

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Hello and welcome again to another edition of Let's Talk Ed With Professor Chris. If you haven't subscribed, please do so.

You're gonna love this one... Of course... it's about money. Why not?

So we talk about money management. Today, we are talking about scholarship, one of the best ways to get money. I missed out on that opportunity.

So I'm here to help you find all the resources. All the strategies you need to get money.

With me today is a very special guest.

Ms. Maya, from scholarships?

MAYA ROSMAN: Yes.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Hi Myra. How are you doing?

ROSMAN: Good. How are you?

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Good.

How much money did you bring with you today?

ROSMAN: How much money did I bring with me?

I brought no money with me, but that's OK... You don't want me to carry it around?

You want me to hold it so like an award it to students in a few months.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Great.

So here's the question that I always ask the people that I interview with. It's not a trick question.

I said great question.

ROSMAN: Alright?

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Tell us a little bit about your career path.

Have you always, back in college, thought you were gonna be in scholarships.

ROSMAN: No, absolutely not.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Shoot.

ROSMAN: I thought I was gonna be a college professor.

That's what I thought I was gonna do. I was gonna go through school and be a professor, and that was the only plan I had.

I went to Graduate School and I very quickly realized that what I wanted to do was... like to do what I really wanted... It was gonna be 10 years away of doing lots of things I didn't wanna do in between. And I had done... I had worked a bit before I went and I was like I can, I can do good things in the world elsewhere.

Umm, my very first job out of college was at UNC Chapel Hill and I was a departmental registrar and undergrad advisor. I loved it. I loved working with students and then...

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: You saw money.

ROSMAN: Um, what?

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Then you saw money.

ROSMAN: I didn't. I didn't deal with money at all at that point, and I worked at a non-traditional high school for a while, being in a community resource person. And then I got into data management umm for nonprofit.

So I worked at a women's health organization and I worked at... I worked at the Museum of Life and Science as their behind-the-scene data person.

What I really really missed was directly working with students and so this job came open I was very excited because it's like half me being super nerdy in my office about data and digging in and figuring out what stories we can tell with what we know. And half talking to students and making sure the scholarships are ready for you all to get. And I love it.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Nice.

So, from your career path, this is the best one so far, where you are right now?

ROSMAN: Yes. Absolutely.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK, I think I think it's great that you know, I asked this question and I'm yet to find anyone who has said ohh yeah, when I was going to college I... scholarship is what I wanted to do. And you know I, that's what I focus and that's why I am right here.

It never happened to me.

ROSMAN: Nope.

When I worked at the high school, we would have people in to talk about their careers and also there never very few every now and then... there was like, I'm gonna be a doctor and they are a doctor.

Right? But like most folks, it's this kind of rub.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: And the good thing is we ultimately find where we want to be eventually, right?

ROSMAN: Um hmm.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK, so we're gonna get right to it and talk about money.

ROSMAN: Wonderful.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Let's start with someone that differences between... he has scholarships when he has fellowships, and of course, financial aid.

Let's start with those differences and then we'll focus on scholarships.

ROSMAN: I don't get into fellowships too much, so I'm definitely not the expert there.

My understanding is that is usually based on like scholarship that you're doing funding to do specific kinds of work, but financial aid is money you apply for that is usually federal or state based.

Some of its loans, some of its grants, loans you have to pay back, grants you do not, but there are a lot of things like requirements you have to meet in order for them to give you that money and then scholarships are free money for schools.

Scholarships are money that comes not from the state or from the federal government, but from community-based donors and community-based like individual donors, organizations that care about students... want to be involved, and want to fund them with our individuals.

It's usually someone who has a particular area they really care about and they wanna see students succeed and they wanna give money in that way. With our corporations and organizations, it's usually businesses who want students to graduate so they can hire them.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Interesting.

ROSMAN: S, they wanna provide scholarships because they want that to go faster for students. So they can get the skills that these employers want.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Ok. I'm gonna ask the same question again even though you've talked about it, but it was kind of in the framework of... what is this? What is this? What is this?

Specifically with scholarships. What are the different types of scholarships?

ROSMAN: OK, so..

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Sorry I have to make you repeat yourself again.

ROSMAN: Yeah. I don't mind at all.

So for the Wake Tech Foundation, which are the scholarships that I manage, our scholarships, Umm, all of them only need one application, so when I start talking about all the different things don't get overwhelmed because they are... a lot of times students will go... Oh, that's too many, I can't even wade through it.

They don't have to, but all of our scholarships have different criteria and they are based on what the donor wants for that money.

