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A. Program Overview

The SOAR Ambassador Program is a scholarship program offered by the Office of Scholarships & Financial Aid. Scholarship recipients – “SOAR Ambassadors” – are carefully selected as incoming freshmen based upon a review of the scholarship application, high school academic achievement, standardized test score performance and the results of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The scholarship award is the equivalent of in-state UNCW tuition and fees. Supplemental awards toward books, meals and housing are supplied for sophomore, junior and senior years. Due to its four-year design, the program is intended for traditional high school graduates pursuing undergraduate coursework for their first undergraduate degree and not participants/graduates of early college programs or graduate coursework. Full-time enrollment is required for eight continuous semesters.

Ambassadors participate in programming designed to encourage student engagement in campus activities and contribute to their personal and professional development, while completing degree requirements in four years. Examples of approved events include academic lectures, seminars, resume writing, arts and cultural performances. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the multitude of community service and leadership opportunities offered through the Office of Student Leadership Engagement.

B. The Award

SOAR Ambassadors receive the equivalent of in-state tuition and fees during each academic year of eligibility. The scholarship is available for a maximum of eight consecutive semesters or the attainment of 120 credit hours, (124 credit hours for cohorts that began prior to 2019), whichever occurs first.

Award Schedule for 2019-20 Academic Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award Schedule 18-19 Academic Year</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition &amp; Fees</td>
<td>$7,138</td>
<td>$7,138</td>
<td>$7,138</td>
<td>$7,138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
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<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$7,138</td>
<td>$8,138</td>
<td>$9,138</td>
<td>$10,138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All SOAR scholarship funds are split evenly between semesters and will be applied to student accounts, along with all other financial aid. These funds will be used to pay university charges; excess funds will be refunded to the student in accordance with university policies. Students must complete the fall semester programming expectations to be eligible to receive the spring award. Students in their final semester will receive half of their scholarship funds until the semester requirements are complete. **A minimum of half of the program requirements should be completed by mid-year in order to receive a subsequent payment.**

### C. Program Components

#### 1. Community Service
Most SOAR Ambassadors have been active volunteers prior to enrolling at UNCW. The community service requirement is an extension of those activities. In addition to the associated physical and mental health benefits, through these activities, students may form personal and professional relationships that last long after the service activity has ended. Students are encouraged to seek organized opportunities either on- or off-campus in the Wilmington community, but may also create an initiative, with prior approval, that may fulfill a personal passion. All students must complete 10 hours of community service each academic year.

#### 2. SOAR Ambassador Organization
The purpose of the SOAR Ambassador organization is to enable SOAR Ambassador scholarship recipients a forum to 1) gain and display leadership skills, 2) design and host community service activities within the campus and Wilmington community and 3) provide a supportive peer network among the various cohorts. The design of the organization will facilitate a degree of flexibility that enables individuals to serve in a leadership capacity and control the delivery of content and opportunities for Ambassadors to complete the program requirements. The organization uses the traditional structure of officer positions, with additional leadership opportunities within subcommittees. Ambassadors elect officers annually.

In addition to leadership skills, participation in a student organization facilitates networking with other leaders on campus, both student and administrators. This is an excellent opportunity to learn skills and meet people who can advance a student’s transition to life after college. Ambassadors who serve in an officer role can satisfy five hours of community service.
3. **CLAM$**

The SOAR Ambassador program emphasizes student engagement. Active student engagement offers benefits that extend the rewards of a college education beyond the classroom. The campus has a variety of events to help students build community with peers and gain new experiences. CLAM$ content areas are career preparation (C), leadership development (L), academic major exploration - excludes SI sessions (A), multiculturalism/arts (M) and financial literacy ($). Activities must 1) occur on the UNCW campus or 2) be an event coordinated by a UNCW Department. Event participation forms must be signed by a UNCW faculty/staff member – not a student.

The University’s First-Year Learning Communities help students transition to college and offer curricular and co-curricular experiences. Joining a learning community is an excellent way to aid a student’s ability to complete the CLAM$ requirements.

