Scholarship Extravaganza

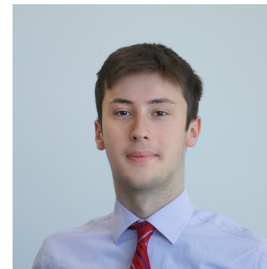Being Human in STEM - SCI 3900/HONOR 3990

Introductions

Isaac Lee
(he/him)

Corinne Orton
(she/her)

Milan Subotić
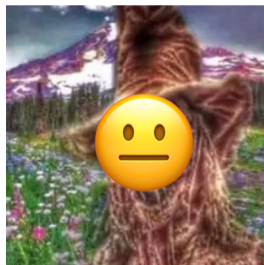(he/him)

Nate Brown
(he/him)

Beth
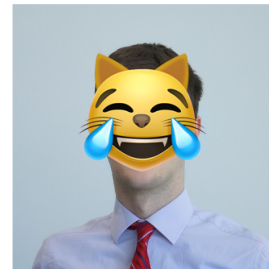Penderghast
(she/her/hers)

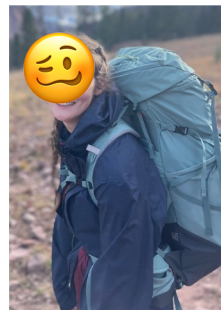# Introductions

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(he/him)

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Beth
Penderghast
(she/her/hers)

Table of contents

Project motivation

01

Our motivation

- Different GPA requirements for merit scholarships
- Access is limited
- Awareness of scholarships is low
- Departmental scholarships often are unawarded

- ≅ 70% of college students nationally are stressed about finances
- Scholarships amount for 35% of tuition funding for students nationwide
- Over 20% of students lose scholarships at the U
- Hard to find applicable scholarships

Scope of the project

02

Meeting with Anthony Jones

Executive Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships at the University of Utah

What we discussed:
- Issues we identified with the scholarship portal
- What the school is doing to address the issues
- Can students help?

What we concluded with him:
- Students can have roles in solutions
- Student feedback for new portal is needed
- Student advisory committee for the Central Financial Aid Office is needed

Old vs New Scholarship Portal

AcademicWorks (old)

- Prone to crashes
- Confusing, redundant, long filter

Scholarship Universe (new)

- Better user interface
- Doesn't crash

Our event

03

What we did

Apr. 11, 2024:

- Held an event open to all students at the U
- Students tested the Scholarship Universe portal and then filled out a feedback form
- Students were incentivized with food and the possibility to win an Amazon gift card
- We had 33 people show to the event

Photos from the event

How the event worked

First set of survey questions

How long did it take to fill out? Opinions on the filtering tool

Second set of survey questions

Are the scholarships relevant? Will you apply?

Scholarship Universe filter

Students fill out the filter until the first "Break point"

