



ANNUAL LETTER JANUARY 2020



That turtle didn't get to the top of the fencepost by himself! One of our founding principles is that everyone needs help along the way. Each of us can look back and remember a friend, relative, teacher, coach, boss or preacher that was in our corner when we needed it most. Likewise, we believe in paying it forward. We may not be able to repay those who helped us along the way... but we can certainly stand behind the next generation.

2020 marks a milestone for our foundation: 5 years in operation and 100 students helped to date. In those years we've gained some perspective:

First: the money matters. Our average scholarship is just \$3,800/year. This seems small at just 15% of the average in-state total cost of attendance in the UNC System. However, we've heard from our partners that the money matters - it can be the difference between a 10 hour work week and a 20 hour work week, saving time for extra course load, an unpaid internship or other enrichment activities. In some cases, the Last Dollar Scholarship can prevent a life event such as a sick parent, a lost job, or a car accident from ending a college career.

5 Years by the Numbers	
32	Number of GMFF Scholar Graduates (including 9 in 2020)
100	Total number of students helped
70%	% of cost students raise through savings, merit scholarships, grants and work
3,056	Total hours of Goodwin Meissner Scholar volunteerism since 2015
\$3,863	Average annual scholarship amount
1%	Annual operating expenses as a percent of assets
100%	% of donations that go directly to students
\$800K	Total value of GMFF giving to date

Second: the money is more than the money. Family hopes and dreams rest on the shoulders of many of our scholarship recipients because most are the first in their families to attend college. Moms and dads, grandparents, aunts, uncles, counselors and mentors have all “pitched in” to help each student gain access to a college education. The expectations are high and so is the pressure. Meanwhile, there are doubts: “Do I really deserve to be here?” “Can I even do this?” “Am I smart enough?” College can be overwhelming, but our recipients tell us that our support means we believe in them, and in some cases that inspires them to pay it forward. Take Brian Gonzalez, for example:

Last spring, Brian graduated with an engineering degree from NC State and started his career at Cisco Corporation. Brian says he’s excited to start a career and he’s already talking about the non-profit he wants to start so he can help people in his hometown of Henderson, NC. We’re proud to call Brian a Goodwin Meissner Scholar - he truly embodies the spirit of our foundation. His advice to other potential first generation college students is, “Take advantage of the opportunities before you, and if you don’t see any... create the opportunity for yourself.”

Again this year, I am appreciative of your support and hope that you are all aware of the important role you’ve played in the lives of our Goodwin Meissner Scholars: helping them obtain their degrees and ultimately launch their careers.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Dean Meissner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Laura Dean Meissner
President, Goodwin Meissner Family Foundation