

## Terms of the Golden LEAF Scholars Program

Administrative Rules adopted August 2016

Scholarships in this category are available to:

- **Rising freshmen** – High School seniors from qualifying counties are eligible for up to a \$12,000 scholarship (\$3,000 per year for four years) to attend participating colleges and universities.
- **Community college transfer students** – Students from qualifying counties transferring from a community college to one of the participating four-year institutions are eligible for \$3,000 a year for up to three years, depending on the number of credits the students transfer.

Funding of this scholarship is contingent each year upon an award made available to the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (Authority) by the Golden LEAF Foundation (GLF).

The Golden LEAF Foundation participates in the administration of the program by awarding funding, helping to establish criteria for participant selection, offering policy guidance and providing a companion student leadership development program for a selection of scholarship recipients.

It is important for scholarship recipients to maintain a current email address with the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority through their Student Portal account. Scholarship recipients are asked to regularly check their email account for important communication from SEAA. The Student Portal address is <http://www.cfnc.org/index.jsp>.

### **Selection Eligibility**

To be considered for the Golden LEAF Scholars Program, a student must:

- 1) live in one of the qualifying counties;
- 2) be a high school senior or a community college student applying to transfer to a qualified institution;
- 3) complete the application and submit supporting documentation by the stated deadline;
- 4) meet the requirements for in-state tuition under §G.S. 116-143.1 or §116-143.3 as those requirements are specified and interpreted in the Residence Manual;
- 5) plan to enroll at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  time or nine hours as an undergraduate in one of the participating schools in a degree-granting program;
- 6) maintain “satisfactory academic progress” as defined by the campus for financial aid renewal; and
- 7) have an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) that does not exceed the cost-of-attendance.

### **Qualifying County Determination**

A new list of qualifying counties will be established each December. Qualifying counties will be those that meet the criteria for participation using economic distress data for the calendar year ending in the December in which the list is published and the calendar year beginning the following January. Every effort will be used to ensure that the list of qualifying counties released in December is complete; however, qualifying counties may be added to the list. Please

refer to the Golden LEAF Foundation website [www.goldenleaf.org](http://www.goldenleaf.org) under scholarship information for any changes to the list of qualifying counties.

### **Scholarship Retention**

- 1) A scholarship recipient who resides in a qualifying county upon the initial award will retain eligibility and will be eligible for renewing the award if the county no longer qualifies, or if the student moves to a non-qualifying county within the state of North Carolina.
- 2) If an awarded student's FAFSA is later corrected causing the Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) to be adjusted upward, the scholarship may be rescinded. The scholarship will be rescinded if the awarded student's FAFSA is later corrected causing the EFC to exceed the cost-of-attendance

### **Summer School Funding**

Eligible students attending summer school must:

- 1) enroll for no less than nine hours to receive the full award. Summer enrollment will be approved for the year between the junior and senior terms, if it will facilitate an early graduation for the student;
- 2) the student must have made satisfactory academic progress in the current year prior to enrolling in summer sessions; repeat coursework will not be approved for funding;
- 3) summer co-ops and study abroad programs will be handled on a per situational basis.

Summer session funding will count as one of the authorized semesters.

### **Scholarship Renewal**

**Once a student is awarded the Golden LEAF Scholarship and maintains the necessary eligibility requirements, the student does not complete a renewal application. The scholarship recipient must complete a FAFSA each year.**

No application is required for renewal. The Authority will group students by campus and forward a roster to the appropriate campus FAO with instructions that students on the roster are eligible to receive a GL scholarship, provided the students was enrolled full-time for both fall and spring semesters and maintained satisfactory academic progress. Each campus will determine the student's eligibility for the next year after the conclusion of the spring semester.

Student must maintain  $\frac{3}{4}$  enrollment, at all times, to remain eligible for the scholarship.

GL Scholarship permits scholarship disbursements for four consecutive academic years or eight semesters; community college transfer students are permitted three consecutive academic years or six semesters. Entering freshmen have five years to complete degree requirements for graduation and remain eligible for the scholarship; community college transfer students have four years to complete degree requirements. However, funding will only be provided for eight semesters for entering freshmen and six semesters for community college transfer students. Therefore, if a student is unable to attend a semester or academic year due to a documented extraordinary circumstance (i.e., a medical condition, family illness, etc.) as determined by the institution's financial aid office, the student will retain future eligibility for the scholarship if the student enrolls during the subsequent academic year. Circumstances that are within the control of the student (i.e., failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress; falling below  $\frac{3}{4}$  enrollment) are not considered to be extraordinary circumstances.

Renewing student's EFC cannot exceed COA, and enrollment must be no less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  time or nine hours per semester to receive the full scholarship. If the student has need which is less than the full scholarship, the scholarship will be pro-rated.

### **Deferments**

Eligible students who cannot enroll at one of the participating institutions for the fall semester immediately following high school graduation or transfer from a community college due to space limitations or fall graduation from a community college, will retain enrollment eligibility spring semester of the same academic year for the scholarship.

Students may also defer the scholarship for up to one year if:

1. One-time funding aid is received which causes the student to meet the COA.
2. Involved in training which enhances the educational experience.
3. Medical or family circumstances prevent enrollment.

All circumstances have to be determined by the institution's financial aid office, if the student shall retain future eligibility for the scholarship and if the student enrolls during the subsequent academic year.

### **Transfers**

A student may transfer among the participating institutions provided that  $\frac{3}{4}$  enrollment has been continuous and the student has maintained satisfactory academic progress. Students are responsible for notifying the Authority of the transfer.

### **Special Enrollment – Bridge Programs**

The Golden LEAF Scholars Program will provide scholarships to students participating in Bridge Programs. Including, but not limited to Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses program (RIBN), Pharm.D or other similar programs.

In the RIBN program, the student is jointly enrolled in a community college and a four-year college or university. During the first three years of the program, the student takes classes at the community college campus along with at least one online course per semester at his or her four-year college or university. Upon successful completion of the first three years, students take their fourth year at the four-year college or university. Because the first three years of classes are held at a community college, students have the opportunity to pay mostly community college tuition rates through the RIBN model. Golden LEAF scholars in the RIBN program are eligible for up to \$1,500/year in Golden LEAF scholarship funds for up to three years while attending classes at the community college and \$3,000/year in Golden LEAF scholarship funds for up to one year during the final year of the RIBN program while attending classes at a four year college or university.

In programs such as PharmD or other similar combined degree programs in which students receive both a baccalaureate degree and a graduate degree, typically over a period of 5 or more years, the scholar is eligible for up to \$3,000/year for the first four years of no less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  time or nine hours enrollment. Although enrollment to achieve a degree higher than the baccalaureate extends beyond the four year period of funding, the Golden LEAF Scholars Program will continue to track the graduation of scholars.

Students in the Bridge Programs such as Pharm D or similar programs who are in baccalaureate programs working towards a graduate degree are not eligible for summer school funding. Scholars must make satisfactory academic progress as repeat coursework will not be approved for funding.

### **Leadership Program**

Once a GLF scholarship recipient applies and remains in good standing with the GLF Leadership Program, and if GLF is made aware of a change in the GLF scholarship recipient's financial need eligibility, the student will be grandfathered for participation in the GLF Leadership Program.