We have scholarships that based on academic merit, so how well students are doing here at Wake Tech. Based on financial needs... So where did they fall? What do they need? What gaps can we fill?

And then some that are based on your your students program of study or their division. Those often tend to be ones that come from companies that really want to hire those students.

And then ones that are really kind of a hodgepodge of those different things.

I... we have a scholarship that is for women who are older than 35 who are coming back to school and live in Wake County, right?

So there are scholarships pretty much every student qualifies for at least one. I have a couple right now where the qualification is literally is... exists at Wake Tech... is qualified to be considered for the scholarship. And then some that are so specific that it's really a very small number of students that qualify.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Great. Then it's collections for professors.

ROSMAN: Unfortunately no.

No, no staff can get scholarships at this time.

We have other opportunities through the foundation for staff who are studying.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Great. Let's talk about eligibility. What does a student need to qualify for... And you could pick which one and maybe a different, but what does a student need to just...

ROSMAN: So, in order to qualify there's a couple of really basic things.

Umm one, you need to be studying in a curriculum program, so not a Continuing Ed program. That's who these scholarships are for. There are scholarships for Continuing Ed students. They are just handled differently.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Okay.

ROSMAN:

So that's number one. Number two... Most of our scholarships and this is new this year, the minimum number of credits that you need to be enrolled in in the semesters when you're awarded is now just three. It used to be six. It's now three.

We have about 10 different scholarships where it's still six, but that's a level we we looked into and we decided to change. We wanted to make them more open.

Most awards are looking for at least a 2.0 GPA, but that is not universal. So, if your GPA is a little lower, we still encourage students to apply if they fit a criteria where we don't have enough applicants, we might consider someone below a 2.0.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: 2.0 and up. You can get this scholarship. I honestly thought your GPA to be like a 3.5 or 4.0 to get scholarship, but that's not the case. 2.0 just keep that in mind.

ROSMAN: Absolutely. And it's based on your spring semester final GPA at Wake Tech. So, if you think you're on the like the cusp of it... Students who are like, but I'm doing really well right now and I think my GPA is gonna go up, it's worth their time to apply. Umm.

And then you have to be at Wake Tech in the semesters that we award them.

So we don't give you money to take to NC State, you if you are, if you're applying in our application cycle, which is going on from March 1st through April 30th, it's for the next fall and spring semester.

So you'd have to be planning to be at Wake Tech, either in that fall semester or and or that spring semester.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Since we're talking, you already started talking timelines. Let's go back to the timeline.

ROSMAN: Yeah.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: When are the scholarships available? When should students apply? When they hear back and then we'll get into the process, let's start with some of the timelines.

ROSMAN: Yeah, absolutely. So every single year we keep it the same. We want it easy to remember, so if March 1st is a Sunday, that's when scholarships open and they are open all the way through April 30th. And that's official deadline that the system just shuts down in terms of accepting applications is 11:59 p.m. on April 30th.

If the clock clicks over to midnight, as you're pressing the submit button, it will say no. I always tell students. Make your own deadline like April 28th and then you don't have any worries...

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: I need you to do that here for me, please.

ROSMAN: Ok.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: The deadlines again.

ROSMAN: Yes.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Yes.

ROSMAN: So the official scholarship deadline is April 30th at 11:59 p.m.

If the clock clicks over to midnight, as you're pressing the button, the system will not accept your application. I really suggest that students give themselves a deadline of about April 28th. That means you don't have to worry. You don't have to hit up against a deadline, and if they encounter any kind of error message, it's an online system, things happen right?

If you need help troubleshooting something, I will help you, but if you've waited till 11:58 p.m. and on April 30th, we're just not gonna have time.

So, April 28th would be a good deadline, but as long as it's submitted by that April 30th deadline, it is considered for a scholarship.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Great. Now let's talk about the liquid money, money, money, money, money. Let's talk about that.

ROSMAN: Yea.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Let's start with. What is the smallest scholarship you get? What's the largest scholarship you could get?

ROSMAN: Alright, so I'm gonna give you a little bit of a caveat on the smallest scholarship we have been doing this for a long time. Some scholarships were established many, many years ago, when it costs even less than it does now to go to Wake Tech.

So we have a couple of scholarships that are small, small potatoes like \$800.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: That's not small, still. Wow.

ROSMAN: But most of them are at least \$1,000. We are encouraging all of our new current donors to do more than that. That's where we're at right now.

Our largest scholarship award, it varies slightly year to year, but it was \$6,000 last year.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Wow.