Look at first 10 matches

Students look at the first 10 relevant scholarships

Donuts and gift cards

Students enter the gift card drawing and eat donuts
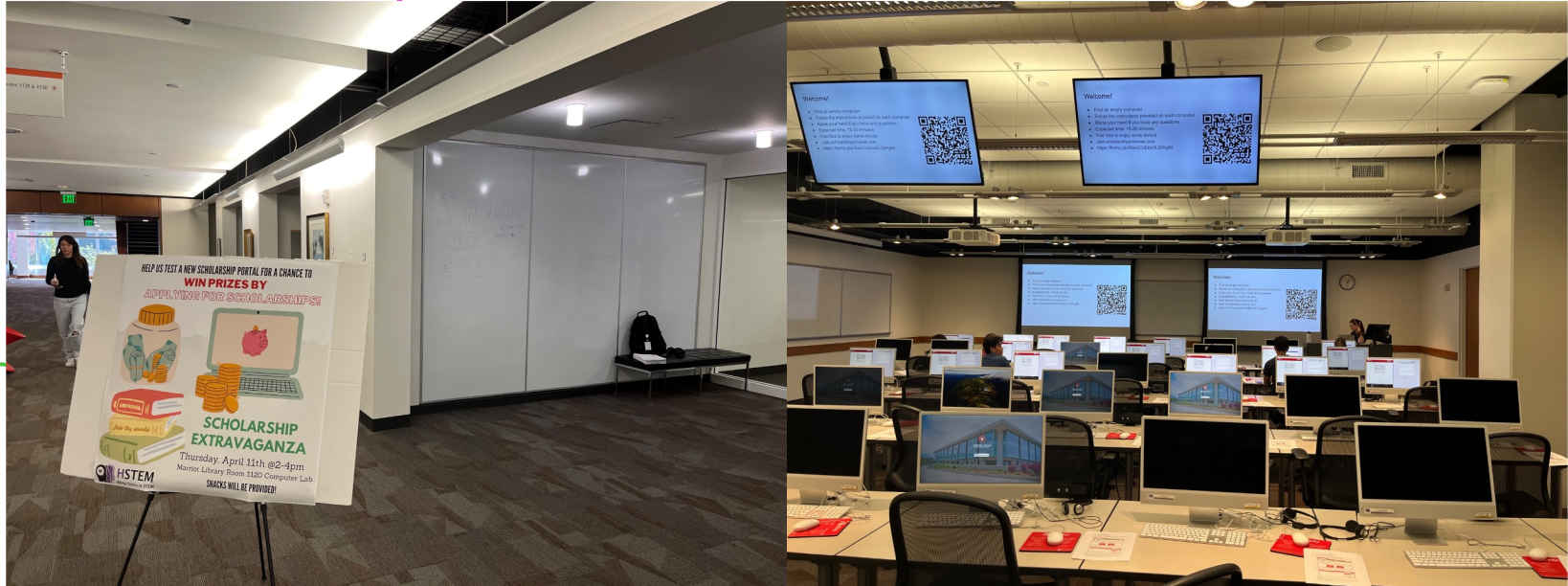
Data Analysis/ Discussion

04

Filtering: Efficiency

TIME SPENT (min)
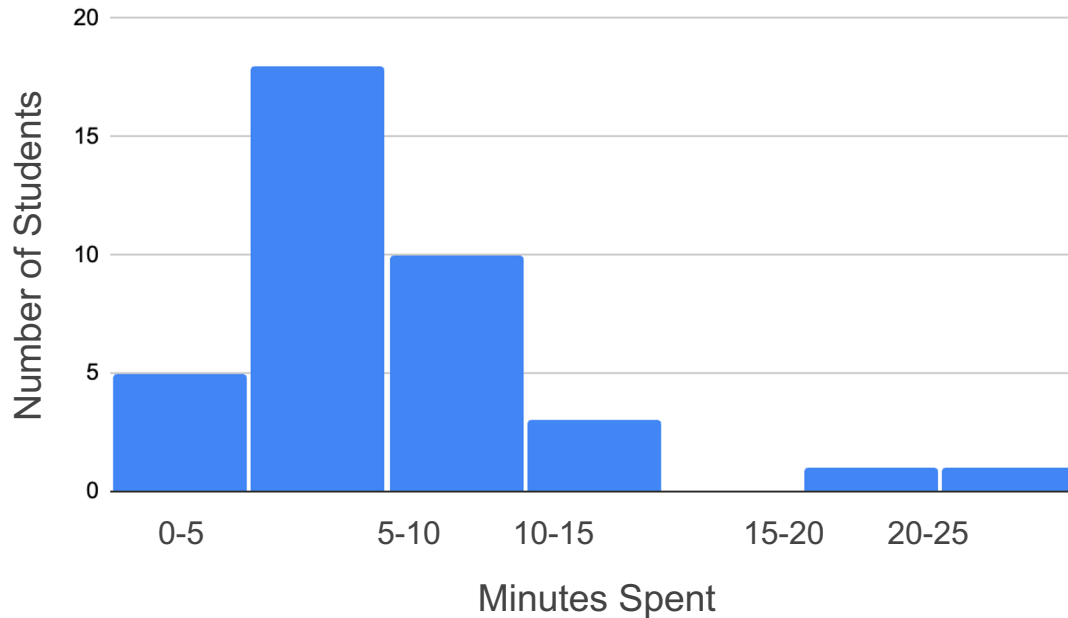
Avg time: 9 min 40 sec, Med. time: 8 min

3 outliers: 19, 26, and 30 minutes

Scholarship Universe filtering time was ⅓ that of Academic Works on average

Filtering: Was the Required Time Appropriate?

About 74% of students agreed that the time to answer the questions was appropriate.

