

Effective Scholarship Strategies: A Motivational Workshop for Undergraduate Students of Islamic Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

One concrete embodiment of community service is the giving of assistance to students who are struggling with academic challenges, such as scholarships. The session was constructed with a participatory and practical design, with the purpose of ensuring that participants not only grasped the theoretical content but could also apply it immediately. On the first day, the workshop session showcased authentic CVs that captivated the interest of scholarship prospective candidates. Participants endeavoured to organize their CVs with the assistance of the speakers. The second day was filled with writing motivational letters and preparing for interviews. In addition, role-playing exercises resembled scheduled interviews. Participants alternated between roles as interviewers and candidates. This practice was intended to improve their confidence and communication abilities. The program was successful in meeting its goal of equipping students with the knowledge and abilities needed to submit scholarship applications. Participants in this exercise not only improved their technical understanding but also gained confidence in their ability to compete for scholarship opportunities.

Keywords: Scholarship, strategies, undergraduate students, workshop

Introduction

One of the most important components of the tridarma of higher education is the participation in community service. One of the concrete manifestations of this service is the provision of assist to students who are struggling with issues that are associated with their academic pursuits (Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2012). In this age of globalization, scholarships are one of the most essential keys that students can use to expand their access to higher educational possibilities and larger prospects for self-development (Almassri, 2024; Campbell & Mawer, 2019).

The event was arranged by the Career Development Centre (CDC) in conjunction with the Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business (FEBI). The event was named "Scholarship Workshop Preparation for Undergraduate Students." The purpose of this session is to give students with complete guidance on how to create a good and attractive scholarship application, beginning with developing an awareness of the requirements and ending with the compilation of requirements. As a result, the purpose of this activity is not only to assist students in obtaining scholarships (Murr, 2010), but also to enhance their capacity to put together professional documents that may prove valuable in the future (Yuzar & Rahman, 2024).

Due to a lack of information and technical abilities in the preparation of scholarship applications, many students have not been able to take advantage of scholarship opportunities, even though they have a great deal of potential (Yuzar et al., 2024). The goal of this workshop is to reinforce the mission of FEBI and CDC in terms of supporting the professional development of the undergraduate students.

Methods

The workshop was created with a participatory and practical approach, with the goal of ensuring that participants not only understood the content in a theoretical sense but also had the ability to instantly apply it (Richards, Carter, & Sherlock, 2004). Prior to the beginning of the workshop, the CDC and FEBI team first carried out a survey to students to determine the requirements that they have about scholarships. The poll inquired about the kinds of scholarships that the respondents were interested in, the difficulties that they frequently encountered when preparing applications, and the extent to which they understood the conditions that were established. The information that was gathered served as a crucial basis for the development of materials that were both effective and relevant.

Based on the findings of the survey, the workshop module was developed to cater to the requirements of the students in a complete manner. In the resources, you will get an introduction to the many kinds of scholarships, both national and international, as well as strategies for drafting a curriculum vitae and a letter of motivation, as well as strategies for preparing for scholarship interviews. In addition, participants were provided with detailed instructions on how to effectively manage supporting papers such as transcripts, certificates, and letters of recommendation. Face-to-face interactions with knowledgeable resource persons, such as eminent academics and scholarship recipients who have achieved success, were held during the session. To ensure that participants had a comprehensive educational experience, the activity was divided into several primary sessions, including an introduction, training on document preparation, a simulation of an interview, and individual consultation.

An evaluation is carried out immediately following the conclusion of the activity by use of a questionnaire that is filled out by the participants to determine the degree to which the workshop objectives were accomplished. It is planned to make use of the findings of this study to enhance initiatives that are comparable in the future. In addition, as a follow-up, the CDC team established an ongoing consultation service for students who require more assistance in the process of applying for scholarships. By taking this approach, it is intended that the workshop will not only be beneficial at the time of implementation but will also have an impact on students' preparation to face scholarship chances over the long term.



Pic 1. The activity of the workshop

Activity Implementation and Outcomes

On the 15th and 16th of May 2024, this session was held at the hall of the Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business. A total of fifty students from a variety of FEBI study programs participated in this specific activity. Uswatun Hasanah, a recipient of an LPDP scholarship; Fadhlur Rahman, an

Australian Awards scholarship recipient; and Munawar Rizki Jailani, who earned scholarships from the Egyptian and Malaysian governments, were the keynote speakers at the event.

There were statements made by the Dean of FEBI at the beginning of the first day. He underlined the significance of developing abilities that are not related to academics to help students' careers (Foreman et al., 2015). After this, there was a session that introduced the many sorts of scholarships that are available, including those that are offered on a national basis, such as the LPDP, as well as those that are offered internationally, such as the Australian Awards and other prestigious scholarships provided by foreign governments.

The attendees were asked to learn how to create an attractive curriculum vitae during the subsequent session. Real-world examples of curriculum vitae that were able to successfully draw the attention of scholarship givers were presented by the presenters during this session. At the same time, participants were provided with the opportunity to attempt to put together their curriculum vitae with the assistance of the presenters.

Writing a letter of motivation and practicing for an interview were the primary activities of the second day. Letters of motivation are an essential component of scholarship applications since they provide insight into the applicant's character and the reasons they are applying for the scholarship. The presenters walked the audience through the phases involved in producing great writing, including how to emphasize one's skills without going overboard. In addition to the session, there was a group workshop that took place, during which participants provided feedback to one another on their drafts of motivation letters. In addition, role-playing exercises were used to imitate interviews that were scheduled to take place. Participants were given the task of acting out the roles of interviewers and candidates in a sequential manner. This practice was designed to help them develop their communication abilities as well as their confidence.

Conclusion

The workshop titled "Scholarship Workshop Preparation for Undergraduate Students" was hosted by the Career Development Centre (CDC) in partnership with Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business (FEBI). The program was effective in accomplishing its goal of providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to submit scholarship applications. Through participation in this exercise, not only did participants increase their technical understanding, but they also strengthened their confidence in their ability to compete for scholarship possibilities. This demonstrates that collaboration across different departments within the university can have a large and good effect on students, as demonstrated by the partnership between CDC and FEBI. It has been suggested that workshops of a similar nature be organized on a regular basis to enhance the long-term viability of this program. This workshop should provide a more focused focus on types of scholarships or on a larger group of students. Since this is the case, it is believed that a greater number of students will be able to achieve their academic goals and obtain scholarships.

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