is recommended. However, we understand the reality of college costs and students coming to college with a number of credits from high school. We are open and flexible to students wishing to graduate in three or three-and-a-half years, but do expect that they will still complete the four-years worth of curricular requirements. This may mean “doubling up” during one of the final semesters to complete both third- and fourth-year requirements simultaneously.
 - We also encourage students who are entering college with earned credits to explore options of completing multiple majors, minors, certificates and semester-long internships if interested. The University supports students wishing to pursue these additional opportunities through the More in Four program, hosted by the Graduation Planning and Strategies office.
- **What happens if my student fails to meet the program requirements?**
 - It is the strong desire of the Center and the Service Scholar Advisory Board to help ensure successful completion of the program by all Scholars. However, we acknowledge that student priorities change, and unexpected circumstances occur. Failure to meet the program requirements will result in probation or dismissal from the program.
 - The first time any of the requirements are not satisfactorily met, a Scholar will be placed on probation. The probationary period will last one semester, and then the Scholar will return to good standing, if all regular requirements are met. Scholars may appeal their probation to the Service Scholar Advisory Board if they believe that special considerations are warranted or that the probation was issued in error.
 - The second non-consecutive time any of the requirements are not satisfactorily met, a Scholar will be placed on probation. The probationary period will last one semester, and then the Scholar will return to good standing, if all regular requirements are met. Scholars may appeal

- their probation to the Service Scholar Advisory Board if they believe that special considerations are warranted or that probation was issued in error.
- The third non-consecutive time any of the requirements of the Program are not met, the Scholar will be dismissed from the program. Scholars may appeal the dismissal to the Service Scholar Advisory Board for any reason.
 - If a Scholar fails to meet any of the program requirements while they are on probation (consecutive nonsatisfaction), they will be dismissed from the program. Scholars may appeal the dismissal to the Service Scholar Advisory Board.
- **What if my student plans to study abroad (or participate in out-of-town internship experiences) during a fall/spring semester?**
 - We want Service Scholars to make the most of their college experience. Students wishing to study abroad, or complete semester-long internships should submit a letter of request to the Scholar Advisory Board with their intended leave of absence plans and anticipated date of return. The Advisory Board is favorable to granting one-semester accommodation to students once during their four-years.
 - Scholars cannot request a leave of absence for either the fall or spring semester of their first year of the program. Unfortunately, this does mean that students involved in the First Year Abroad program hosted by International Programs are not eligible to join the Service Scholar Program.
 - **Can my student participate in Service Scholars if they are a distance-learning student?**
 - No. Service Scholars must be physically on campus and first time-in-college admitted students at the time of application.
 - **Can students involved in Service Scholars also be involved in other campus programs and organizations?**
 - Yes! Service Scholars are leaders in all areas of campus life. While being a Service Scholar is an added time commitment, it isn't unrealistic, and many students find that being a Scholar helps them to connect to other campus involvement. Past Service Scholars have been actively involved in Fraternity & Sorority Life, Student Government, working full-time jobs while taking classes full time, participating in Undergraduate Research, completing the Honors Program and Honors in the Major, being in ROTC and even serving as Student Body President.
 - **As a parent/family member, how can I support my student in Service Scholars?**
 - Supporting your Service Scholar is very similar to supporting them in all aspects of their college experience. Ask them how classes are going and what they are learning. Check in with them about their service hours and if they feel like they are making a difference at their service agency/site. If they are concerned about anything, encourage them to meet with a member of the Service Scholar Advisory Board or their cohort instructor.
 - If you are ever in Tallahassee on a Service Scholar Evening Sunday, we invite you to join us in person. Once a year, one of our Scholar Evenings is themed "Bring a Buddy Night" and many students often elect to bring their siblings, parents, family members or roommates.



Service Scholar Vocabulary

Should your student be selected to join the Service Scholar Program, we want to help you feel included by keeping up with our lingo. Here are a few common terms/vocabulary that you may hear from current and Alumni Service Scholars.