The time it took to answer the questions felt appropriate.
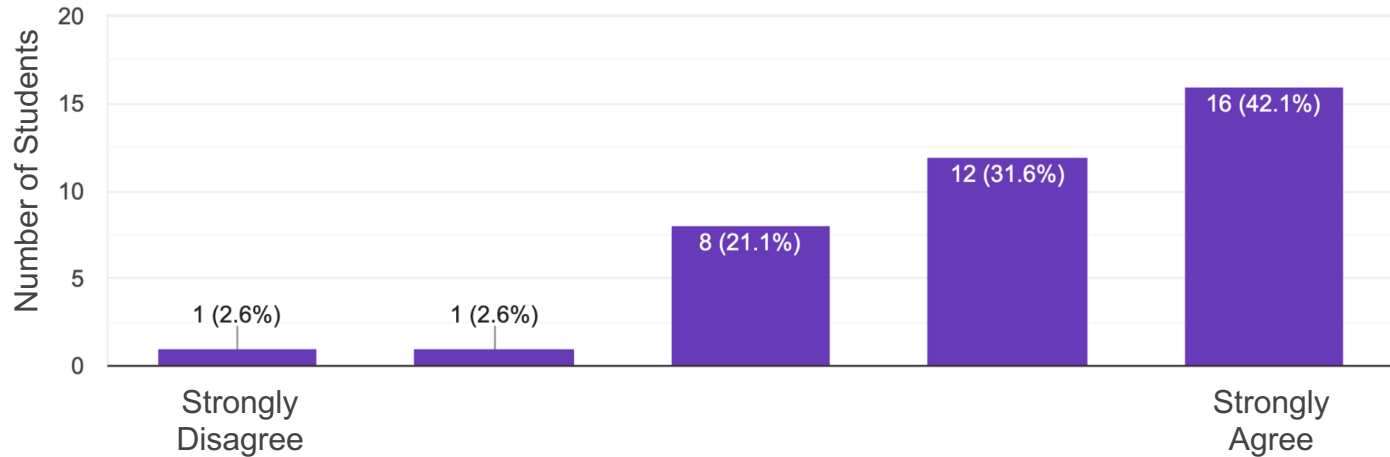
Filtering: User Interface Experience

80% of students felt that the user interface was easy to navigate.

The user interface was easy to navigate.

Number of Students

20

15

10

5

0

0 (0%)
Strongly Disagree

5 (13.2%)

3 (7.9%)

19 (50%)

11 (28.9%)
Strongly Agree
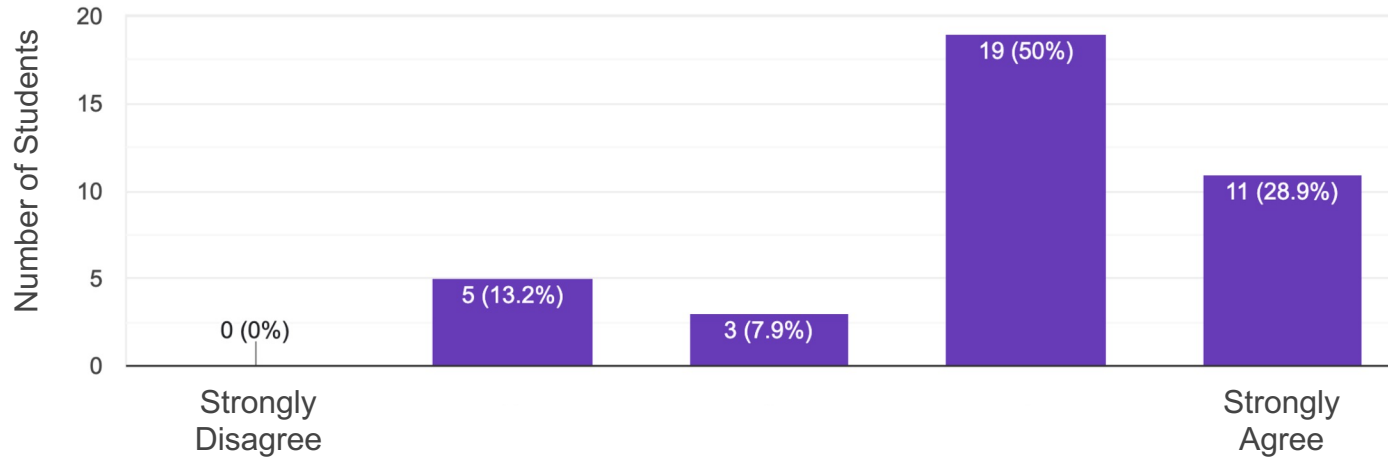
Filtering: Clarity of Questions

95% of students felt that the questions they were asked were clear.

