



Scholars Program

at Benedictine University

More than an Honors Program

The Scholars Program at Benedictine University is a learning community designed around a four-year course of study that enables a select number of gifted undergraduate students to develop skills as leaders and thinkers while meeting many general education requirements. The program focuses on academics, leadership and service in a global context and includes the following distinctive features:

Rigorous Academics

Scholars Program courses are small seminars taught by senior faculty committed to the study of seminal works from a wide variety of liberal arts disciplines such as history, philosophy, literature, biology and political science. Students take one Scholars course each semester, learning together over four years with the same group of students. These discussion-based, reading- and writing-intensive courses include two interdisciplinary seminars devoted to the Catholic and Benedictine intellectual traditions and to the exploration of the theme of "human dignity and the common good." Courses unique to the Scholars Program focus on leadership, artistic creativity and global interdependence. Scholars Program students meet other general education requirements by choosing among approved courses in ethics, economics and mathematics.

Scholars Program students must present their scholarly work or research at an academic conference at least once during their participation in the program.

Students engage in active reflection of their intellectual development and analytic and research skills, and demonstrate their attainment of the Scholars Program essential student learning goals including academic, leadership and creative achievements, by developing and maintaining an electronic portfolio. They compile e-portfolios with the support of a faculty mentor and by participating in the e-portfolio workshop during the fall of their junior year. In the fall of their senior year, students defend the e-portfolio before the Scholars Portfolio Review Committee, which helps determine if a student has met program requirements and will graduate as a Benedictine Scholar, or if the student has exceeded the requirements and will graduate as a Benedictine Scholar with Distinction.

Service

Scholars Program students undertake individual service-learning projects, reaching out to vulnerable groups in the local, regional or global community and interacting with the people they serve in a sustained and meaningful way. Scholars Program students help shelter the homeless, feed the hungry, comfort the elderly, and work for peace and social justice in DuPage County and beyond. The 40 hours of required service-learning and a reflective essay on the service-learning project is typically completed by the end of the sophomore year. During May of their sophomore year, students plan and participate as a class in a week-long group service-learning project.

Second Language Proficiency

To help ensure that Scholars Program graduates will be able to participate effectively in a global context, students must demonstrate a minimum of intermediate-low level proficiency in speaking, reading and writing a second language. Proficiency is typically achieved through coursework (equivalent to six semesters of university-level study) or in exceptional cases, may be demonstrated through testing. Further details on the Scholars Program language proficiency requirement can be found on the checklist or by visiting ben.edu/scholarsprogram.

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Scholarships for Scholars

Scholars Program students in good standing receive a merit-based scholarship each year. Benedictine University invests in gifted students to provide them with the resources necessary to develop as perceptive and conscientious leaders. The director of the Scholars Program advises accepted students of the amount of the merit scholarship for which they are eligible.

Qualifications for the Program

Freshman Candidates

- Acceptance into the University.
- Minimum ACT score of 27/ SAT score of 1210.
- Cumulative high school GPA of 3.75/4.0.
- Two years of second language study in high school.

Because we seek students who enthusiastically embrace the aims of the program, we allow some flexibility in admission requirements and may admit students who have either the required ACT/SAT score or GPA, but not both, provided that they bring other substantial experiences to the Scholars Program.

Transfer Candidates

- Acceptance into the University.
- Cumulative college GPA of 3.2/4.0.
- Two letters of recommendation from college faculty, at least one of whom must comment on the student's writing ability. Fewer than 60 semester credit hours completed.

Scholars Program students are grouped by the year of anticipated graduation and each class is limited to 15-20 students. Most students enter the program as incoming freshmen, but when space is available, it is possible to join the program any time prior to the conclusion of their sophomore year.

Application Process

Prospective Scholars Program students are asked to:

- Attend a Scholars Program orientation event (when possible)
- Submit an online application
- Interview with the director of the Scholars Program

Admission to the program is competitive. Students may be admitted, waitlisted or denied. Students denied admission to the program may reapply at any time prior to the end of their sophomore year.

Campus Life and Education Abroad

Scholars Program students are afforded a unique opportunity to learn, serve and grow. Scholars participate in all facets of student life. Some play sports, write for the campus newspaper or work as lab assistants. Students are urged to participate in education abroad or internship experiences that match their personal and professional interests. Scholars Program students have studied in Japan, China, France, Germany, England, Spain and Mexico.

Learn more

The Benedictine University Scholars Program welcomes applications from talented high school seniors and transfer students in their freshman or sophomore year. For application information, contact the Office of Admissions at (630) 829-6300, the Scholars Program at (630) 829-6250 or visit and apply at ben.edu/scholarsprogram.