SOAR Leadership Program for first year students also offers enriching experiences, including the opportunity to hone leadership skills, explore campus involvement initiatives and navigate the campus prior to the official move-in weekend. **First year participants fulfill the L component of CLAM$ and the community service requirement by attending this program.**

4. **Peer Advising**

The SOAR Ambassador peer advising program is a resource to assist first-year Ambassadors achieve program goals with the guidance of an upper-class Ambassador. Like every component of the Ambassador program, the intent is to leverage experiences to set the course for a successful year. Freshmen interact with a number of upperclassmen serving in an advisory capacity, such as a resident assistant, orientation leader and Seahawk Link. The SOAR Ambassador program peer advisor differs from these roles in that there is a shared expectation to maintain academic excellence and program eligibility.

The program coordinator matches students. The peer advising agreement contains the established terms for meetings. The peer relationship is required for the duration of the fall semester; there must be an interaction between the pairings monthly. Interactions should occur in-person. Both signatures are required on the communication form. Peer advisors may receive credit for five hours of community service for facilitating a successful peer relationship. Please consult with the program coordinator immediately if challenges arise.
Expectations for Protégés

- Demonstrate willingness to receive guidance from assigned advisor about matters related to the SOAR Ambassador program
- Be attentive, avoid distractions during meetings
- Respond to communications from peer advisor in a timely manner
- Attend and be an active participant at SOAR Ambassador meetings
- Be willing to step out of your comfort zone
- Ask questions when something is unclear

Expectations for Peer Advisors

- Act as an informed resource for assigned protégés regarding matters related to SOAR Ambassador program requirements
- Support new students with identification of activities to meet the program requirements
- Provide basic support for other orientation activities
- Be attentive, avoid distractions during meetings
- Respond to communications from protégés in a timely manner
- Attend and be an active participant at SOAR Ambassador meetings
- Submit Peer Advising Communication forms within seven days of the meeting

The following are examples of what should not be expected:

- Neither participant should expect to have to initiate all communication
- Peer advisors are not expected to provide solutions to personal problems
- Peer advising relationships are not intended as a substitute for professional services, but the advisor may be able to guide the protégé in identifying appropriate resources.

5. Professional Advising

The professional advising component for third-year Ambassadors is intended to expose students to career and academic possibilities associated with their discipline. Students may select a faculty member, academic advisor or career professional in the local community for the year-long relationship. Students should consider the use of a self-evaluation tool to shape the determination of goals. The pair will establish a realistic three-year plan on the Initial Action Plan. The pair meet monthly to discuss and record progress. Fourth-year Ambassadors implement the second year of their plan, also using Action Plan Progress Report forms to record monthly progress and meeting with the SOAR Program Advisor monthly.
D. Program Grade Level Requirements

Requirements for SOAR Ambassadors by Grade Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Years 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus Interaction</td>
<td>CLAM$</td>
<td>CLAM$</td>
<td>Professional advising</td>
<td>Goal implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student org participation</td>
<td>Student org participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Service</td>
<td>10 hours minimum</td>
<td>10 hours Minimum</td>
<td>10 hours minimum</td>
<td>10 hours minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Program</td>
<td>Protégé</td>
<td>Peer Advisor</td>
<td>Peer Advisor</td>
<td>Peer Advisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First and Second Year:
- Career Exploration (2 campus events)
- Leadership Development (2 campus events)
- Academic Enhancement (2 campus events)
- Multiculturalism and Diversity Awareness (2 campus events)
- $ Financial Literacy (2 campus events)
- Service (10 hours of community service)
- Protégé/Peer Advisor monthly interaction
- Active participation in the SOAR Ambassador organization

Third Year:
- Identify a professional advisor with whom to work throughout the year to develop a 3-year action plan
- Meet with professional advisor once per month
- Submit the Action Plan Progress Report monthly
- Meet with SOAR program coordinator once per semester to discuss goals and progress
- Service (10 hours of community service)
- Protégé/Peer Advisor monthly interaction
- Participation in the SOAR student organization is suggested but not required

Fourth Year:
- Execute year two of the goals outlined in the 3-year plan
- Meet with SOAR Program Coordinator once per month
- Submit Progress Report monthly
- Protégé/Peer monthly interaction
- Participation in the SOAR student organization is suggested but not required
E. Program Renewal Requirements

To retain the award in a subsequent academic year, all recipients must:

- Earn a minimum GPA of 3.5 or higher each academic year (reviewed at the end of the spring semester).
- Earn 30 credit hours (reviewed at the end of the spring semester). **This is a requirement, regardless of schedules that may apply to certain majors.**
- Complete all grade-level program expectations for the preceding academic year.
- Complete the FAFSA each academic year – by Oct. 31, and complete the verification process, if required – by Jan. 1.
- Meet the income eligibility guidelines. (Combined family income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. The guidelines can be found at [https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines](https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines).

