I. **The Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge (BRMC) Scholarship Program – The Legacy of a Conservation Pioneer**

The establishment of the Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship Fund was inspired by the work of one of Micronesia’s conservation pioneers, William Charles Raynor, known to many as Bill Raynor. Bill Raynor (Feb. 22nd, 1957-Sept. 1st, 2015), former Director of The Nature Conservancy’s Micronesia Program, first came to the region as a Jesuit volunteer on the island of Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). As a long-time resident of Pohnpei, Bill became extremely involved with Pohnpeian culture and customs; as a result he earned a Pohnpeian honorific title, Soumadau en Pei ni Eng Eihr—Lord of the Altar of the East Wind—and grew giant yams, an important tradition in Pohnpeian society. He was considered a true Pohnpeian; he spoke the language fluently and was revered as a bona fide Pohnpeian agroforestry expert. He married a Pohnpeian woman from Madolenihmw Municipality and together they raised several children and grandchildren.

Not only did he adapt to and became quite involved with the culture, but he also dedicated his life to supporting and improving Micronesians’ quality of life through his work. Bill was a dedicated hero for nature. For over 30 years, he engaged in significant and meaningful conservation work across Micronesia. Among his many pioneering efforts, he helped launch the Conservancy’s program in the region. He also helped to establish/strengthen several non-governmental organizations in Micronesia, (the Micronesia Conservation Trust, Chuuk Conservation Society, the Conservation Society of Pohnpei, Kosrae Conservation and Safety Organization, Micronesian Islands Nature Alliance, Yap Community Action Program, Marshall Islands Conservation Society, etc.) that are now leading conservation and sustainable development work in their jurisdictions. As a sponsor and founding member of the Micronesian in Island Conservation (MIC) Network, Bill was committed to identifying and nurturing emerging conservation champions from across the region. He was also instrumental in establishing the Micronesia Challenge ([www.micronesiachallenge.org](http://www.micronesiachallenge.org)) and the endowment fund associated with the initiative. Over the course of approximately three decades, Bill supported and mentored emerging environmental leaders who have the passion and the potential to continue the conservation initiatives and maintain the Micronesia Challenge commitment that he and the other conservation pioneers helped establish in the region.

II. **Purpose of the BRMC Scholarship Program**

The Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship Fund aims to contribute to the development of effective conservation of Micronesia’s biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable livelihoods across the region. This scholarship provides an opportunity for individuals from Micronesia to undertake either a Master’s or Doctorate degree in any resource management/conservation field at various institutions within the Pacific Region to include universities in Guam, the US, Hawaii, Fiji, Japan, New Zealand or Australia. Applicants are to focus on leadership and technical skills and/or majors that enhance their ability to carry out work in conservation, climate adaptation and sustainable development in Micronesia.
III. Funding of the BRMC Scholarship Program

The BRMC Scholarship will provide up to $30,000 per year, per scholar, for at least two years for the successful completion of a Master’s program, and at least three years for the successful completion of a PhD program. This scholarship is limited to just two awardees per scholarship-round in order to provide the mentorship and guidance support that will be required to ensure the students’ long-term success.

The Micronesia Conservation Trust has established a sub-account within the Micronesia Challenge Endowment, the revenues from which will fund the scholarships. Individual donors and an anonymous private foundation have provided the seed money for this endowment fund. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation have also provided non-endowment funding to support the first four scholars while the endowment funds build.

IV. Eligibility of Applicants

To be eligible for the Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship Fund, applicants must:

A. Be a citizen OR permanent resident of any of the five Micronesia Challenge jurisdictions.
B. Possess a Bachelor’s degree.
C. Have a cumulative undergraduate GPA of not less than 3.0, OR have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 with at least 3-5 years of work experience in conservation, climate change, or sustainable development
D. Be working for a natural resource management agency/NGO, OR have a high potential to be hired by one.
E. NOT be a recipient of a full scholarship from any other funding source at time of application (students with partial scholarships will not receive funds in excess of their tuition and associated fees).
F. Be accepted or enrolled in a graduate degree program in a resource management/conservation field at universities within the Pacific region: University of Hawaii, University of Guam, University of the South Pacific, and universities in Australia, New Zealand and Japan.
G. Commit to returning to Micronesia to work in the environment sector as specified in the Student Contract.

