



Kent State University
Fraternity/Sorority Officer Resource Guide

SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR

Created By: John Campbell, Fall 2009 Graduate Intern

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Kent State University Mission Statement

The mission of Kent State University is to discover, create, apply and share knowledge, as well as to foster ethical and humanitarian values in the service of Ohio and the global community. As an eight-campus educational system, Kent State offers a broad array of academic programs to engage students in diverse learning environments that educate them to think critically and to expand their intellectual horizons while attaining the knowledge and skills necessary for responsible citizenship and productive careers.

Kent State University Greek Community Mission Statement

We, as the Greek Community of Kent State University, believe in integrity, honesty, and individuality. We aim to help men and women become stronger leaders, individually and collectively, by holding ourselves to higher standards. We strive to excel in service and scholarship, while forming lifelong bonds of friendship.

The Scholarship Chair Position

Because of the expressed value of scholarship, many chapters of Greek organizations recognize official positions responsible for promoting academic excellence within organizations. While Scholarship Chairs may be known as other titles in varying organizations, their purposes often include the following:

- Motivate members to perform well academically and promote a positive attitude toward academic achievement
- Model admirable behavior in regard to academic performance (lead by example)
- Monitor member grades to ensure that all individuals within the organization conform to established national and campus guidelines
- Maintain confidential academic records on all members and compile statistical reports (distribute and collect grade release forms)
- Place members on academic probation when necessary
- Promote good scholarship among members by providing them with opportunities to better themselves academically
- Link members with campus resources needed to succeed
- Form and ensure an active Scholarship Committee
- Make weekly reports at chapter meetings
- Consult alumni, advisors, and other campus officials for guidance and resources regarding scholarship programs

Chapter Self Audit

Self-assessment is an important concept for all chapters. In order to set goals and be successful, a chapter must have an understanding of itself. The purpose of this evaluation is to understand your chapter's strengths and weaknesses. (Adapted from Case Western Reserve University's Scholarship Action Plan, based in part on a report of the Scholarship Committee at Eastern Montana College, headed by Dr. Ed Whipple, Vice President for Student Services)

Chapter Bylaws and Policies

Minimum GPA for new members _____

Minimum GPA for chapter member _____

Minimum GPA for chapter officer _____

Probation GPA _____

Does the chapter get grade releases? _____

Are these GPA requirements enforced? Are they sufficient?

What is the position description of the scholarship chair in your Constitution and Bylaws?

Chapter Self Audit (continued)

Academic Probation

What does academic probation entail? Is it enforced?

How is academic support offered to those who are struggling?

What proactive measures does your chapter have to ensure academic success?

Programming for the Chapter

In what ways does the chair provide programming to the chapter?

Rewards and Incentives

How are chapter members who succeed academically rewarded or recognized?

New Members

Is past academic performance a major factor when choosing new members?

Does the chapter have a scholarship program for new members?

Does the new member program interfere with academics in any way?

On average, are your new initiates' grades lower either before or after their initiation?

Chapter Self Audit (continued)

Other Questions

Does the chair have a committee? What is their role? How can they be better used?

Do you have a study room/test files/scholarship closet/etc? Is it well-maintained? Is it used?

Do you have a faculty advisor? What is their role? Are they well utilized?

What kind of budget does the scholarship chair have, and how is it used?

Do you have study tables? Generally how many people attend? Who attends and why?

Are current study tables adequate (availability/location/etc)?

Do you have study hours or quiet hours? How often? How are study hours and quiet hours enforced?

Do you use upperclassmen as tutors for other members or pledges of your chapter?

Are you satisfied with your present scholarship program?

Developing an Effective Scholarship Committee

Once the chapter recognizes its needs for a scholarship program and selects a Scholarship Chair, this person may choose to instate a Scholarship Committee to share responsibility for overseeing the chapter's academic initiatives.

The makeup of the committee should include members representing the various class levels, along with the Faculty Advisor, if possible. The members of this committee do not have to be the members with the best GPAs. Rather, they should be individuals who are devoted to the idea of improving the academic attitude of the chapter and its overall scholastic performance.

This committee should develop programs, policies, and goals that pertain to scholarship and recommend them to the chapter for adoption. It is ultimately the chapter's responsibility to set goals and adopt them. This committee should be the motivating force to see that these programs or goals, once adopted, are successfully implemented within the chapter. Scholarship committee meetings should be held at least every other week to discuss the progress of the programs, possible improvements, and any problems that may surface.