The questions were clear.

Number of Students

- Strongly Disagree: 1 (2.6%)
- 0 (0%)
- 1 (2.6%)
- 14 (36.8%)
- Strongly Agree: 22 (57.9%)
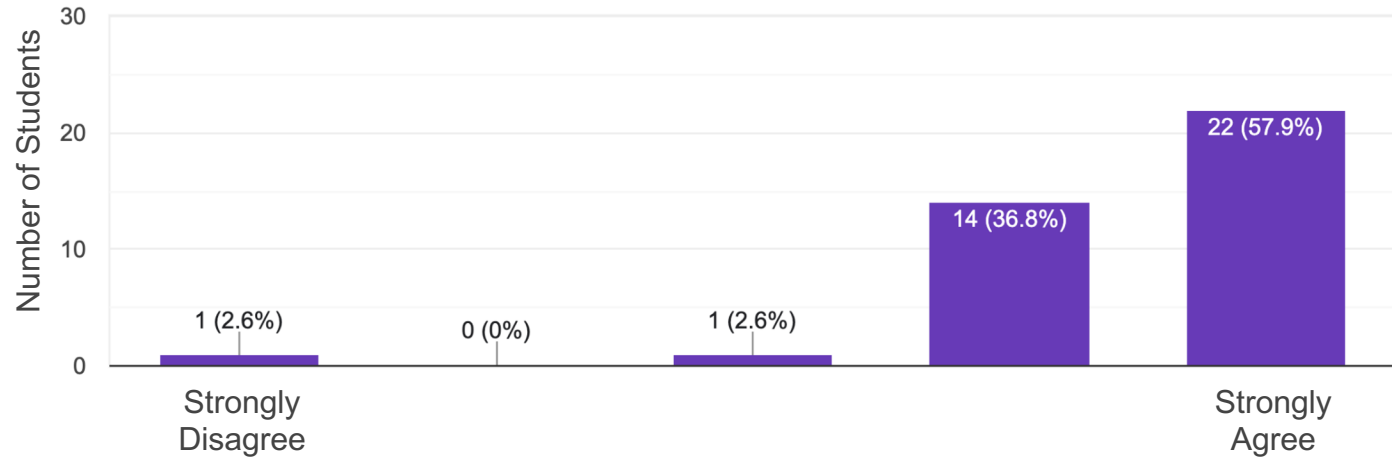
Scholarships: How Many Were Applicable?

71% of students were eligible for at least 7 of the 10 "most relevant" scholarships they matched with.

Of the first 10 scholarships shown, how many are you eligible for?

Bar chart. Y-axis: Number of Students (0 to 20). X-axis: Number of Scholarships Eligible For.

- 1: 3 (7.9%)
- 2: 2 (5.3%)
- 3: 2 (5.3%)
- 4: 3 (7.9%)
- 5: 1 (2.6%)
- 7: 5 (13.2%)
- 8: 2 (5.3%)
- 9: 3 (7.9%)
- 10: 17 (44.7%)
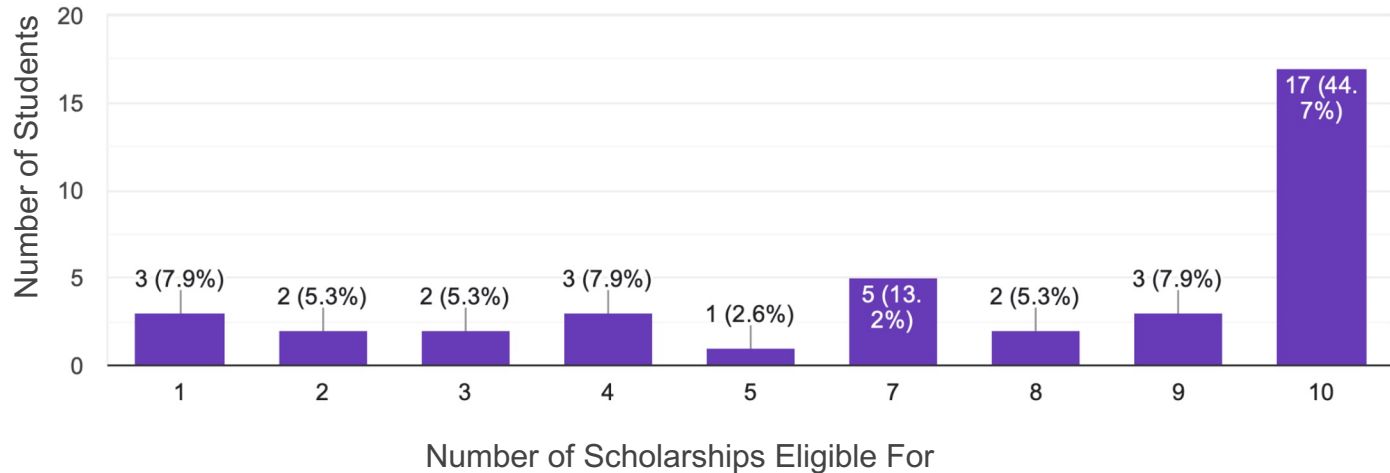
Scholarships: How Many Will You Apply To?