*Note: If a current SOAR Ambassador no longer meets the federal poverty criteria, he/she is ineligible to receive this scholarship. By completing the FAFSA early, students will be better positioned to receive alternative gift aid.*

F. Progress Reviews

**Attendance:**

Attendance and absences at required meetings will be recorded and considered to determine program eligibility in conjunction with other requirements. You can miss one meeting per semester (without penalty) with prior approval or in the event of an emergency. Please email the SOAR program coordinator at scholarships@uncw.edu in advance of or as soon as possible after the meeting. For each additional missed meeting, students must perform two hours of community service.

**Mid-Semester Program Review:**

After fall break, fall graduates will receive communication regarding the status of program requirements.

**Mid-Year Program Review:**

At the end of the fall semester, Ambassadors will receive communication regarding the status of program requirements.
End-of-Year Review:
You will receive notification if you successfully or unsuccessfully met the requirements to remain in the SOAR Ambassadors program in mid-late May, after the spring semester grades have posted.

At the end of each semester, students who have failed to meet program requirements are subject to dismissal from the SOAR Ambassador program and the corresponding award may be removed. This does not pertain to the 3.5 GPA requirement.

G. Dismissal
Program dismissal may result from not meeting/maintaining one or more of the following expectations:

- Full-time enrollment (minimum of 12 credit hours per semester)
- Achieving a cumulative 3.5 GPA (by the end of spring semester)
- Earning 30 credit hours during the academic year (by the end of spring semester)
- Completing grade-level specific program requirements
- Attending SOAR program meetings and/or scheduled meetings with the program coordinator, providing timely responses to communication from SOAR staff including submitting documentation within the allotted time frames
- Unacceptable conduct as defined by the university code of conduct (including but not limited to: rude, harassing and/or violent behavior). This is subject to immediate dismissal from the program.

If you are dismissed from the SOAR Ambassador program, you will receive an official dismissal letter.

Please note: Students may take summer term classes to raise their cumulative GPA or obtain the required 30 credit hours in an academic year. Courses to address a credit hour deficiency may be taken at UNCW or elsewhere with credits transferring to UNCW. Courses to improve GPA must be taken at UNCW for the course to be included in the calculation. SOAR Ambassador scholarship awards are not available for the summer term, but students may complete the process to request summer financial aid.

Please check with your academic advisor to determine if it is possible to bring your cumulative GPA up to the required 3.5 with summer classes before enrolling. You can also access the GPA calculator in SeaNet.
H. Reinstatement Requests

To appeal your dismissal for GPA and/or hours earned, complete the Scholarship Reinstatement Request form. You will be notified by email that you have been reinstated, typically within 10 business days. Please note the review may take longer during peak processing times.

If appealing on the basis of income eligibility, students/families must complete the Special Circumstance Appeals process. Results for this process are usually available early in the spring semester. Students appealing will not receive funds associated with the scholarship program during the fall semester, but must continue to fulfill program expectations while waiting for the appeal decision. If the appeal is approved, the aid will be restored retroactively.

Dismissal for the following reasons may not be appealed:
- Failure to attend all required events
- Failure to complete the required community service hours
- Unacceptable conduct

I. Recognition

The renewal requirements for the SOAR Ambassador scholarship program are rigorous. While increased financial awards are a way to reward those that maintain eligibility and advance in the program, students also have the opportunity to earn recognition for exemplary behaviors, such as:

- Program completion (students receive a cord for commencement ceremonies)
- Outstanding role as Peer Advisor
- Outstanding role as Student Leader*
- 4.0 GPA during a semester
- Community Service Award
  - exceeding the minimum number of required hours,
  - creating/organizing a meaningful, successful event for other Ambassador participants,
  - making a significant impact to an organization/effort.

