

**MEDICAL EMERGENCY SCHOLARSHIP
IN THE QUINNEY COLLEGE OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AT UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY**

Goal:

The purpose of this fund is to aid graduate students in the College of Natural Resources and the Ecology Center facing financial hardships due to medical expenses that constitute close to or more than 25% of their annual income.

History:

The College of Natural Resources (now the Quinney College of Natural Resources) Emergency Medical fund was established by Tammy Wilson, a doctoral student in the Department of Wildland Resources at USU. In September 2005, Tammy was seriously injured while riding a bicycle. She broke her back and surgery was required to repair the injury. Many friends within the college began raising money to help pay her medical costs. However, Tammy was fortunate that her medical care was covered by Workers Compensation. The money raised (\$3,725.48) was donated, establishing the Medical Emergency Fund. Since 2005, fundraising efforts, mainly through a yearly winter social allowed the fund to continue to grow. Students with outstanding medical debt (\geq \$5,000) are eligible for assistance from the fund.

Requirements

- 1) Student recipients will be graduate students in good standing in the Quinney College of Natural Resources that are enrolled on USU's Logan campus as well as students of the Ecology Center in good standing with their respective colleges and the Ecology Center.
- 2) A maximum of \$5,000 per person will be awarded to cover medical expenses. Expenses may include, but are not exclusive to: physical therapy, occupational therapy, psychological counseling, transportation for treatment, housing during treatment or other expenses associated with complete recovery. Medical expenses incurred are defined broadly to include spouses, established domestic partnerships, and/or dependent children. Applications for amounts lower than \$5000 can be reviewed for eligibility on a case-by-case basis by the QCNR GSC.
- 3) Potential recipients submit an application, detailing their medical and financial situation. Additional documents submitted should include receipts and medical bills, explanation of benefits from the insurance company and other documents the applicant considers important to explain the situation. An applicant can choose to black out information regarding the specific condition from the application and the hospital/insurance bills submitted.

- 4) To be eligible, the reason for the medical expenses has to have happened while the person is a graduate student at QCNR or the EC. The application for this scholarship has to be submitted within a year of the accident/diagnosis. A person is still eligible if he/she has graduated but all the above conditions have been met. However, the new income of the graduate can be taken into consideration by the committee. Medical expenses due to chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes) can be exempt from this eligibility rule and should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- 5) Applications will be reviewed by a committee headed by the QCNR Graduate Student Council Head or Medical Liaison (representing the views of the whole council based on discussions from QCNR GSC meetings), the QCNR Associate Dean, and a representative of USU's Student Health Services (SHS) as designated by the SHS director. All awards will be decided by group consensus. Variances for additional or debatable expenses will be determined on a case-by-case basis. In addition, the committee may decide to meet with applicants for further assessment.
- 6) Applications have to be submitted through USU's Student Health Services Portal www.aggiehealth.usu.edu (compliance with HIPAA).
- 7) Applications will be reviewed as they are submitted. The maximum number of awards will depend on the funds available.
- 8) A minimum balance of \$2,500 will be maintained at all times in the fund.
- 9) This document will be reviewed every year by the QCNR GSC Head or Medical Liaison to ensure that the fund is still meeting the needs of graduate students and that the descriptions and contact information are up-to-date.
- 10) Potential major updates to the fund can include the expansion of emergencies covered, minimum amount of debt required for eligibility, number of awards handed out, expansion of coverage to other departments, or other issues. These decisions have to be made by the QCNR Graduate Student Council through a majority vote.
- 11) For the fund to be discontinued, 75% of graduate students participating in the QCNR Graduate Student Council must vote in favor of discontinuing the fund.
- 12) A fundraiser for this fund has to be organized at least once a year (Winter Social or other event).
- 13) This scholarship is similar to hardship scholarships provided by the university and does not require the issuance of any tax forms.

- 14) The contact person at USU's Student Health and Wellness for the MEF is Maren Seamons (maren.seamons@usu.edu; phone 435-797-9828).

NOTE: The Medical Emergency fund consists of two parts. One part (the spendable account) is under USU's Student Health and Wellness and the other (the endowment fund) is under QCNR. Overall, both can be used to pay out the scholarship. Dipping into the endowment fund is trickier but it should be remembered that the money in this fund was raised to give out these scholarships. The fact that it is an endowment is an unfortunate designation that has created more problems than given benefits. We get about \$200/year from this endowment, which, in case of emergency, is not worth keeping on. The closure of this fund, however, is tricky and no-one wants to deal with it.