Responsibilities of a scholarship committee include:

- To prepare a written scholarship program to be submitted to the chapter for approval.
- To develop goals for the term and the academic year and to present these goals to the chapter for adoption.
- To evaluate the scholarship program regularly and to recommend any needed improvements or modifications.
- To develop and arrange for the presentation of awards/scholarships banquet.
- To be acquainted with all services offered by the school (e.g., academic learning/counseling centers, tutorial programs, financial aid) and refer members to them.
- To work with the social committee to ensure that chapter social activities are not scheduled during critical times on the academic calendar (e.g., midterms, "dead week", final exam week) and that weeknight events are limited.
- To establish and coordinate chapter study hours, a chapter tutoring program or "study buddy" program.
- To maintain the chapter library and study room(s) in proper order.
- To maintain the chapter's scholarship bulletin board.
- To arrange for guest and/or faculty speakers.

Developing an Effective Scholarship Committee (continued)

It should be the goal of this committee to develop programs that the chapter will adopt in an effort to improve the academic standing of the group. A chapter that has never had a scholarship program should not try to adopt a large-scale program immediately. The committee should try to implement the maximum change that the chapter is able to assimilate. Whatever program is adopted, regular reviews, progress reports, and encouragement are critical to success.

You will find the process of gaining chapter buy-in to be a prime requisite in the success of the program. This process will:

- Help you enlist the support of the chapter for the program
- Eliminate confusion and help build understanding of the program
- Demonstrate the importance of scholarship
- Help maintain continuity in and further the program

No later than the second or third committee meeting, the program should be outlined. When the program is completed, it should first be taken to the executive committee meeting so the plans can be reviewed in detail. This will serve three purposes. First, it is necessary to communicate the plan with the officer board so they understand it, support it, and are able to coordinate it with other chapter activities. Second, the officers may have useful suggestions that can be incorporated into the program before presenting it to the chapter. Third, any problems or changes should be made before presenting the program to the chapter.

After reviewing the program with the executive committee, it should then be presented in detail to the chapter as a whole to be adopted. If there appears to be a major controversy over any part of the program, encourage the chapter to discuss it at length. If the program does not have the respect and the majority support of the chapter it will be impossible to administer effectively. Having reviewed the program with the officers will hopefully avoid major controversies when presenting it to the chapter. Remember, don't try to change too much too soon. Re-evaluate the existing program and make positive changes that will benefit the chapter as a whole.

Starting a Successful Scholarship Program

In order to effectively administrate a scholarship program, there needs to be a definite, organized, step-by-step plan of execution to avoid confusion and insure proper coordination. It is helpful to consider this as a chronological process throughout the term. The following is a brief checklist reviewing the committee's duties in such a manner.

Beginning of the semester

- ✓ form the scholarship committee
- ✓ determine the scholarship program
- ✓ review the scholarship records of all members
- ✓ check study files and update if necessary
- ✓ schedule the initial conference with the Faculty Advisor to review the status of the chapter
- ✓ meet with new big brothers and big sisters and explain their role in the scholastic development of the new members
- ✓ distribute and explain the scholarship program to the chapter
- ✓ post the chapter's GPA from the previous term
- ✓ determine the chapter's goal(s) for the first quarter and post them
- ✓ meet with members to set individual goals and objectives

Checklist regarding new members

- ✓ begin scholarship file on new member
- ✓ distribute and explain scholarship program and let them know that you are available to help
- ✓ complete grade release forms

During the semester

- ✓ begin a series of discussions with the new members about study skills
- ✓ encourage members having academic difficulties
- ✓ periodically meet with members having academic difficulties and discuss situation and progress
- ✓ meet with new members and discuss classes/coursework and how they are doing
- ✓ meet at least bimonthly with the Faculty Advisor to discuss the scholarship program and any problems
- ✓ assign tutors as needed
- ✓ schedule university and community speakers

At the end of the semester

- ✓ post the grade report on the chapter scholarship bulletin
- ✓ review the members' goals from the beginning of the term

Guest Speakers and Program Ideas

An important role of the Scholarship Chair is to provide members with opportunities to learn more about topics related to academic success. This can be done in a variety of ways. Hosting guest speakers and planning programs geared toward academic improvement and self-understanding are excellent ways to develop your members.