*selected by SOAR Ambassador program staff
J. Forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMS</th>
<th>COHORT</th>
<th>SUBMISSION FREQUENCY</th>
<th>REQUIREMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action Plan</td>
<td>Year 3, Year 4</td>
<td>Once</td>
<td>Submit by Sept. 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Plan Progress Form</td>
<td>Year 3, Year 4</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Submit monthly after meeting with advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Advising Evaluation Form</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Once</td>
<td>Submit by May 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Advising Agreement</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Once at the beginning of the fall semester</td>
<td>Submit by Sept. 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Advising Communication Form</td>
<td>Years 2, 3 and 4</td>
<td>Per meeting, at least monthly</td>
<td>Submit within 7 days of event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Advising Evaluation Form</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Once</td>
<td>Submit by Dec. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Participation Form</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Per event</td>
<td>Submit within 7 days of event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship Reinstatement Request Form</td>
<td>As applicable</td>
<td>If dismissed from the program due to GPA or credit hour requirement</td>
<td>Submit at end of summer session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Required documentation will be uploaded into the same scholarship software used to apply for the SOAR Ambassador scholarship. Save documents to a location on your computer as a PDF in order to retrieve them as a file for the upload process.
K. Suggestions for Protégé/Peer Advisors

Meeting Structure

- Stick to a regular meeting schedule
- Establish/adhere to established boundaries
- Use a meeting agenda:
  - what is the current status of the goal
  - where do you need to be
  - what steps are needed to accomplish the goal
  - debrief/confirm what was discussed
  - establish date/time for next meeting
  - evaluate the meeting’s effectiveness; provide “feedforward” (use the term “feedforward” instead of feedback; Marshall Goldsmith https://blog.shrm.org/sasia/blog/try-feedforward-instead-of-feedback)
  - Complete and submit the Communication Form to OSFA after each meeting

Suggested Conversation Topics

- Balancing academics, program requirements and social life
- Time management
- Networking
- Personal responsibility and accountability
- Life at home
- CLAM$S program opportunities
L. Frequently Asked Questions

Where may I find SOAR program forms?
SOAR program forms are in the “Forms” section of the UNCW Office of Scholarships & Financial Aid website (uncw.edu/finaid).

How do I check to see if you received my completed SOAR forms?
Forms must be uploaded by students using the scholarship software. You may view the status of the uploading process by accessing the scholarship software in SeaNet under the Student Services Tab, select “Financial Aid”, then select the “Apply for Scholarships” link. The “SOAR Ambassador program forms” item is used to upload the required documentation. The scholarship software can be accessed at the following link:

https://uncw.scholarships.ngwebsolutions.com/CMXAdmin/Cmx_Content.asp?cpId=715

May I recommend a friend for a SOAR Ambassador scholarship?
You may encourage a high school student to complete the application process. Only entering freshmen may be admitted into the SOAR Ambassador program.

May I complete my community service hours off campus or at home on weekends or breaks?
Community service hours may be completed on the UNCW campus or with an organization that serves the Wilmington community. If you are not sure if your event will qualify as an acceptable activity to meet program requirements, please inquire with the program coordinator prior to attending the event.

Does the SOAR Ambassador program pay for summer school, even if I am attending to meet the 30-credit-hour requirement?
The SOAR scholarship does not pay for summer classes. Students should complete the summer aid application for consideration of summer aid.

Can AP transfer credits count toward the credit hour requirement?
Credits earned prior to entering the SOAR Ambassador program do not count towards the annual 30-credit-hour requirement but do contribute towards the maximum credit hour limit. If you reach the 120/124 credit hour limit during a fall semester, you may remain in the program for the following spring semester, as long as you do not exceed the eight semester maximum.
I am a double major and my degree is going to take longer than four years to complete. May I continue my SOAR scholarship for another year?
The SOAR Ambassador Program scholarship is intended for traditional freshmen students without any prior college attendance. The scholarship is limited to eight semesters. If degree attainment is not obtained or if a second degree is also pursued to extend the academic tenure of a student, by completing the FAFSA, you receive funding, based on your eligibility, from alternate funding sources. You should also complete the university scholarship application.

If I am an out-of-state student, can my SOAR Ambassador scholarship be increased to cover the additional costs?
The scholarship is awarded in the amount of in-state tuition, regardless of a student’s state of residency.

What if my income increases for the following year and I no longer meet the “200% or below the federal poverty guidelines” criteria?
If your combined adjusted gross income on your FAFSA increases significantly and you no longer meet the federal poverty guidelines criteria, you will be ineligible to remain in the SOAR Ambassador program and will be considered for other aid you are eligible to receive. Review the reinstatement request process for additional information.