When I had applied for scholarship... Kind of a two-part question here, but let's start with the first one. And I get the scholarship, am I going to expect you to give me, let's say that \$1,000. Is a one-time \$1,000 that have to apply again or is it a one-time \$1,000 for two semesters or what?

ROSMAN: Most of our scholarships are one academic year, so...

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Could be two semesters right?

ROSMAN: You get some of your money. We split it evenly, so if you got a \$2,000 scholarship, you would see \$1,000 in your student account for fall and \$1,000 in your student account for spring. And then you would need to apply again if you need money the following year.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK, that's great. So student applies. OK, now let's get to the process.

ROSMAN: Yeah.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: How many students do you think apply for these scholarships, and how many actually get them?

ROSMAN: So, it varies year-to-year in terms of how many students apply and how many scholarships we have.

We keep it open for our donors to make final decisions through about early May, so I won't even know, like even if I looked at my list right now, there may be one or two that sneak in there, by the... by mid-May. But the last couple of years we've awarded scholarships to about 300 students and we have over 100 different scholarships than some of those have multiple awards, so that's about 300, which is looking like somewhere around \$500,000, on the table for students this year, which is really lovely. And then it also varies year-to-year how many students apply.

I have been doing this since 2018. I've seen as few as 700, which means your chances are really good and as many as almost all 1,200. 2020 we were we just opened the applications when everybody went home for COVID and we got so many more applications that I've ever seen before. Last year we were just shy of 1,000. So somewhere in the neighborhood of like 25% to 25% of students received awards.

This year, so far, the early applications have been higher than what I recall in the past.

Umm, I... most of our applications usually get submitted in the last two days... yeah, of the application period. Students wait. I get nervous that we're not gonna have enough, and then we get 500 applications on one day.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK. And the reason I actually also ask this question is because if I apply for a scholarship and I get it this year, but do you all keep the pool of those that applied and... I'm not trying... I'm trying to see if I should be encouraging students to keep applying or to say, well, you know, you got one this year.

ROSMAN: No.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK.

ROSMAN: Keep applying.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Keep applying.

ROSMAN: Keep applying. We are gonna consider each year on its own on its own merits.

So, if you don't get an award, keep applying. Different things... Things will change.

There might be a scholarship that wasn't available last year that you are the perfect candidate for this year and you won't know that unless you apply and don't get too discouraged.

I often have students who say ohh I apply last year as I was coming into Wake Tech, I wasn't a Wake Tech student yet. Incoming students can apply as well as current students, but they have fewer opportunities than current students, so I don't want students to be discouraged. Umm.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So, keep applying.

ROSMAN: Yes. Keep applying.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Alright, great. How can a student... What is the dumbest that a student could do to lose the scholarship... and the reason I ask this is because you just say if they get like \$2,000, right, give you \$1,000 one semester and \$1,000 the other semester.

What can a student do for you to say... You know what? Sorry, you got this money, but I'm not gonna give to you?

ROSMAN: So usually that is not decision I am making. Usually that is more like you didn't come to Wake Tech. I can't give you money if you are not enrolled.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Ok.

ROSMAN: Umm. Or something happened and Wake Tech took steps to remove you from campus, right? But that wouldn't necessarily be my decision.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Ok.

ROSMAN: The other, and I'm gonna give a little plug here for students because we automatically split it between semesters. I've got 300 students. I'm awarding. I don't know what all of their plans are, but we don't want you to miss out. We don't want to miss out on their money if they're if they're gonna be here in the fall, but not here in the spring.

So a student who is graduating in the fall or knows that they're gonna transfer after the fall if they get an award, they should contact me and tell me that, and then I will give them all \$2,000 in the fall.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Oh wow, okay.

ROSMAN: I don't want them to miss out on that other money.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: You are just so nice.

ROSMAN: They they earned it. We just don't know their plans. I have no way of knowing so many students take multiple things before they move on. I can't even look at how many classes you have to figure out any of that, so it's really about communication.

In addition, sometimes we'll have students who are done with all these prerequisites for another Wake Tech program in the fall, and there's nothing for them to take, but they're starting a nursing program or a dental hygiene program or some other program in the spring.

Same thing. Contact me. Tell me that... hold your full scholarship for spring. So...

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Great. So, I believe part of the requirement for scholarships to write an essay is that, and in that essay you actually saying what you need the money for. Is that correct?

ROSMAN: That is part of the essay. Do you want me to see if I can do the prompt off the top of my head?