Workshop and Speaker Topic Ideas

- Concentration and memory skills
- Creating an effective study group
- Improving reading skills
- Learning styles assessments
- Note-taking skills
- Preparing for midterms and finals
- Stress management and dealing with test anxiety
- Keeping motivated/avoiding the “sophomore slump”/”Cures for Senioritis”
- Time management
- Test-taking strategies
- The role other factors play on academic performance
 - Fitness and nutrition
 - Mental health and well-being
 - Over-involvement
 - Risky behavior (excessive partying, etc.)
- Invite an alum to discuss the importance of maintaining academic focus as well as his or her job or career field
- Invite a professor to discuss interesting research projects in his or her field of study
- Goal setting

The following sections offer advice for incorporating scholarship in various ways (source: Elon University Scholarship Manual):

Scholarship in Chapter Meetings

1. Give reminders of final course drop dates, early registration, and other related announcements.
2. Make weekly announcements of cultural, education, and career opportunities on campus and in the community.

Scholarship in Recruitment

1. Display your scholarship trophies.
2. Display graphs of chapter scholastic progress.
3. Display bulletin boards with scholastic information.
4. Emphasize the importance of academic success with Potential New Members.

Guest Speakers and Program Ideas (continued)

Graphs

1. Chart the progress of the chapter average, the new member average, and the initiated member average over the past four years. For chapters needing a jolt, chart the percentage of initiated members below bylaws standard and the percentage of dean's list members.
2. Compare your chapter average to other sororities/fraternities on campus. Initiated and new member averages help here, too.
3. Show how your chapter compares with other chapters of your sorority/fraternity.

How to Study Plans

1. Recommend three hours of study per class instead of two
2. Present How to Study workshops or Information Presentations to the entire chapter after new members are initiated (this will show that good scholarship habits do not end after the new member program is completed).
 - a. explain University academic probation
 - b. explain chapter grade requirements
 - c. teach study techniques
 - d. explain honor programs
 - e. outline your chapter scholarship program
 - f. discuss how to improve study atmosphere and chapter performance
 - g. teach how to take essay vs. objective examinations
 - h. teach a method of studying
 - i. describe learning skills centers and courses available
 - j. inform members to counseling and tutoring services
 - k. distribute lists of chapter members and their majors
 - l. distribute schedules for the computer labs on campus

Useful Files and Library

1. Stock files by having "Clean Out Your Notebook" parties at the end of each term; members contribute notes, test and books (that were not bought).
2. Keep updated files about GRE, LSAT, etc. exams offered on or close to campus, with detailed information on how to register, study for them, etc.
3. Test files – to be used properly, as a questioning learning tool only.
4. Major and Minor Files- used for assigning tutors, study buddies.
5. Graduate school catalogues and information.
6. Departmental catalogues.

Guest Speakers and Program Ideas (continued)

Events

1. Campus librarian, computer center director, or academic advisor
2. Placement office personnel or visiting representatives from businesses
3. Administration officials
4. Alumnae/alumni on the faculty
5. Prominent and successful alumnae/alumni in the community

Scholarship Committee

1. Sponsor a chapter book sale or trade each term.
2. Develop a program where each member of the committee is directly responsible for a certain number of members below the bylaws requirement.
3. Establish a chapter tutoring system to be coordinated by the committee.

Scholarship for New Members

1. Plan a library night once a week.
2. Arrange a tour of the library for new members.
3. Combine new member meetings with study sessions.
4. Give each new member a study buddy for motivation (try to match majors).
5. Do not set up double standards and require more activities for new members.

Scholarship in Housing Facilities

1. Post important dates within the facility, such as drop/add days and final dates.
2. Set up a potential tutor list and post inside the facility.
3. Post any study hours and rules.

Recognition

Maintaining motivation among members to perform well academically can be difficult as the semester progresses; nonetheless, this is an essential role of any good Scholarship Chair. It is important to recognize members who do well in this area. Take every opportunity to award good work.

