

## Fellowships at Rhodes

We all want to attract the very best students to Rhodes. We have found in recent years that we have been most successful in recruiting these students when we have linked their financial aid needs with programmatic opportunities that reflect their personal strengths and future aspirations. These opportunities, or fellowships, have turned financial aid scholarships into much more powerful tools for recruiting, learning, and persisting. The Burch, Bonner, CODA, Taylor, Rhodes Institute, and St. Jude Summer Plus Fellows have all benefited from this alignment of financial aid with research, internship, and service experiences.

Inspired by our new curriculum, fellowships align our goals for student access with our hopes for student learning and distinctive opportunities for student engagement. Fellows not only receive financial support but are part of an effort to form a community with those students who share common interests so that they have the additional support of other fellows. We have learned from existing programs that:

1. Recruiting students into learning communities based on activities, such as research, work, and service encourages students to apply for admission;
2. Recruiting for a specific program yields students at a higher rate than recruiting to the institution generally;
3. Incorporating financial aid into activities that build community will continue to increase a student's likelihood to thrive; and,
4. Integrating fellowships into our more engaging curriculum creates a natural partnership that builds on the strengths of the institution.

Fellowships implement one of the four long-range strategic goals adopted by our Board of Trustees in January of 2005 entitled "[Commitment to Achieving Our Aim.](#)" Beginning with the Class of 2012, all students receiving merit aid will be involved in a beyond-the-classroom learning experience that advances their curricular goals. Some of these experiences will begin after a student's first two years at Rhodes. Some will involve work with faculty in their major area of study. Other options will involve working with staff colleagues as student associates, and a growing number will include learning opportunities beyond our gates.

Fellowships represent a major step forward in advancing our Vision for Rhodes, creating new ways for our extended community to fully invest in our Vision. They give us a leadership role in how colleges and universities can better align financial aid and academic goals.

**E-mail message:**

I hope you are having a great summer. As your time permits, please take a few minutes to review the attached description of plans to develop a new fellowship program to take the place of merit aid. According to the plan, all students entering in the fall of 2008 can expect their institutional aid to include a fellowship aligned with their academic interests and personal strengths.

We are sending this document to the entire campus because we want you to be informed and have an opportunity to participate in this important initiative. It represents a new way of using financial aid to support student learning as well as goals for student access.

The ambitious timeline requires us to launch the initial stages of the project as soon as possible. Many logistical and administrative details have yet to be resolved and soon we will convene as many faculty, staff, and students as are available and interested in an exercise to map out all of the implications of fellowships. Following this exercise, we will appoint a group of faculty and staff to develop a detailed implementation plan.

These programs send a powerful message about our expectations for students, the depth of learning we aim to foster, and the kind of citizens and scholars we want to produce.

Please review the attachment and if you're interested in joining us for one of our input gathering sessions, please contact Provost Charlotte Borst ([borstc@rhodes.edu](mailto:borstc@rhodes.edu)).