



How long after high school graduation does the NCS tuition assistance continue?

New Century Scholars are encouraged to enroll at SCC in the Fall following high school graduation. However, should a delay be necessary, some Scholars starting their education at SCC within 15 months of graduating from high school would still be able to make full use of their NCS tuition assistance. The NCS tuition assistance pays tuition and fees for five semesters of college work (full or part-time enrollment) within the three years following traditional high school graduation. This allows students two years to complete an associate degree. Many degree programs require a summer term. The five semesters of NCS support allows for this. Please note that a Scholar may not earn a degree in the allotted time if he/she does not attend classes full-time, does not meet testing requirements for general education coursework at the time of enrollment or for some reason does not make satisfactory progress toward graduation each semester. Scholars may continue to attend SCC and complete their coursework if NCS support expires prior to earning a degree. However, for those Scholars, tuition and fees would be their own responsibility.

How is Western Carolina University involved in NCS?

WCU has joined in to offer similar last-dollar tuition assistance to New Century Scholars who graduate from SCC with an associate degree in selected programs. After successfully completing the SCC requirements, while remaining in good standing with NCS, the Scholar can apply for admission to WCU to pursue a bachelor's degree. Specific rules apply. See the separate WCU contract for details.



Welcome

As Western North Carolina prepares the next generation of workers, business owners, managers, teachers, parents, community leaders and public officials - the importance of a college education has never been greater.

By joining New Century Scholars, you are taking the first step on your journey to a college education and your future as a successful part of our community.

Congratulations and welcome to the New Century Scholars Program.

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What is the New Century Scholars Program?

The New Century Scholars Program provides support, encouragement and incentive to selected students from Jackson, Macon and Swain Counties. Scholars are selected for NCS participation in the 7th grade and are expected to remain in the program through graduation of high school. Most students will choose to enroll in Southwestern Community College (SCC) upon graduation to complete an associate degree, however, it is not a requirement for participation. The program's guarantee of last dollar tuition assistance at SCC serves as both the motivation needed during middle and high school years and the tool for guaranteeing access to higher education after graduation. In addition to the five semesters of tuition support at SCC, Scholars who complete their degree at SCC are offered a similar guarantee at Western Carolina University (WCU) to work toward a bachelor's degree.

How did New Century Scholars start?

New Century Scholars was started in 1995 after Jackson County Schools Superintendent, Dr. Charles McConnell, identified the need to help "high potential" students achieve the goal of attending college. New Century Scholars was created as a motivational tool to help students identify and pursue the goal of attaining a college education. Dr. McConnell and Dr. Barry Russell, then President of Southwestern Community College, approached area business leaders with a simple plan to remove barriers to help students and families achieve this dream. The New Century Scholars program was expanded to Macon and Swain counties in 1996.

What is the goal of New Century Scholars?

New Century Scholars is designed to improve academic readiness, bolster student persistence toward high school graduation and increase the college-going rate in Western North Carolina. It is our desire that New Century Scholars learn to set high expectations for themselves and work hard to reach their goals.



Are textbooks included in tuition and fee payments?

No. Textbooks are not included in tuition and fee payments. Costs for textbooks and other college supplies are the responsibility of each New Century Scholar. Local scholarships, grants and aid may be available for Scholars who need and request support and may be awarded in addition to New Century Scholars tuition assistance.

What should we do to prepare for the college costs that will be the responsibility of our family?

While New Century Scholars and their families will not need to worry about the costs for tuition and fees, it is important to prepare for the other costs associated with college. The cost of textbooks, supplies, computers, transportation and living expense are the responsibility of each individual Scholar. It is recommended that you prepare now to meet these financial needs. Family savings started now can benefit from six years of growth; but more importantly, opening a special college fund provides an opportunity for the NCS student to learn the valuable lesson of investing in their future.

Are NCS funds available to take to another college or university?

New Century Scholars is a unique program that was started locally. Currently SCC and WCU are committed to supporting students in the program. NCS funds are not available to students who choose to attend college elsewhere.

However, should an opportunity to attend another college or university arise, New Century Scholars are not required to attend SCC. The primary goal of New Century Scholars is to help students prepare for their futures and gain access to higher education.



What are the benefits offered to New Century Scholars upon entering SCC and WCU?

New Century Scholars who successfully complete the NCS program and graduate from high school are eligible for last-dollar tuition assistance to SCC. Scholars will be able to attend SCC without paying the cost of tuition and fees for five semesters. Upon successful completion of selected associate degree programs at SCC and acceptance at WCU, students may also pursue a bachelor's degree at Western Carolina University without incurring the cost of tuition and fees.

What does “last dollar tuition assistance” mean?

All New Century Scholars are **required** to apply for financial aid prior to entering SCC. If a student qualifies for state or federal grant awards, these funds will be used **first** to pay for college tuition and fees. NCS funds kick-in **after** other grant funds are awarded, if financial aid funds are not sufficient to cover the costs of tuition and fees, or if the student's program of study makes him or her ineligible to receive these funds.

The NCS Program utilizes the collective value of the funds raised to benefit an entire cohort or class of New Century Scholars. Some Scholars may have all tuition/fees paid from the NCS fund - some may qualify for less NCS funding or none at all. Regardless of the method, all Scholars will have the opportunity to attend SCC with no tuition costs.