- **“The Center”**: Short for The Center for Leadership & Service, the department at FSU that coordinates the Service Scholar Program.
- **Scholar Family**: Because our program boasts graduates for the past 25+ years, and works very hard to maintain relationships with graduates, we call our collective group of all past and former Service Scholars “the Scholar Family”. We do our best to honor this name by caring for each other with compassion, respect, and support whenever possible.
- **ServScript**: All FSU students have the ability to log their service hours directly to their official FSU transcripts through the ServScript program. Service Scholars become particularly comfortable with this resource because they are required to document their service hours in this portal so that we can confirm their successful completion of program requirements. For more information on ServScript, visit www.thecenter.fsu.edu/servscript
- **Van Trained**: The Center has a small fleet of vehicles that any student can use to transport themselves and others to service projects in the Tallahassee area (and surrounding counties). To be eligible to drive these University vehicles, a student must have a clean driver history for at least

one year, have proof of automotive insurance and become “Van Trained” where a Center staff member teaches them the proper operation and procedures for using these vehicles.

- **Scholar Evening:** Once a month the Scholar Family comes together for fellowship and curricular engagement across all four cohorts. We share a meal together and engage in some form of continued learning about the community, social issues, or campus context. These evenings are always on Sunday from 5:30pm-7:30pm with an optional social time beginning at 5:00pm. Dates are provided for the entire academic year at the start of the fall term. Scholars are required to attend and should plan their other commitments around being able to be present in Tallahassee on these dates.
- **Scholar Buddies:** Peer mentorship matters. All incoming first year Scholars are paired with an older student in the program during their first semester as a Service Scholar. This “Scholar Buddy” serves as their mentor and point of contact for questions not only about the Program, but also about their service and advice on navigating FSU. Scholar Buddies that span multiple generations of students are often called “Scholar Families” and can be traced back for decades!
- **White Elephant:** The December Scholar Evening always includes a festive White Elephant gift exchange where students, faculty, and staff all participate in silly gifts and lots of laughter.
- **Brick Pass:** When the Service Scholar Program was established, it was housed in the Center for Civic Education and Service which was in a small brick house just 50 yards from our current building on campus. While the little brick house is long gone to campus expansion, many of the bricks from our first home remain. At the April Scholar Evening, to close out our year together, all students, faculty and staff engage in a reflection activity referred to as “Brick Pass”.
- **Reflection:** For true learning to occur through service, one must reflect. The Service Scholar Program values reflection as a teaching tool for self-discovery and large-scale impact towards social change. Students reflect in many of their course assignments and at each Scholar Evening.
- **Journals:** So that students can maintain a record of their personal growth in reflection, each Service Scholar is issued a personal journal as a first-year student. The journals are stored within the Service Scholar Program Coordinator’s office and are subsequently distributed to students during scheduled reflection time held during Scholar Evenings. While scholars have access to their journals throughout their duration of the program, arrangements for utilizing them outside Scholar Evenings must be made with the program coordinator. Upon completion of the program, graduating scholars take their journals with them.
- **FS4U:** Florida State University has a scholarship portal where all students can go to search for scholarships that they may qualify to receive. The Service Scholar Scholarship is sometimes awarded through this portal and student recipients must log in to 1) accept their award and 2) write a thank you note to the scholarship donor/donor’s surviving family members. Students log in with their FSU username and password. Funds cannot be disbursed to their student accounts until both steps are complete.
- **Service Learning:** Students participating in the Service Scholar Program are engaging in service learning. This takes place when the academic knowledge and critical thinking skills gained in classroom curricula intersect with intentional and mutually beneficial partnerships with the community, and with reflection on those interactions and intersections.
- **Positive Sustainable Change:** The overall goals of the Service Scholar Program are focused on creating individual change in students so that they are prepared, equipped, and motivated to create change in the world. While each Scholar maintains the agency to determine what change

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looks like for them, all change efforts should be positive (changing the world for good), sustainable (both in impact and the use of human resources) and focused on resisting the status quo.



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Beyond this Guide

The likelihood that this eleven-page Family Guide answered all of your questions is slim. Hopefully, it at least answered some questions and left you more assured that we are here to support your student in their ongoing development within service and community engagement. For all those questions that remain please consider visiting the program webpage at thecenter.fsu.edu/servicescholars or emailing the Program Director, Dr. Erin Sylvester Philpot (Scholar Class 10) at esyvester@fsu.edu.

