

Thoughts on Professional Practice and Education

Article 15: Surveying Scholarships

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This is the fifteenth article on professional practice and education I have prepared. In this article I will discuss surveying scholarships.

Almost every state and regional/national professional surveying society offers scholarships. I follow this statement with a sincere thanks to the professional societies for their support of surveying education.

Surveying scholarships have three purposes. The first purpose is to provide helpful financial aid to surveying students. The second purpose is to show the student that the surveying profession values formal surveying education. The third purpose is to let students know the profession they are entering wants to support them at the start of their professional career and throughout their professional career.

Theory holds that free money should attract many applicants. Unfortunately, many professional societies are disappointed with how few applications are received. Scholarship announcements are sent to college surveying programs and faculty members. Advertisements are made on society web sites and in survey publications. Still, the applications are often fewer than expected.

My observations as a faculty member reveal that most 18 to 22-year-old students either obtain student loans or their parents fund the student's college education. These students usually need to be cajoled to apply for scholarships. The students believe their education finances are secure. There is no need or incentive to apply for scholarships. This statement does not apply to their parents. Parents of the 18 to 22 year old students, made aware of scholarships, strongly encourage their children to apply for scholarships.

Many older students (referred to as non-traditional students) tend to rely on the G.I. Bill, their own finances, a spouse working, or their employer to at least help pay for their education. Older students are more aggressive in seeking scholarships and making application for scholarships. Many of the older students are married with children and need money to help alleviate their family finances.

Surveying programs with internal scholarships usually avoid seeking applications to award internally funded scholarships. Survey program leaders will award these scholarships without application based on observed financial need and scholarly performance.

Surveyors that wish to financially aid surveying students can fund a scholarship within a surveying program. Funding a scholarship allows the donor to honor a particular person by naming the scholarship after the person (or themselves). Often family and friends of a deceased surveyor can set up the

scholarship through donations to honor the deceased surveyor. Donors can set the terms for awarding their scholarship. Help for setting up a scholarship is readily available through a university. Contact the head of the surveying program for further information of funding a named scholarship.

Another option some employers have undertaken is to award financial aid or scholarships to employees or employee family members. Scholarships encourage surveying students to work for the firm and also encourage current employees to pursue surveying education. To those surveying firms that offer financial aid to surveying students, I thank you for your benevolence and support for the profession.

I will close with my personal experience with scholarships. The United States government paid for my education up to and including my master's degree. Four years' service in the U.S. Marines after high school gave me access to the G.I. Bill. My Ph.D. and law degree were paid by teaching assistantships and my wife working. I also recognize and thank the Pennsylvania Society of Land Surveyors for their financial support aiding my Ph.D. studies resulting in the preparation of a boundary law book for Pennsylvania. (The book is available through the Pennsylvania Society of Land Surveyors and belongs to them.)

I have three children. I made known to them while in high school that they were responsible for their own college tuition. I thought they would follow my lead and join the Marines, thereafter using the G.I. Bill for their education. Of course, being teenagers, they rebelled as teenagers often do. Not one of my children joined the Marines. Two went to college on ROTC scholarships. The third earned a State of Maine merit scholarship for a four-year degree. Two engineers and one nurse subsequently graduated without school loan debt. The two with ROTC scholarships did have to pay for the scholarships with active-duty time in the army including several months in a combat zone.

† Other books and articles by Knud can be found at <https://umaine.edu/svt/faculty/hermansen-articles/>