Interview of Scholarship Applicants

August 1, 2024

Dear Alumni Club Members

As you know, during the pandemic, we discovered that the alumni club scholarship interview process was not fully in compliance with the university’s policies. After a holistic review, a pause was placed on in-person and virtual scholarship interviews.

At that time, we also revisited interview best practices with consideration to appropriate questions, partnership with Ohio State Athletics and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Ultimately, our decision was made to protect students, the scholarship committee, the club, the Alumni Association, and the university.

That said, we have noted disappointment in lack of that in-person or virtual interview process. We have revisited the issue and are excited to announce that your scholarship committee can once again hold virtual or in-person interviews, with parameters that follow the university’s policies.

**Discuss with your scholarship committee and board about possible virtual or in-person interviews.**

* Why is it important to hold interviews?
* What do you hope to accomplish in virtual or in-person interview?
* Are you judging the student by physical appearance or dress?
* Is the cost and process realistic for the committee/club?
* What is the committee looking for in a student that can’t be discovered by their application only?
* Are you awarding a student based on a first impression, who their family is, or a personal relationship, while discounting others?

**If the scholarship committee decides to hold virtual or in-person interviews, the committee must:**

* Notify Leslie Smith that the committee intends to interview virtually or in-person. Complete the **ASP Interview Agreement** and send to Leslie by October 1.
  + <https://groups.alumni.osu.edu/engagement-strategies/alumni-scholars-program/asp-forms/>
* Appoint the scholarship committee by November 30. Submit **ASP Committee List** by December 1 to Leslie Smith.
  + <https://groups.alumni.osu.edu/engagement-strategies/alumni-scholars-program/asp-forms/>
* All those reviewing applications must sign the **ASP Confidentiality Form**, either the Word document or DocuSign version
  + <https://groups.alumni.osu.edu/engagement-strategies/alumni-scholars-program/asp-forms/>
* At minimum, three members who will sit on the scholarship committee must go through a background check and fingerprinting procedure.
  + Results can take up to 6 weeks to be verified therefore the procedure must take place by December 1.
  + Proof of results must be submitted to Leslie Smith by February 1.
  + Notify Leslie Smith who took the test, result, and date. Submit paperwork to Leslie Smith. **ASP Background Check**
  + <https://groups.alumni.osu.edu/engagement-strategies/alumni-scholars-program/asp-forms/>
    - The check/fingerprinting may be valid for a few years. Make sure to find out how long and when the process needs to be done again.
    - Let Leslie know so that she can track it and provide proof.
  + The cost of the check is at the personal expense of the committee/board member or the club. **The Alumni Association will not pay for nor reimburse this expense.**
* It is the responsibility of the club scholarship leader to locate the business that provides the check/fingerprinting.
  + We understand that each community is different but start by contacting your local police or sheriff’s department for suggestions.
  + The Alumni Association will not be able to provide that information.
* **ASP Interview Location** 
  + <https://groups.alumni.osu.edu/engagement-strategies/alumni-scholars-program/asp-forms/>
  + Location and time of interview must be submitted to Leslie Smith by February 1.
  + Location must not be a personal home.
  + Select a neutral site, which is accessible for those with disabilities and is centrally located.
  + If there is a charge for room rental that is an expense of the club and is not reimbursable.
  + If doing interviews virtually, we suggest that the committee be in the same room, again at a neutral location. This will help to eliminate any connectivity issues.
  + Virtual platform, e.g., Zoom, must be on the club’s account. Purchase of an account is not reimbursable.
* If you are interviewing a student under the age of 18 and NOT admitted to the university (an applicant), the parent *must* be included in the interview, whether virtual or in-person.
  + You are provided the student’s status on the application spreadsheet. Leslie can confirm status prior to student interviews. Leslie can also confirm age (over/under 18) but not divulge birthdate.

**Regarding interview questions**

* Focus on the student’s responses from their application essays.
* You may use the university Shared Values for interviews as a guide as well. **Shared Values**.
  + <https://groups.alumni.osu.edu/engagement-strategies/alumni-scholars-program/asp-forms/>
* Interviews should last no longer than 15-20 minutes.

To be fair to all applicants, your committee must interview students with the same process, especially to keep the ability to award Ohio State varsity athletes (including walk-on athletes) without NCAA penalty.

**Considerations**

* Not all students/committee members have ability to travel or pay for travel to an in-person facility for the interview.
* Not all students/committee members have connectivity or a home computer for a virtual interview.
* Some students/committee members may have accessibility issues.

We want to protect the club, the Alumni Association, and the university from any potential legal issues. Consider all pros and cons to an in-person or virtual interview process.

**Virtual and in-person interviews are options. Your committee may choose to interview by telephone or not to interview students at all. This is perfectly acceptable and allows for objective, fair review of applicants. We are glad to bring back this option to your groups and appreciate your understanding of the new process required to participate.**