



Johnson Foundation scholarships benefit NSU College of Business and Technology

This academic year, a new scholarship was offered through the Johnson Scholarship Foundation to American Indian business students at Northeastern State University.

The Florida-based Johnson Foundation, which works to provide economic opportunities for education to American Indian students, recently made the \$50,000 gift to the College of Business and Technology. The funds support 20 scholarships worth \$2,500 disbursed in \$1,250 increments per semester.

The business college, NSU Foundation and Johnson Foundation all hope this is the germination of a scholarship program with the priority of creating American Indian business leaders.

"If we follow their guidelines and do what they say, we could be the beneficiary of additional gifts from the Johnson Foundation," said John Gyllin, director of Development for the NSU Foundation. "This is a collaboration between the College of Business and Technology and the Foundation, but dean John Schleede and Dr. Dunn Faires get the credit on this."

Dr. Schleede, dean of the College of Business and Technology, said he and Faires were referred to the Johnson Foundation by Dr. Bob Lorence, a consultant for the JSF.

"He was looking for schools with a large American Indian enrollment," Schleede said. "In the past all of their scholarships for American Indian students were going to tribal colleges, and they felt they were not having the impact that the board had hoped for."

Schleede and Faires believed NSU, a larger school with a community reach spanning northeast Oklahoma including the Cherokee Nation, offered an ideal investment for the Johnson board.

"We spent almost two years helping them get to know us," Schleede said. "Bob visited campus twice, as did the board chairman, Malcolm McCleod, and grants person Sharon Wood. During their visits, they met with many people on campus including the two entrepreneur faculty, Dr. Phyllis Fife and Gyllin. They wanted to be sure we had the capability to attract and monitor students in the appropriate majors."

Those applying for the scholarship must major in Entrepreneurship or Business, hold a GPA of 2.5 and be a full-time student of American Indian descent. Those receiving the scholarship must participate in the American Indian Business Leaders student association.

"I believe this is an experiment," Schleede said. "If we are successful in helping (JSF) meet their goals of creating American Indian Entrepreneurs, they will expand the program."

Schleede said success could result in a continuing benefit for the College of Business and Technology and its American Indian students.

"During (JSF's) last visit, they indicated that if we were effective in finding good students and helping them be successful, they would offer a challenge gift of a much larger amount which we would need to find a match for," he said. "This would create a permanent endowment."

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