Recognition Ideas

- Recognize a “Scholar of the Week” who has performed well on a test or project
- Rotate a trophy, plaque, or award recognizing each semester’s most outstanding or most improved scholar
- Recognize members who appear on the Dean’s List or President’s List by posting their names in a conspicuous place
- Host a contest in which members predict their grades, and reward those who come the closest to their predictions at semester’s end
- Create posters reminding members of study hours or house quiet hours
- Award prizes to all members who are at or above your chapter’s goal GPA
- Award members who see significant improvement in GPA between semesters
- Create teams (bigs/littles, pledge classes, random groups) to engage in competition to be the most academically successful
- Give members one raffle ticket for earning As on assignments. Hold occasional drawings for prizes such as gift cards to Chipotle or Starbucks or discounts on dues.
- Submit names or profiles of those who do well to your organizations national magazine or newsletter as well as the campus newspaper

Academic Probation

While the concept of academic probation seems pejorative and morale-diminishing, its enforcement is vital to ensuring the strong academic performance of any chapter. It is important that each chapter enforces its policies regarding academic probation.

The Scholarship Chair can be helpful to members on academic probation by doing the following:

- Meet with the member individually to discuss the situation. See how the member feels so that the chapter may be able to help them achieve their academic goals.
- Make recommendations for a plan of action, including a sample study schedule, a list of possible tutors, finding a study buddy, etc.
- Recommend that the member meet with his or her academic advisor to discuss the situation.
- Meet with the member on a weekly basis to discuss modifications to the plan of action agreed upon and to monitor the member's progress.
- If progress is not occurring, inform the member of the potential consequences for failing to meet academic standards.

Obstacles to Good Scholarship: Stress

The Problem

- Stress is an emotionally/bodily reaction to physical, psychological, or emotional demands
- Stress is a fact of life
- Managed stress can become useful and healthy (viewing events and challenges)
- Unmanaged stress can become distressful and unhealthy (viewing events as threats)

Causes of stress

1. Expectations we place on ourselves
2. Expectations of others
3. Our physical environment – noise, movement, weather, season changes
4. Our internal environment – academic pressure, frustration, not enough time, decisions, social life

Symptoms of unmanaged stress

1. Increased heart rate and blood-pressure; feeling tense, irritable, fatigued, or depressed
2. Lack of interest and ability to concentrate, apathy
3. Avoidance behaviors: abuse of drugs, alcohol, tobacco

Ways to manage stress effectively

1. Add balance to life; don't overdo studies or play
2. Know and accept what kind of person you are: strengths and weaknesses
3. Get a thorough physical exam
4. Take "time outs," especially during study
5. Expand your support network; reinforce friendships
6. Exercise regularly
7. Watch your breathing
8. Walk loosely and walk more
9. Learn and practice relaxation skills
10. Study each subject regularly for moderate periods of time
11. Discuss problems with friends, family, dean, or counselor

Obstacles to Good Scholarship: Concentration

The Problem

In many colleges, over 8% of the students report problems concentrating on their studies. Most of these students blame outside distractions for their problems. Many research studies manipulating noise levels and distractions have found that such disturbances may increase, decrease, or not even affect concentration. These researchers have therefore concluded that distractions don't cause concentration problems directly. It is the way distractions are interpreted by the students that disrupts their study.

Creating a Study Environment

If you plan to get anything accomplished when you study, you need to have an atmosphere that promotes effective studying. This should start with the chapter house, if your chapter has one. It is every member's right to be able to study at the chapter house. Therefore, it is every person's duty to allow those around them to study without interference. In order to create a study environment, one should:

1. Find a place to study and keep it for study only.
2. Tool-up the environment with all study needs.
3. Control noise level and the visual environment to acceptable levels.
4. Avoid relaxing while working: create work atmosphere.

When to Study

1. Best during the day and early evening; you'll remember better.
2. Best when there are fewer competing activities in progress.
3. Best when adequate rest periods are provided.
4. Stop studying when fatigue or lack of attention occurs.

How to Study and Concentrate

- When distractions are present, become intensely involved.
- Keep a pad of paper handy to jot down extraneous thoughts that cross your mind while studying; get them out of your mind and onto paper.
- Set goals before you begin each period of study (number of pages, number of problems).
- Design adequate rewards after specified goals are attained.
- Break-up the content of study by mixing up subjects and building in variety and interest and removing boredom.
- Make the most of rest periods – do something very different.
- Don't try to mix work and play.
- Start with short study periods and build to longer periods only as fast as you maintain concentration.
- If necessary, make a calendar of events to clear your mind of distractions.
- Realize that you won't lose friends, respect, or a "good time" just because you are studying...these will keep.
- Plan the length of your study period by the amount of material you have decided to cover, not the clock. (Often the clock is one of the most dangerous distractions.)