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Yes.

ROSMAN: All right, so... First thing.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Yeah.

ROSMAN: So, umm, I will tell you the three parts of it. I'm not gonna get the exact wording right. So what... How will receiving this scholarship help you? So, we we wanna know from students if you got this money next academic year, what's gonna be different for you than if you do not?

What are your college and career plans? So, what are you studying at Wake Tech?

What's next? What's your long-term career goal? Again, we want students to be specific. We want them to talk in personal language, so it's not... You're not speaking in third person You're saying I am studying this and... This is why I'm excited and this is what I want to do next.

And then we asked them how will they give back to the college of community? And that's talking about community involvement, community service, volunteering and that can be service they've done in the past. Service right now or things they wanna do in the future when they're not in school full time working full time. Taking care of family and don't have time to do that sort of thing.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Yeah, alright, now let's talk about your process, how you pick. Who gets this scholarship?

Let's say you have 100 applicants. How do you how do you decide on whose you pick?

ROSMAN: So, remember how I thought you half my job as being really nerdy with data? I get really nerdy in Excel spreadsheets before we start awarding.

So, what happened is that we sort of split our scholarship awards into scholarships that look at financial need and scholarships that do not, and the ones that are looking at program of study may be in either category, but they're either need, we need to take need into consideration or we do not.

And we do large, we do application scoring and we we come up with two numbers and one is for those those need numbers and one or for the merit numbers and depending on whether or not a scholarship looks at need is which of those numbers I'm going to use to rank students within that applicant pool and that those scores are made up of their average essay review score, their academic merit score, which is gonna look at their GPA and their course completion rate. And then if it's a needs score, we use a score from the FAFSA to determine a financial needs score.

They do not have to fill out the FAFSA in order to apply, but we, but they may be less competitive for those need scholarships than a student that did fill out a FAFSA.

And then I pull up the top scholarship with the most money to award... Look at the rank those students based on that scoring and pick the top one or however many that scholarship awards, move on to the next highest dollar amount. Pick the students who have not yet been awarded a scholarship for at the top of that list and work my way all the way down.

There's about 130 scholarships, so I'm doing this 130 times this year and as we get towards the lower dollar amount, I will often award more than one scholarship because those are a little lower. But mostly it's one scholarship per student.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Do you ever have money left over?

ROSMAN: Yes. So I'm gonna talk to the camera.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Yes.

ROSMAN: If any of you graduated from a high school in Duplin County, I want you to apply for scholarship because we have one donor whose money is only for students who graduated from that Duplin County High School, and I am not allowed to give it away unless a student who meets that criteria, applies. If that is you, I have money for you. Please apply.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Great.

ROSMAN: Every now and then.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Yes.

ROSMAN: I will have a scholarship where they we've got a couple of home builder's awards from local builders and they give out a lot of scholarships, and I just don't have enough applicants from that area.

What I will do is I will usually end up reaching out directly to a department head to see if we can award that money, but it's much easier if I can award it from the students who apply.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Great. Now, when I apply and I get the money.

ROSMAN: Uh huh.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: I'm gonna track what I use the money for.

ROSMAN: No.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: It's my money, I can do whatever I want to do with it?

ROSMAN: So, here's how it works. There's a couple of steps but I am not gonna track it and I'm not gonna follow up with you about how you used it.

So, we... I work with my colleagues in financial aid, they will enter it into self-service.

So you can see... students can go into self-service, see their scholarships. Students will be alerted, the name of their scholarship, but in self-service it says something really generic like Foundation Scholarship or WTCC Foundation.

It will not say the name of their scholarships, and sometimes students think that the money isn't there, but it'll tell you the amount.

And then that is able to be used anywhere you can use student accounts.

So pay for classes. Pay for books. A couple of other things you're able to pay for. If it is not all used for books and classes, then the financial aid, just like with Pell Grants or other aid, will will refund it to you on their refund schedule.

So if you don't use it all, if you it'll come to you in the way that the students specifies, and they may use it to whatever they need.

My feeling is any money that they were getting that they didn't expect is going to help them stay in school if they need to use it for transportation costs, great. If they're using it for food. That's great. Everyone needs to eat it helps you be a better student. If you're using it for rent.

Again, all part of what... As a person, you need in order to focus on your studies.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: That's great.

So you didn't mention financial aid.

ROSMAN: Uh huh.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So ,I'm trying to kind of help the students get all the money they could get. Right?

ROSMAN: Yes.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Which one should apply for first?

