The ASU Medallion Scholarship-- Overview

- The ASUAA Medallion Scholarship is the signature scholarship initiative of the ASU Alumni Association.

- For more than 30 years, this program has helped hundreds of Sun Devils to achieve their dream of a college education.

- Made possible through funding from generous private donations and a partnership with the Arizona Department of Motor Vehicles collegiate license plate program.

- $17 of every $25 fee paid for the collegiate plate supports the Medallion Scholarship.

- For the upcoming school year, there were 400 applications from Arizona high school seniors who have received the ASU Deans Scholarship based on academic performance. From there, ten teams made up of 6 alumni, throughout the country reviewed and rated the applicants. After much debate, we had a pool of 40 finalists.

- The candidates then participated in an interview from which 30 recipients were selected.

- The interview selection criteria includes: leadership, extracurricular activities, and community service involvement.

Medallion Scholars receive:

- $3,000 in scholarship funds, annually renewable;

- support through defined scholarship community activities;

- direct access to the Association and its members through volunteer participation in traditional programs and events.

Hannah's Medallion Experience

During the end of my senior (last) year of high school, I was notified by mail that I was receiving the ASU University Scholarship, because I had at least a 3.5 grade point average. This scholarship was $2,750.00 by itself (around £1,715). My high school counselor called me to her office one day not long after that, and informed me that I met the criteria of the Medallion Scholarship, and that I should apply. It was a prerequisite that a student was a recipient of the University scholarship to
apply for the Medallion one. I did apply; there was an online application that required a CV and an essay question about a community service event we had participated in and what impact it had on ourselves and the community.

Based on a review of my application, I was selected for an interview with the board members of the Alumni Association. They asked me questions about what I wanted to study, what leadership positions I currently held, what community service I did and why, and why I chose ASU for college. Based on the interview, I was chosen to receive the scholarship. The scholarship doubled the amount of the University Scholarship, so I received an additional $2,750 renewable each year pending I met the requirements for keeping it.

Those requirements are:
- must complete 30 credit hours by the end of each spring semester
- must maintain a 3.0 grade point average by end of spring semester
- must complete a minimum of 4 community service events, and they have to be events that we would not normally do on our own (for instance, if we are involved with a service program on a regular basis, those events do not count and we must find something new to do)
- all freshman and sophomores must meet with their “buddies,” (mentors, those being mentored) once a month for the duration of the school year
- must attend all monthly meetings and mandatory events (the mandatory events include a barbecue at the beginning of summer, a mid-year picnic in the park in January, the Reception Banquet for the incoming freshman, and the Senior Send-Off for the graduating Medallions.

As a freshman (first year) in the Scholarship program, I was assigned a sophomore mentor in the program. We were required to meet up at least once a month and talk about academic and any other struggles I was having, as well as discuss questions I had related to the university. There were monthly meetings to attend, on the first Thursday of every month at 5:30 that usually lasted until 6:30, and everyone was required to attend these from every grade level. We discussed upcoming volunteer opportunities, different networking opportunities, and job openings that might be of particular use to us, as well as ice breaker games to get to know one another better. Sometimes there was even pizza and soft drinks, funded by the Alumni Association.

ASU has one full-time staff member in charge of running the meetings and making sure that everyone is meeting the requirements of the scholarship, as well as being in charge of the SAA student group, or the Student Alumni Association, which is actually an undergraduate club responsible for keeping up ASU traditions as well as guarding the “A” on A mountain and painting it gold when it gets painted by a rival school. He keeps tabs on all of us and is our go-to guy for any struggles we may be having.

The first event I went to was the Reception Banquet in April, which was a formal dinner at Old Main on campus. My parents were invited as well, and we were introduced to the program and what it was about, its history, etc. and presented with an actual medallion during the course of the evening. I had no idea how big of a deal the scholarship program was until that dinner.

The second event I attended was the summer barbecue at Dr. Christine Wilkinson’s house, the President of the AA as well as Vice President and Secretary of the university. Here is where I had a chance to get to know other people in the program. This is held every year shortly before
school starts in August. At the barbecue were the Alumni Ambassadors, recent and not-so-recent graduates of ASU who had joined the Alumni Association and paid the membership fee (and volunteered to be there), and they were there to network with us about possible job opportunities and what it was like to work in the “real world.” If someone was interested in their job, they offered to let us shadow them during a work day to see if it was something we really wanted to do and to learn more about that profession.

During the school year, there were monthly meetings to attend, service projects to do, and meetings with my mentor. As time went on, our scholarship leader Greg left us and was replaced with Dan Turbyfill, who decided to change the program up a bit.

Dan decided that the students should be the ones running the program instead of mostly him, so he handed the reins to us. He formed a Leadership Council, with two or three representatives from each class (we call the classes cohorts), and changed the monthly meetings from everyone being together to just grade levels being together. He placed different jobs to different cohorts as well; the freshman now plan our mid-year picnic in January as far as food, events, and games. The sophomores plan the Senior Send-Off party, choosing a theme, colors, events, music, what awards to present, and so on. The Juniors are in charge of planning the Reception Banquet, choosing menu items, décor, making reservations, and choosing two people to be the Master of Ceremonies for the night. The seniors plan the all-cohort service project, and are in charge of finding something a group of 130 students can do together. Dan also changed the service project requirements from being 4 on your own to:

- 1 required with your cohort
- 1 required with all cohorts (that’s the one the seniors plan)
- 2 on your own

I was chosen to be on the council from the beginning, and as a sophomore I planned our first senior send-off (it was the first time we had graduating seniors in the program; the program is fairly new even though the scholarship isn’t), and this past year was in charge of planning and delegating tasks for the Reception Banquet and was chosen with one other person to be an MC for the night. I have last year’s script if you would like to see how this banquet is run.

Dan also changed the scholarship to an even $3,000 to help ease the burden of tuition raises. This was helpful because even with the two scholarships, it is not enough to cover full tuition and fees. A final experience I should add is that I have had access to Dr. Wilkinson personally as a mentor, something not offered to just any student. She is a phenomenal person, and makes herself available to us if we want to schedule an appointment with her to talk about something. Meeting with her has been incredibly influential in my experience at ASU. She has encouraged me to get involved with clubs and organizations, helped me with a newspaper article for a class, and various other things. Having both Dan and her to turn to is a very nice part of the program, and I would encourage having someone like that be a part of any program you may wish to implement.

The Medallion Scholars have a closed Facebook group, as nearly everyone in the program has a Facebook account, and it is used to post upcoming volunteer and networking opportunities, and is instrumental in planning group activities. We also use the Black Board application through the university, and we have our own organizational site where we keep a calendar, tasks, meeting
minutes, and other things. It is useful because everyone logs onto their MyASU page multiple times a day, and it is a good way of reaching everybody consistently because events and tasks show up on that page, making them difficult to miss.

I know personally, the program has benefited me in a number of ways. I have had many experiences I would not have otherwise had, and it has been a great opportunity to give something back to my school and community. The program does require a lot of time and effort, but now that the students from my university took it into their own hands and figured out how to make it work (with a lot of guidance from Dan of course), it is blossoming into an incredible program.

If you have any questions, please let me know!

~Hannah Jones
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