Welcome back to Claremont!

As you may have heard, the terms of Robert Day’s ’65 transformational gift have been amended to provide improved guidance and flexibility for the undergraduate and graduate levels of the Robert Day Scholars Program. Reflecting discussions with the entire RDS community, including the Board of Advisors, faculty, staff, students and alumni, these amendments allow the College to improve the curricular and programmatic offerings, broaden the availability of financial aid, and realign the Program’s administrative structure. Although the redesign of the Program remains in progress, there are some exciting details that we would like to share with you now.

Let’s start with the curricular and programmatic details. In our effort to identify and support the strongest candidates for the undergraduate Program, we may begin recruiting Scholars during all four years of their academic journey. This would be a departure from our previous timeline of selecting applicants during their second year, and as a result, for this academic year, we will likely open applications in the Spring for current Freshman (Class of 2019) and Sophomores (Class of 2018) from all five undergraduate Claremont Colleges. Starting next academic year, we also plan to select a small cohort of incoming CMC students (Class of 2021) through the undergraduate admission process.

The redesign of the Scholars Program will also contain some curricular enhancements, with a particular focus on the needs of our CMC students. At the undergraduate level, discussions are focused on how RDS can best integrate the undergraduate Robert Day Scholar experience, the financial economics sequence, and the BA/MA program. We are also studying how to make the undergraduate Scholar Program more approachable for all students, regardless of major. For the graduate program, the redesign will likely result in a more selective admission process for external, non-Claremont College students, thus reducing the overall size of the master’s program.

Next, the amendment provides greater flexibility in the use of scholarship funds for all Robert Day Scholars. We will now be able to customize the timing and amount of financial awards, along with making funds available for transformative experiences, such as starting an enterprise, conducting research, or pursuing an internship. Of course, for current Scholars in the Classes of 2016 and 2017, we will honor our previous commitments, although in some instances, Scholars may be able to receive a portion of their financial award earlier or use it toward funding an experiential opportunity.

Finally, the amendment realigns the administrative leadership of the Scholars Program. Rather than appoint a new academic dean of the Robert Day School, Michelle Chamberlain has been appointed the Interim Executive Director. Michelle is responsible for coordinating the Program internally and promoting it externally. Additionally, Marisa Walter has been asked to step in as the Interim Director of External Relations, to ensure continuation of the strong placement record of the Program. The RDS community will continue to work together to formalize the optimal, permanent structure for RDS soon.

Of course, we will continue to update the community as the redesign process unfolds. In the meantime, we anticipate sharing more details about the changes to the Robert Day Scholars Program later this semester, and encourage interested students to check this website in November for further updates. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Michelle Chamberlain at mchamberlain@cmc.edu or (909) 607-8555.