

# THE MOREHEAD-CAIN

Background Information for Conference Scholarship Session  
Attributes That Matter: Beyond the Usual in College Admission and Success  
January 18, 2013  
Charles Lovelace, Executive Director

The Morehead-Cain Scholars Program is the oldest full merit undergraduate scholarship program in the United States and among the most prestigious. Established in 1945, the mission of the Morehead-Cain Foundation (formerly the John Motley Morehead Foundation) is to sustain and enhance the excellence of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The Foundation pursues this mission by identifying, investing in, and inspiring promising leaders.

Modeled at the undergraduate level after the Rhodes Program at the University of Oxford, the scholarship provides full funding for a four-year undergraduate experience, as well as a summer enrichment program. The program is designed to accelerate and enhance the Scholar's life experience, self-knowledge, and global awareness. The criteria for the scholarship are leadership, scholarship, physical vigor and moral force of character. The rigorous selection process and attractive benefits of the Morehead-Cain yield Scholars of the highest caliber, who comprise a select community of motivated and distinguished campus leaders. There are 224 Scholars currently enrolled at the University, and the program has 2,900 alumni. This year the Foundation plans to award fifty scholarships from approximately 2,000 applicants.

The selection of the Morehead-Cain Scholars differs from regular undergraduate admissions in that personal interviews are used to select the finalists and recipients. The Foundation uses seasonal college admissions readers to perform the initial screening of applications and relies on volunteers, many of them Morehead-Cain alumni, to conduct interviews.

In 2000, the Foundation embarked on a concentrated effort to improve and update its selection process. The goal of the project was to improve the ability to identify potential leaders, thereby increasing the success rate of individual recipients and their collective impact on the University community. McKinsey & Co. was engaged to work with the staff to define the project and desired outcomes, conduct the research, and make recommendations.

The core of the study compared academic and extracurricular achievements in secondary school, on which the scholarship was awarded, to the Scholars' engagement in the campus community. The analysis found that traditional assumptions about secondary school activities as indicators for success did not correlate to actual performance at undergraduate level. Executive Director Charles Lovelace will discuss not only how this research prompted the Foundation to make major changes in its application, screening, and interviews.