V. Eligible Institutions:

A. Educational Institutions To help ensure recipients are able to participate in Micronesia Challenge activities, either remotely or during breaks, awardees are encouraged to study at universities within the Pacific region/rim and they must secure an agency that will commit to hosting them during their studies and one willing to hire the intern after they complete their studies
   1. Pacific rim universities
   2. Online degrees
   3. US mainland colleges
B. Host institutions/mentors – in ROP, FSM, RMI, Guam, CNMI
Awardees of this prestigious scholarship will receive financial support to earn graduate degrees while receiving close guidance and mentorship from key individuals within the Micronesia Challenge partnership, including members of the peer learning networks, MIC and the Pacific Islands Managed and Protected Areas Community (PIMPAC). The mentors/advisors are technical experts who have extensive experience in the field of conservation, climate change adaptation and sustainable development in Micronesia/Pacific. The types of institutions best suited to support/host BRMC scholars include:

1. Government line agencies responsible for resource management
2. Micronesian NGO conservation organizations
3. International/Regional conservation organizations (with local field office, or permanent staff in Micronesian jurisdiction)
4. Regional or International Agency (i.e. SPREP, SPC, UNDP etc. with local field office or permanent staff in Micronesian jurisdiction)
5. Colleges & Universities
6. Mentors can be recognized leaders in the field (need not be currently employed by/affiliated with agency)

VI. Application Procedures
Applications are accepted on a “rolling” basis at any time, with the selection process triggered by one or more scholarships becoming available due to:
A. Graduation of one or more participating scholars.
B. Unexpected departure of a scholar.

When one or more scholarship becomes available, MCT will announce the impending closure of the open application period at least one month before the closing date in order to allow for potential applicants to submit applications in time for consideration

VII. Selection Process
Members of the BRMC Scholarship Selection committee are required to sign a disclosure of potential conflict of interest prior to each selection. In doing so, the members confirm that they will abide by the BRMC Program Manual and to step down if at any stage they find themselves in a conflict of interest. Committee members must commit to assessing each candidate solely on the base of her/his individual merit.

The Committee consists of the following members:
- MCT Capacity-Building Program Manager
- Micronesia Challenge Coordinator
- TNC Partnership & Communications Coordinator
- Donor Rep (Packard or MAC)?
- MCT Board Rep

The Selection Process involves three stages:
A. Pre-selection
   The MCT Deputy Executive Director leads the first stage of the selection process, serving in a primarily administrative capacity.
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1. Announce application deadline (will accept on a rolling basis but then will announce specific deadline/closing for consideration)
2. Receive and compile
3. Conductive administrative check
4. Forward complete/compliant packages to selection committee

B. Selection
The BRMC Scholarship Selection Committee is primarily responsible for the actual selection phase of the process.
1. Receive and review the compiled applications.
2. Shortlist (ranking sheet, interview at least 2 candidates per opening).
3. Interview (interview questions sheet & evaluation sheet)
4. Select (unanimous decision/consensus)

Applicants will be selected based on the following:
1. Strength of their application and that the program they are attending is in line with conservation, climate change adaptation and sustainable development goals of their home country’s or host organization;
2. The strength and commitment of their host institution, including the ability to hire/retain them after the completion their studies;
3. The commitment and experience of their mentor(s) in resource management and sustainable development efforts in the Pacific.

C. Post-selection – DED & CBPM
i. Final determination of financial need in order to determine the amount and distribution of the final award.
   1. Allowable costs:
      a. Tuition & Fees
      b. Room and Board
      c. Books and supplies
      d. Computer/technology
      e. Airfare for travel to Micronesia for summer commitment
      f. Mentorship Project/Internship activity expenses
ii. Finalize contract with the selected student(s). Upon receipt of the scholarship, awardees must sign a promissory note which serves as their acknowledgement for their understanding and acceptance of the scholarship terms and conditions.
iii. Develop and enter into agreement(s) with mentor and/or host agencies in order to formalize the relationship, determine roles and responsibilities and outline post-degree employment.

II. Awarding the Scholarships – administration and payment request procedures
A. The following forms and documents shall be completed, signed and approved upon the acceptance of the award and are required in order to disburse funds:
   i. Student Contract
   ii. Mentor and Student Agreement
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iii. Mentorship Plan and Budget
iv. Determination of Financial Need (per semester)

B. The MCT Capacity-Building Program Manager (CBPM) shall serve as the primary point of contact for the Student, the Host Agency, the Mentor and the Academic Institution for the purposes of program administration. The CBPM shall observe all MCT procurement and payment request procedures as required for the administration of the program.

III. Post-Graduation
The alumni of this scholarship program will form a cadre of new leaders that will meet annually in association with the MIC peer-leaders network. This will allow the alumni to continue to be mentored by conservation champions around the region and grow as leaders, who will in turn serve as mentors themselves for new scholarship recipients. The Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship Fund committee, will also make a good faith effort to place scholarship recipients in permanent positions when they graduate.

Forms and Agreements
- Application Form
- Evaluation matrix
- Interview questions
- Student Contract
- Mentor and Student Agreement
- Mentorship Plan and Budget
- Determination of Financial Need (per semester)