53% of students were either likely or extremely likely to apply to the scholarships recommended to them.

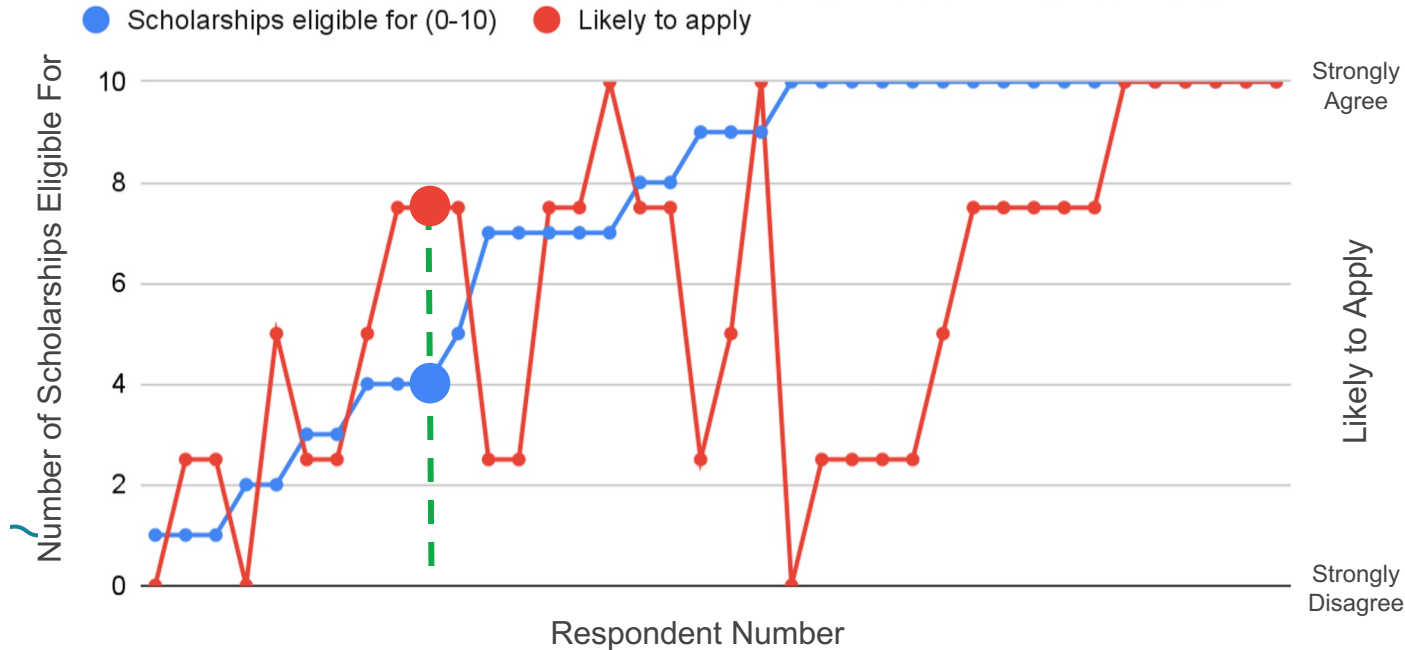**I am likely to apply for some of these scholarships.**
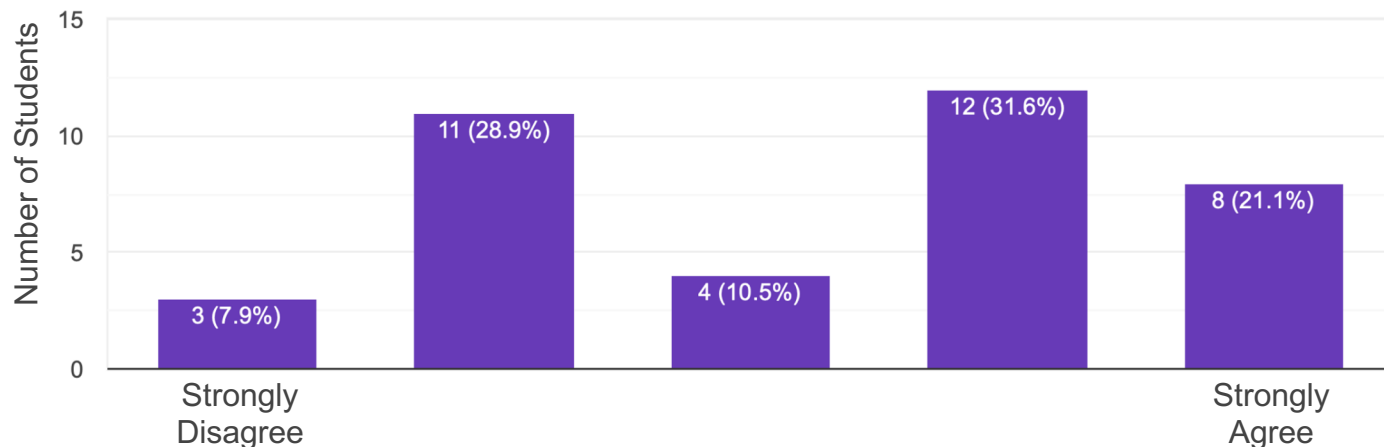
Matched Scholarships

