



HOME | CONTESTS | STAFF | CONTACT
Find it quick in our | SITEMAP

Your Future After High School

SCHOLARSHIPS

Sunday, December 21, 2008



E-mail A Friend

en Español

Inside Tips from Scholarship Judges

By: Ashley Cisneros

Scholarships have to be the sweetest kind of financial aid. Who can resist money for college or career school that you never have to pay back? And while there are thousands of scholarships, there are also thousands of students vying for the same awards.

Florida Trend's NEXT interviewed two scholarship judges who make the call on who gets the cash and who doesn't. Both agreed to share exclusive scholarship-winning secrets.

FTN: What things immediately disqualify an application?

Dr. Bernard Oliver (Director of the Alliance Program at the University of Florida): "Plagiarism, poor grammar and dishonesty. Scholarship judges have to read a lot of applications. If they ask you to write no more than five pages, follow that. Re-read your essay to make sure you really answered the question. There may be many applicants for one scholarship, and judges need to find ways to narrow down possible winners. Tossing out applications that don't follow the directions is an easy way to do that."

Randy Proto (Chief Executive Officer of American Institutes headquartered in Davie and Chair of the scholarship committee of the Florida Association of Postsecondary Schools and Colleges): "Failing to include required documents (transcripts, letters of reference, etc.) or not meeting the qualifying requirements — make sure you understand those before you apply."

FTN: Do students have to have all A's or be in 10 student organizations to win a scholarship?

Oliver: "No, a lot of scholarship committees are looking for well-rounded students. Students without high grades should aim to have a strong involvement portfolio in things like athletics, student government and service. We're not just looking at who has the best GPA, but also who's a good citizen."

Proto: "No, unless the specific scholarship is purely about academics. And even then, there is still a range of grades that could be awarded the scholarships."

FTN: Should students use big words in scholarship essays?

Oliver: "Using big words in every sentence is not necessary. If you use multi-syllable words in the wrong context, it takes away from the quality of your essay. If you don't know what a word means, don't use it."

Proto: "I would recommend only doing so if you've done so in the past in other essays or assignments and have had good results."



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- High School Life
- Colleges & Tech Schools
- Scholarships
- Healthy & Fit
- Cars, Sports & Fun
- Workin' It
- Your Cash
- News You Can Use
- Ask a NEXTpert
- Get Smart Guide
- Contests & Prizes
- Links
- Request **FREE** info on Colleges, Jobs and More

Teachers' Lounge

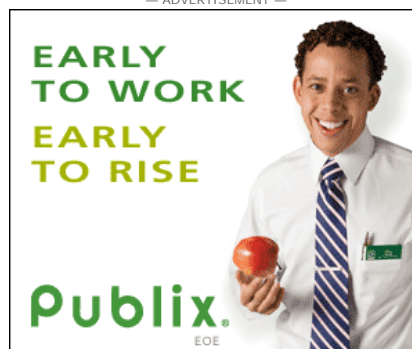


Become part of something good. Learn how Suncoast helps people like you.

Click Here



— ADVERTISEMENT —



FTN: Should students mention their part-time jobs in their scholarship essays or applications?


Oliver: "Definitely mention part-time jobs because they show responsibility and character. And explain the reasons why you work. Do you work to help your family? Are you saving up for college?"

Proto: "Certainly. Mentioning jobs shows that you are committed to hard work, can support your area of interest or show your values to family or to the community."

FTN: What can students do to distinguish themselves from the pack?

Oliver: "Talk about your unique experiences and the way those experiences have impacted your development and how you see the world. Talk about obstacles you have overcome and lessons you have learned. And even if you think you haven't had obstacles so far in your life, you can talk about that, too. Maybe you have been sheltered or haven't had the opportunity to see the world. Show that you want to grow."

Proto: "Have a neat and complete submission. Even though one shouldn't judge a book by its cover, it's hard to get past a negative first impression. Give background information on why you want the scholarship — describe challenges overcome in the past, link your outside interests to elements of the school you're trying to go to, find a way to clearly state what the scholarship would mean to your future."

 **WEB BONUS:** Read more from Randy Proto [here](#).

6 More Scholarship Search Tips

- 1** Take the most advanced classes you can and study hard to get good grades. This will help you when you apply for merit-based scholarships (ones that require academic excellence in certain classes or a certain GPA).
- 2** Get involved in the community. Volunteer hours are a common requirement for scholarships. Besides benefiting your community, you benefit from getting great experiences to talk about in your scholarship and admission essays.
- 3** Find an extracurricular activity you like and grow within it. Leadership experience is often a requirement of scholarship programs.
- 4** Look for scholarships everywhere. Search free scholarship websites like [FastWeb.com](#) for opportunities. Be careful to avoid scholarship scams — a big clue is if they ask you for money to search for scholarships. Ask your parents if their employers offer scholarships. Talk to your employer, counselor and local community organizations for ideas. Plus, check out our list of scholarships [here](#).
- 5** Print out info on scholarships and keep your records in a binder. Make a deadline calendar to help you stay on track.
- 6** Write a general essay about your leadership, volunteer experiences and goals for the future. You may be able to tweak one essay and tailor it for several different scholarships.



- [Central Florida Electrical Joint Apprenticeship & Training Committee](#)
- [FACTS.org](#)
- [Florida Association of Postsecondary Schools and Colleges](#)
- [Florida Department of Education](#)
- [Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences](#)
- [Florida Gulf Coast University](#)
- [Florida Lottery Bright Futures](#)
- [Full Sail University](#)
- [Internat'l Brotherhood of Electrical Workers-Local Union #606](#)
- [Lake-Sumter Community College](#)
- [Miami Dade College](#)
- [Miami-Dade County Public Schools](#)
- [Valencia Community College](#)
- [Publix Super Markets](#)
- [Suncoast Schools Federal Credit Union](#)
- [United States Marines](#)
- [Florida Division of Blind Services](#)
- [Florida Ready to Work](#)



How To Advertise | Order The Magazine | Privacy Policy | Terms of Use
 Copyright © 2000-2008 Trend Magazines Inc. All Rights Reserved.