



The Synod of the Covenant

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

**Report of the Grants and Scholarships Team
To the Synod Assembly
May 7, 2023
(Included in the Consent Agenda)**

Since the beginning of 2024, the Synod Grants and Scholarships Committee has set a goal to evaluate our current Scholarships process and learn about the history of how scholarships have been given in the synod over the past several decades. We began by inviting Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence to share with us the history of the synod's scholarships. Since the early 2000s, we have seen a shift from higher education scholarships administered by CECA (Committee on Ethnic Church Affairs) and directed toward students from our BIPOC churches, to the addition of a small scholarship ministry for higher education in general, and then finally to one higher education scholarship program. This single scholarship is now administered by MWSs and Ruling Elders of varying races from across the synod and offered to students committed to the principles of Matthew 25, prioritizing those from the BIPOC community and those with financial need. While much of this major transition happened during the synod's work with an Administrative Commission and the subsequent changes in leadership, it became clear to the current committee members that there was need of and possibility for some repair, particularly in our synod's goal to be actively anti-racist in its practice. We followed up our conversation with Fran with a conversation with Adrienne Adams, gaining more knowledge of CECA's scholarship process, and discussing what best practices to benefit our BIPOC students might look like now. Finally, we received a report from Heather Johnston that included a breakdown of both the history of scholarship changes and how much money has been spent on scholarships each year categorized by race and ethnicity for the sake of comparison. Again, while a significant portion of the money synod gives toward higher education scholarships is given each year to BIPOC students, the committee agrees that the goal should be to return to having scholarships administered by members of our BIPOC community for our BIPOC students.

As our committee came to that conclusion, we also knew we did not want to hand over the responsibility for scholarships this year with no one and no plan in place to take the reins. To that end, we have made some changes for our process this year as a step toward our end goal. Upon the recommendation of Adrienne Adams, we are pushing the deadline for applications until September 1, with the goal of benefiting those who apply to school later for different reasons. Students may apply now until that date. Decisions on awards will be made by September 30 and announced soon after. We will contact the racial ethnic churches and affiliated campus ministries in each presbytery, ensuring that they are aware of the scholarship and encouraging them to help their eligible students apply. We have expanded our eligibility beyond membership in one of the churches in our synod to include engagement in the ministry of those churches or one of the affiliated campus ministries within our bounds. This year, we will continue our combined focus on Matthew 25 principles while prioritizing BIPOC students and those with financial need.

Our hope is that as the synod works to hire a community organizer for our BIPOC community and to pursue other ways to work toward racial equity in our churches and in the communities of our

synod, that the wider synod will work with our committee to transition toward a more just and equitable scholarship process in the coming year. We look forward to doing that good work together.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Amy Duiker,

Moderator