How much money will each NCS student receive?

This will vary from student to student. Students who receive a full federal grant package will not likely receive any tuition assistance from the New Century Scholars Program. Students who do not qualify for any state or federal financial aid will have **all** their tuition and fees paid by NCS funds. By participating in New Century Scholars, each student can be confident there will be no cost for college tuition and fees. Many Scholars apply for additional scholarships which are awarded in addition to NCS or grant funding. Private scholarships do not decrease the amount of “last dollar tuition assistance” a Scholar will receive while at SCC. Financial aid funds **or** NCS funds **or** a combination of both give students and parents a guarantee that tuition and fees will not prohibit the Scholar from accessing higher education.



Who funds New Century Scholars?

New Century Scholars is a locally funded initiative. For each new class of NCS students inducted, funds are raised on their behalf to support participation in New Century Scholars. The number of new NCS is determined by the sum of the collective funds raised within the community each year. These funds are pooled and used for the collective benefit of the students in that cohort (or class) of students.

Funding currently comes from local businesses, individuals, clubs, organizations, and fund-raisers. All funds raised for NCS tuition support are held until graduation and used for tuition and fee payments.

Occasionally, we ask that students assist with fund-raising efforts. By participating in fund-raising activities, students learn that their efforts help to sustain the New Century Scholars program.

How are students chosen?

Potential New Century Scholars are identified by school staff at the end of the 6th grade year. A committee of teachers and administrators review the school record of each candidate and select the “new” New Century Scholars at the beginning of the 7th grade year. New participants are notified of their selection at the start of their seventh grade school year. Selected students must display effort in the classroom, have a positive attitude, demonstrate a desire for education, and exhibit good behavior and character. A student's potential for success in college is important. Grade point average and financial need are not primary considerations in the selection process. In addition, students must be eligible to **apply** for federal financial aid and must be residents of North Carolina.

What is the reason for participating in NCS from 7th through 12th grade?

The New Century Scholars Program is more than just a tuition guarantee. New Century Scholars helps students to develop life skills that ensure academic success. Scholars are strongly encouraged to take courses that will prepare them for college level work. Research has shown that when students are identified early in their educational careers, given the support necessary to do well in school, and helped to see a path towards a college education, they are more likely to stay in school and achieve their goals.



What is required once a student joins NCS?

The requirements of the NCS Program are designed to help prepare the student for success, both now and after graduation. All students who strive to meet these goals will be more prepared for college, but Scholars are asked to make a commitment in return for the community's support and faith in their ability to achieve. All Scholars are expected to comply with school attendance regulations, meet grade requirements, follow school guidelines regarding behavior, complete ten hours of volunteer service each year, remain drug and alcohol free, exhibit good citizenship, and reaffirm their commitment to the program by signing the NCS contractual agreement annually. Additionally, Scholars must complete the application, FAFSA and financial aid processes for SCC admissions and meet academic and behavior requirements while enrolled at SCC to remain in good standing.

What is required of a parent of a New Century Scholar?

Parents of New Century Scholars are asked to support their student in honoring the commitment made when joining NCS and to reaffirm this commitment each year through contract signing. The most visible show of support is for parents to help Scholars attend all scheduled activities and complete his/her annual volunteer service requirement.

Why do we sign a contract to participate in NCS?

The contract to participate in the NCS Program is signed by the student, his/her parents, public school officials, SCC officials and WCU officials. Annual signing of this contract not only reiterates each party's serious commitment to NCS but it also serves as a binding agreement that protects the rights and responsibilities of all involved.

What are the benefits of being a New Century Scholar?

The New Century Scholars Program not only provides last-dollar tuition assistance for college, it provides support to students throughout their education from middle school through graduation from Southwestern Community College. Scholars participate in service learning opportunities, enrichment activities, leadership development training, and educational workshops and activities designed to help them develop their potential for success in college and beyond.



What kind of support is offered to New Century Scholars?

Student support is offered through activities and services provided by the public schools and Southwestern Community College. Support services are coordinated by the NCS Coordinator who monitors student progress and arranges support as needed. Social and cultural development is supported through leadership training, team building, enrichment events, volunteer service and other NCS activities. Visits to SCC campuses and participation in workshops arranged by the college also encourage student growth and provide students a smooth transition to SCC.

Why is volunteer service required of New Century Scholars?

Research indicates that participation in meaningful volunteer service opportunities increases student motivation, links learning to real human needs and increases student development. When community members reach out to one another without hope of personal gain, great rewards can be found. This is the foundation for the tuition assistance the New Century Scholars Program is able to guarantee. The New Century Scholars Program is successful because of the strong support provided by our local communities. It is critical that New Century Scholars are given the opportunity to give back to the community and the citizens who actively support their dream to attend college.

What happens if a New Century Scholar does not keep up with program requirements?

Student progress is monitored by the NCS Coordinator. If warranted, a Scholar and/or parent will be contacted by the NCS Coordinator to discuss concerns about a student's ability to participate. Students may be placed on New Century Scholars probation. If concerns are not addressed by the New Century Scholar, termination from the program and loss of financial assistance is a possibility.