- Students with more matches were more likely to apply

- 35% of students with 10 eligible scholarships did not feel likely to apply for them

Number of Eligible Scholarships vs. Likely to Apply
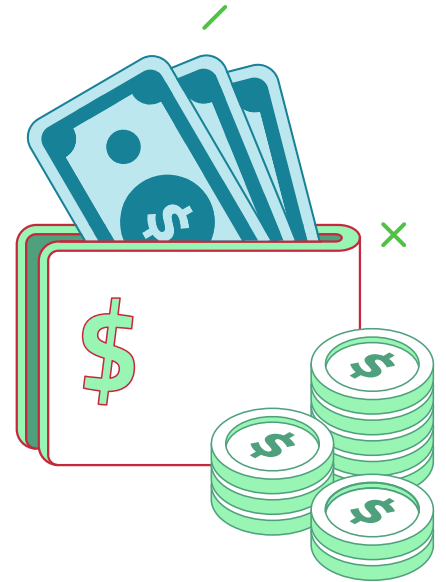
Conclusion and Suggestions

05

How is Scholarship Universe Doing?

We found that it is <u>more effective</u> than the current portal for connecting students to scholarship opportunities

Improvements from the previous portal:
- Less time to filter
- Easier to use
- Questions more relevant

Suggested Improvements from the Survey

Eliminate repetitive questions

    Residency questions in particular

Add more scholarship information

    Add scholarship descriptions so students don't have to go to another site

Shorten long lists

    Alphabetized lists for religious organizations, professional groups, etc

Non-listed information

    Allow students to add information that may not be in a list

Cater to international students

    Many international students are asked unclear questions

Our Recommendations

	Have professors promote departmental scholarships in their classes	**dates, application processes, application questions between departments or colleges**	**Line of communication between students, admin via a student advisory committee**
Students Faculty	Go to professors' office hours	Look for sources of funding both internally and externally- U of U FWC	Provide feedback for application processes—this helps admin!

Dashboard

Questions

Scholarships

Applications

Awards

My Docs

Feedback

Thanks!

Special thanks to Anthony Jones for meeting with us during the FAFSA fiasco

And special thanks to the Financial Wellness Center for advertising our event!

Any questions?