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Scholarship opportunity for Student Fellows program at SCC

Brad Hall
Mar 26, 2023



A few of SCC's 2022 Student Fellows are (from left) Haley Hatfield, Allye Britton, Hope Salyers, Shaina Brown, Stacy Vaughn, Alexandria Weiss; and WKU Academic Advisor Stephanie Prichard. More information and an application can be found by going to SCC's website and searching for "Student Fellows program."



SOMERSET — If you have ever wanted a career as a teacher, there is no better time than now. If you have ever wanted a scholarship to help you become a teacher, there's no better place to begin than Somerset Community College (SCC).

The college has funding available to support students pursuing the Elementary Education Teacher transfer program to Western Kentucky University (WKU). The Student Fellows program offers a scholarship for up to two years at SCC, before transferring to WKU for a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education.

"I think this is a great opportunity for anyone," says Melissa Dalton, SCC education/teacher prep advisor. "They (students) can start local and stay local which helps those who are changing careers or who have families."

Those in the program receive an annual \$1,500 scholarship, \$100 a month stipend, \$100 for testing fees, and \$100 toward a professional development event. Also available to students are peer and faculty mentoring, academic coaching, and monthly activities to help prepare them as teachers. “Students in the program have access to all of WKU’s resources as well as all SCC resources,” Dalton said.

The assistant professor notes that to be eligible to apply for the program, students must commit to pursuing the WKU Elementary Education program and to participating each semester in designated activities, workshops, and trainings. The scholarship is available to residents in the following south-central Kentucky counties: Adair, Casey, Clay, Clinton, Cumberland, Jackson, McCreary, Rockcastle, Whitley, Wayne, and the Corbin area.

More information and an application can be found by going to SCC’s website and searching for “Student Fellows program.” The deadline to apply is Friday, May 26.

Casey County student Hope Salyers was accepted into the program last year and says it’s “an amazing cohort to be a part of.”

“It has helped me to build friendships with fellow students and friends, who will one day be fellow colleagues,” she said. “We are also in the process of putting together projects that can be put in our portfolios to help us secure our teaching jobs.” When she completes her degrees at SCC and WKU, Salyers says, “I plan to get a full-time teaching job in my hometown, where I’ve done substitute teaching, or getting a job in Appalachia.” She said she also plans to “return to college to pursue a master’s degree in higher education or some degree in the history field.”

Dalton notes that students accepted into the program will take part in an orientation day this June and “have monthly activities” such as guest speakers and attending community events. She said that last year’s group toured the WKU campus in Bowling Green. Students may also be enrolled in a First Year Experience course (FYE 100).

As students complete their associate degree requirements, SCC’s University Center of Southern Kentucky steps in to assist with the transition to WKU’s Elementary Education program. “Through the grant, students get the full educational experience right here at home,” says University Center Director Korey Bruck. “They (students) still get to know their classmates and professors and engage with them as if they were in the same physical classroom.” He noted that students in the program can take classes at any SCC campus or center.

Bruck says that WKU advisor Stephanie Prichard helps the students with the entire transfer process including helping them register for their classes. “(This program) has been an amazing opportunity for our Elementary Education students through the University Center,” he said.

Funding comes from a U.S. Department of Education Rural Postsecondary and Economic Development grant. The SCC program to promote the teaching profession comes at a critical time for the state. Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear recently said that Kentucky is seeing 11,000 teacher vacancies this school year.

Kentucky Association of School Administrators Executive Director Rhonda Caldwell was quoted in the Lexington Herald-Leader as saying the teacher shortage in public schools represented a “crisis” for the state.

“The time is now to figure out what we can do to entice, retain and empower citizens to become amazing teachers in our schools. Failure to do so will have dire results,” she said.

For more information regarding Teacher Education at SCC or the Student Fellows program, contact Melissa Dalton at melissa.dalton@kctcs.edu, 606-677-8313, or the University Center of Southern Kentucky at scuniversitycenter@kctcs.edu, 606-451-6667.

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