Office of Scholar Development

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WKU has had unprecedented success in the number of students achieving international scholarships.

Amy Bingham has more on the office behind that progress in this week’s View from the Hill.

The Office of Scholar Development is a resource for students navigating the complex world of nationally competitive scholarships. Just last year 42 students earned over fifty awards valued at more than a million dollars.

Dr. Gary Ransdell’s opening convocation for faculty and staff began with a nod to the dramatic increase in scholarships received by WKU students.

But OSD director Audra Jennings says it’s about so much more than the numbers.

“The numbers are important but that changed lives, so students have opportunities made available to them they didn’t have before.”

Jennings and her staff met with more than 400 students last year providing help with essays, applications and mock interviews.

“The path is not always very clear without someone translating instructions and providing a bigger context.”

Twice a year the Office of Scholar Development provides a day long rotating workshop for students to come and go in order to learn about scholarship opportunities.

“There was a lot of information about different scholarships I could apply for , and for a bunch of different opportunities apart from just study abroad.”

This spring, Megan Laffoon was one of four more WKU students to receive the prestigious Goldwater scholarship. This after OSD steered her toward a unique opportunity to attend a water resources workshop in China.

“I came in freshman year knowing I wanted to do biology and study Chinese and they helped me put that together in a way that I don’t think I would have done quite as well and quite as smoothly.”

This time next year, OSD will be housed in the new Honors College building under construction on Normal Street.

While her office brings scholarship opportunities to light, Dr. Jennings says it’s the superior students who are making a difference around the globe.

“I really do think these folks are going to change the world.”

In addition to the Office of Scholar Development, the new Honors College and International Center will also house the Chinese Flagship and Study Abroad programs. It will open in the fall of 2015.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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