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# National Science Foundation gives \$600,000 to engineering retention program

Written by Johnathan Silver  
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The National Science Foundation guaranteed \$600,000 in scholarships for two groups of 21 freshmen and sophomore engineering students.

The foundation, an independent federal agency, awarded the money as part of its Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (S-STEM) program.

Yvette Weatherton, project director and civil engineering senior lecturer, said the grant supports the university's participation in the national project, Focus On Retention in Cohorts of Engineering Students. FORCES provides financial aid and academic support to foster student success and retention in engineering fields.

Engineering undergraduate enrollment is on the decline nationwide, she said.

"High attrition of first- and second-year engineering students is not unique to UTA — it is a challenge nationwide," Weatherton said. "It is our desire that successful retention strategies that we have incorporated in FORCES will be implemented at other institutions around the country."

Lavonne Hill, Juan Seguin High School's counselors' clerk, said students come in daily for help with scholarships.

"I see firsthand how hungry students are for scholarships," Hill said. "Whoever 'shows them the money,' students most often go to that school."

Seguin students would avoid unnecessary loans borrowed in community college by accepting scholarships at universities like UT Arlington, Hill said.

"Looking at the world as we know it today — if we take away the things that were developed by engineers or had the input of engineers, not much would remain," Weatherton said. "We would have no clean water, no means of removing and treating wastewater from our homes and businesses, no communication towers, no cell phones, no computers, no automobiles nor highways, no airplanes nor airports."

Weatherton reiterated the urgent need for retention in engineering programs.

"As civilization continues to progress, the need for new technology and innovative solutions to life's challenges grows," he said. "Thus, there is a need for engineers to devise solutions for the challenges and problems that we face now and in the future."

The application deadline is April 30.  
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**REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants must:

1. Be a US citizen, US national, admitted refugee or permanent resident
2. Be new undergraduate freshman accepted as full-time engineering majors
3. Meet the College of Engineering's SAT/ACT entry requirements
4. Be prepared for Pre-Calculus I or higher
5. Demonstrate financial need

Source: College of Engineering Web site

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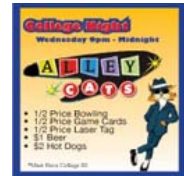
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