May I use my SOAR Ambassador scholarship to study abroad?
SOAR funds will be disbursed with all other financial aid to assist students with paying for education abroad programs for one semester. During the semester abroad, you are exempt from the completing the associated program requirements. You are responsible for fulfilling the remaining requirements during the semester at UNCW.

May I receive additional scholarships and/or fellowships while receiving my SOAR Ambassador scholarship?
You may receive other scholarship or fellowship awards as long as the terms of the award do not reference tuition and fees. Some institutional funds may not be combined with the SOAR Ambassador scholarship.
If I am a senior and don’t need the full 30 credit hours in my final year to graduate, am I still required to take all 30 hours to keep my scholarship?
If you need fewer than 30 credit hours to graduate in your last year, you may submit a degree audit form in support of waiving the requirement. Maintaining full-time student status is always required to receive the scholarship funds.

If my cumulative GPA is a 3.49 at the end of the year, will I lose my scholarship?
No. It is an accepted practice for departmental review, resume’ inclusion and other considerations that GPAs may be rounded by numerical standard.

Can I keep my scholarship if I withdraw during the semester or take a leave of absence?
Students remain eligible for the program by remaining a full-time student for eight continuous semesters. If you do not meet this eligibility requirement, you will be dismissed from the program.

Ideally, you should discuss plans to withdraw from the university with the SOAR Ambassador Program Coordinator. Understandably, there are some circumstances in which a withdrawal may be in your best interest. If it’s not possible to discuss this with the Program Coordinator in advance, you may submit the reinstatement request form for reconsideration of program membership.

This program observes the university’s leave of absence policy (absent for more than one semester), which is regulated by the Office of the Registrar. Note: You must be in good standing (making progress towards completion) for all other grade-level applicable requirements for consideration for reinstatement after a withdrawal or leave of absence.
M. Campus Offices and Resources

For questions about the SOAR Ambassador Program:
**Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid**
Warwick Center
Email: scholarships@uncw.edu
Phone: 910.962.3177    Fax: 910.962.3851

For information on leadership events and community service activities:
**Office of Student Leadership and Engagement**
Fisher Student Center, Room 2029
Email: engage@uncw.edu
Phone: 910.962.3877    Fax: 910.962.7438

For assistance with academic tutoring and support:
**University Learning Center**
DePaolo Hall, First Floor
Email: ulc@uncw.edu
Phone: 910.962.7857

For assistance with resume writing, skills assessment, interview techniques:
**Career Center**
Fisher University Union, Room 2035
Email: careercenter@uncw.edu
Phone: 910.962.317   Fax: 910.962.4257

For assistance managing academic stress, anxiety and more:
**Counseling Center**
DePaolo Hall
Phone: 910.962.3746

To inquire about education abroad opportunities:
**Office of International Programs**
118 Friday Annex
Email: studyabroad@uncw.edu
Phone: 910.962.3685    Fax: 910.962.4053

For consultation or crisis intervention services:
**UNCW Care**
Second Floor, DePaolo Hall
Email: care@uncw.edu
Phone: 910.962.CARE    Fax: 910.962.7374
SOAR Ambassador Program Handbook Signature Page

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a summary of the policies and procedures related to the SOAR Ambassador scholarship program as they relate to students in areas including, but not limited to: eligibility, application and award, requirements and expectations. The handbook serves as a resource and guide for students, parents/guardians and staff.

As the recipient of the SOAR Ambassador scholarship, it is imperative that you read this handbook thoroughly and refer to it throughout your time as a SOAR Ambassador. While university departments will assist you in areas of academic advising, financial aid awareness, and opportunities for leadership and community service, it remains your responsibility to plan and achieve the requirements expressed in this document in a timely and satisfactory manner.

By signing below, you are indicating that you have read the handbook and agree to the terms and conditions of the SOAR Ambassador scholarship program. Please sign and date this page and submit it to the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid by August 31.

Printed Name: ___________________________ 850# __________________

Signature: ______________________________ Date: __________________

We have written this handbook with the intention of providing accurate information. However, the contents in this handbook are subject to change without notice due to changing federal, state and institutional policies and procedures, as well as unintended error. All financial aid awards are contingent upon availability of funds and are subject to revision.