From the Academic Skills Center, Dartmouth College (2001)

Other Obstacles to Good Scholarship

Poor chapter scholarship is often the result of several factors:

- **Over-Emphasis on Activities-** Chapters that are over-programmed with social and intramural activities usually have a more difficult time stressing the academic side of college. It is important that chapters balance the social, athletic, and other activities with academics. A monthly/quarterly calendar of events should be distributed so that members can balance their time accordingly.
- **Lack of Study Skills-** It is important that the chapter offer seminars or resource materials to its members in such areas as study skills and test taking strategies. Poor scholarship can usually be improved if the individual will take the initiative to correct certain bad habits. If a member has poor study skills, no amount of required study hours will improve scholastic performance.
- **Lack of Motivation-** This is one of the most difficult areas to address. The scholarship committee and the officers must set the tone in the chapter regarding academic excellence and the need for it. Motivation can come through leadership, effective programming, membership education, awards, and recognition.
- **Physical factors-** Poor eating habits, lack of sleep and exercise, and a generally poor environment not conducive to studying (e.g., noisy, unclean) can all contribute to poor scholarship. It is important to provide an environment within the chapter that is going to contribute to and promote good health and a productive study atmosphere.
- **Lack of an Organized Scholarship Program-** Most often, high academic achievement is found in chapters that have a scholarship chair, scholarship committee, regular scholarship program, and an organized associate member (pledge) scholarship program.

Other Ways to Infuse Scholarship into Chapter Life

Establish quiet hours or “courtesy hours”

- Quiet hours should be in effect Sunday through Thursday (chapters should discuss and agree upon appropriate quiet hours)
- Have 24 hour quiet hours during mid-terms, the week before finals, and during finals
- All hours of the day should be “courtesy hours” (members should turn down their stereos when asked)
- Make sure that the membership education program is in writing so that the new members’ time is organized. The new member program should be completed before finals

Get to know the faculty personally

- Invite a faculty member to dinner
- Create a “Professor of the Month/Term” Award
- Invite faculty to parents’ day activities
- Invite faculty to the scholarship dinner
- Conduct a “Faculty Appreciation Day” with various events geared toward appreciating the faculty at the institution
- Send the faculty copies of the chapter’s newsletters

Hang a bulletin board in the house for scholarship only

- Post composite grades (do NOT post grades of individuals without their written authorization)
- Establish a “Brag Board” – members put up their own tests or papers or any other appropriate item of which they are proud
- Establish a career board – visit the career center on campus for ideas and articles to put on this bulletin board (e.g., how to prepare a resume, majors, and careers to match)
- Post local and national news to keep membership informed of current events
- Post book reviews
- Post reviews of a certain class, program, or seminar
- Recognize “Look at Our Stars” – pictures of members who have excelled in something
- Post a “Thought of the Week” or “Quote of the Week”
- Put up an “I can help” sheet for members who want to assist other members
- List study halls and quiet hours

Other Ways to Infuse Scholarship into Chapter Life (continued)

Scholarship in chapter meetings

- Offer a vocabulary word of the week, announce it and then post it throughout the house (place in a hallway, in the bathroom, on the fridge, etc.)
- Set a chapter GPA goal
- Give reminders of final course drop dates, early registration, degree application, etc.
- Make weekly announcements of career, cultural, and educational opportunities on campus and in the community
- Announce job offers and admissions in to graduate schools, “Who’s Who”, Mortar Board, Phi Beta Kappa, Order of Omega, Rho Lambda, honoraries, etc.
- Offer a study tip of the week
- Pass around the “A” bag (Each member that got an A on a test or paper in the past week can drop their name in the bag. You can also pass around a perfect attendance bag. Each member that attended each class the past week can drop their name in the bag. Draw one name out of the bag during the meeting and give that person a prize, such as a candy bar. Other members will receive a “Where there is a will, there is an A” or a “Perfect Attendance” flyer with a small piece of candy attached in their mailbox.)