ROSMAN: Umm, so I would say you should do both, but the Wake Tech Foundation Scholarship has an earlier deadline, so you don't wanna miss with deadlines and it takes only about an hour as opposed to filling out a FAFSA, which is like if you filled out a FAFSA, you're gonna come to our scholarship application and laugh because it is so much more simple.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK.

ROSMAN: But do both.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Right.

ROSMAN: If you're able to do both.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK, right.

You're not gonna say ohh you apply for this financial aid, you have money, so I'm not gonna give you a scholarship?

ROSMAN: Nope. Some schools work that way, but we do not.

We are not looking at what else you get. We are looking at what you qualify for in our process. So, if a student has a Pell Grant, has scholarships from an outside source, has other sources of money, we're gonna be like, great, here's your scholarship on top of that.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Maya, this has been great. Is there anything that I've missed?

What are some other questions students have about scholarships that I probably have missed?

ROSMAN: So couple of things.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Yes.

ROSMAN: One. Students get kind of tied up about the essay. Some students are really nervous about writing it. So, it is short. The minimum is 200 words. That's about two paragraphs.

I suggest students write at least three paragraphs and about a page so they can fully answer all three parts of that prompt, and they can talk to anyone they want to about helping them with that. The ILC writing center is a phenomenal campus resource.

And they help students every year. So I really encourage them to reach out there.

The other question I usually get is whether or not this is open to international students, and the answer is absolutely yes. We award international student scholarships every single year.

We have maybe four out of 100 that require a US citizenship and all the rest are open.

We are working with a donor right now who hopefully by the end of the week, we'll have all their paperwork in that is specifically for international students.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Interesting. Okay. I need a cheat sheet.

ROSSMAN: Yes.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: What can I put in my essay, that you see and you go "I am giving them a scholarship?"

ROSSMAN: So. I would love it if there was an answer to that. There is not, but what you really wanna be focusing on in your essay is giving real details about you and your plans.

And then making sure that you're focused and hitting all three parts of that prompt.

And then bare minimum running it through spell check. But grammar and punctuation and spelling matter, and so if you have turned in the best essay with everything we want and all the sentences are run on sentences and you've skipped words and things aren't capitalized when they're supposed to be... our reviewers have to deduct points and they're not going to want to, but they have to.

So you really wanna just make sure that essay shines? That, that's. And it's gonna be different for every student.

I would say if students find themselves writing two or three pages, they have probably wandered off the prompt. It is not that involved of a prompt and should really focus down that that's that's really where my advice lives. That's that sweet spot.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Maya, this has been great.

Well, first of all, what a great opportunity to meet you person.

ROSSMAN: It was lovely to see you as well.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: This is this is great, great information.

Like I said, I know students it's money, money, money. I've always said how do you get money?

You know, of course, I don't wanna get into how you spend it, but yeah, before we close, please. Yes.

ROSMAN: So, one of the things I always tell students, again, takes about an hour of your time total, including writing the essay. You may... I can't guarantee that you'll receive a scholarship. I want you to, but I can't guarantee it, but I know you will not if you don't apply.

It is very small time-commitment for potentially a very lovely payout. I wanna send you emails that say, guess what? You have free money for school.

Umm. So please apply.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Yeah, I haven't seen emails like that in a long time.

So yeah, before we wrap up very quickly... Maya, how can students find you?

ROSMAN: Not just how can they find me, but how can they find scholarships?

We didn't even tell them where to go, so the website you want is scholarships.waketech.edu.

That site has information year round about applying for scholarships, including FAQ, the essay prompt is posted. All that information is there for you, no matter when you go, and then during the application period from March 1st to April 30th, the link to access the scholarship application is at the bottom of the page and at the very bottom of the page is my contact information so that my email is mfrosman@waketech.edu.

But, scholarships.waketech.edu is where to go to find all of that.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Great.

Actually, I had one more question as well.

ROSMAN: Let's do it.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Do you send emails out to students who did not get a scholarship?

ROSMAN: Yes. We do not wanna leave students hanging. Those decisions are usually made the first week in July, so students that receive an award will get an email from us and students who not... will get an email from us at their student email, so they should be checking those in early July. That's a great question.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Great.

Well, there you have it, another edition of Let's Talk Ed With Professor Chris.

Please, please do subscribe. It's money, it's money, please.

Please. I don't know what else to say. Maya, what else can I say?

ROSMAN: I wanna give you money. Apply for scholarships.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: There you go. Thanks Maya.

ROSMAN: You're welcome.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: I'll do a handshake too. There you go.