Develop a chapter library through alumni contributions. Include:

- Dictionary and thesaurus
- Graduate school catalogues and information
- GMAT, GRE, LSAT, and MCAT information and review books
- School/departmental catalogues
- Encyclopedia set
- Specialized dictionaries (Spanish, French, German, Japanese, technical, etc.)
- Atlas
- College yearbooks
- Fraternity/sorority magazines and publications
- Chapter Operations Manual
- Textbooks
- Books for leisure reading and enrichment

Other Ways to Infuse Scholarship into Chapter Life (continued)

Scholarship for new members

- Have the new member class elect a scholarship chair to serve as a member of the chapter scholarship committee.
- Use similar awards program for new members or better yet, incorporate them into the chapter's program. Survey each member to find out their skills and needs.
- Each new member is assigned a mentor. The mentor helps with the transition of attaining academic success in college. Generally, it is best when this mentor is in the same major. The mentor meets with the new member once a week to help with any problems and assist with any questions that they may ask.
- Work with alumni to develop a chapter educational foundation through the school or your national educational foundation – This type of foundation can accept tax-deductible gifts. A chapter can generally maintain its own exclusive fund within their national organization which can be used to help pay for chapter library materials, study rooms, computer equipment, attendance at leadership seminars and scholarships. Normally, the establishment of a special fund within the Foundation requires an initial investment of a specified amount of money. Only net interest from the account may be used after the minimum is reached.
- Develop a chapter computer room through alumni donations.
- Set up a mentor program (have older members or alumni oversee members in the same major).
- Consider probationary status for members who fall below chapter grade standards. Sanctions could include study hours, participation in a study skills program, and restricting their attendance at social functions.
- Have the chapter challenge a fraternity or sorority each term that had a higher GPA than your chapter the previous term – the groups with the highest GPA will be the guest of the other at a barbeque, dinner, or dessert.

Study Hours:

- Too often, required study hours are considered the best solution to increasing scholarship in the chapter. In reality, enforced study hours do not teach good study habits or skills. If you insist on having study hours, then be sure to require both new and initiated members to be involved. Structure the hours on a sliding scale based on previous term GPAs.

Kent State University Resources

Academic Success Center

<http://www.kent.edu/academics/resources/asc/>

The Academic Success Center provides a variety of resources to undergraduate students, including tutoring services, studying resources, and laptop lending.

Undergraduate Studies Advising Center

<http://explore.kent.edu/index.html>

The Undergraduate Studies Advising Center seeks to foster academic success by providing extensive academic advising services to students. Undergraduate Studies is also responsible for assisting undecided students with degree and career planning; assessing the basic skills of all entering freshman students; providing tutoring services that promote student learning; and providing support tools and resources for low-income, first generation and precollege students.

Student Success Programs/First Year Experience

<http://www1.kent.edu/success/>

Student Success Programs provides a variety of resources for incoming and first-year students at Kent State, including coordinating Destination Kent State. They also provide a variety of workshops and speaker series throughout the year dealing with topics such as academic success, career exploration, civic awareness, diversity, and leadership.

Career Services

<http://career.kent.edu/home/index.cfm>

Career Services provides a variety of professional development services for students. Among other things, they offer a variety of career and job preparation help, including interview preparation, resume critique, and assisting with student job searches.

University Health Services

<http://www1.kent.edu/uhs/>

University Health Services is a comprehensive primary care facility serving the Kent State community. Psychological Services is also located within UHS and provides counseling by licensed psychologists.

Counseling and Human Development Center

<http://chdc.educ.kent.edu/>

The Counseling and Human Development Center, located in White Hall, provides free and confidential counseling services to students at Kent State University.

Eastway Outreach Center <http://www.res.kent.edu/newres/tabid/574/default.aspx>

The Eastway Outreach Center provides academic support services from a variety of offices across campus. Services include be tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, Student Success Workshops, and other forms of academic support provided daily.

References

Elon University Greek Life Scholarship Manual

http://www.elon.edu/docs/e-web/students/greek_life/ScholarshipManual.pdf

University of California, Irvine Greek Scholarship Manual

<http://www.dos.uci.edu/greeklife/documents/IFC%20Scholarship%20Handbook.pdf>

Case Western Reserve University Scholarship Policies and Manuals

<http://studentaffairs.case.edu/greek/scholarship/policies.html>