1. **My objective today is simple:** To convey to all of you in this room what a scholarship actually means to students, what *your* scholarships mean to students.

2. **My Story:**
   a. I am the oldest boy in my family. I have one older sister, and 6 younger brothers and sisters. (Imagine dinnertime at my house).
   b. Every one of us was Homeschooled, where I learned how to learn, I didn’t realize it back then but I liked to learn.
   c. When I was growing up though, college was not even on my radar, we were not poor by
any means, but it just wasn’t something I was considering.

d. My friends were going to college and I was working construction, and I enjoyed it, I had a good boss and I love to work on houses. Actually I hope to some day rehab houses just for fun.

e. Then I joined the Marine Corps, I started out in King Bay GA, Then I was went to Camp Lejeune NC with 3rd BN 8th Marine, 2nd MarDiv, where I deployed twice,

   i. First on the USS Kersarge with the 22nd MEU.

   ii. And 2nd to Farah Province Afghanistan, the South-Western portion.

f. My older sister went to NIU to study music, and when I got out of the Marine Corps she suggested that I go to NIU.
g. So I did, and here I am today, talking with you all about how you helped me and so many others on our journeys through college.

3. So what does a scholarship give to students, other than funding?
   a. Security
      i. We don’t have to worry about paying tuition or paying all of the tuition.

   b. Hope
      i. Hope created because in the future we know we won’t be tied down by so much debt.

   c. Confidence
      i. Confidence in ourselves.
ii. When I received my first scholarship, I thought to myself and later wrote it in a thank you letter.

iii. The donors (all of you here tonight) have enough confidence in MY abilities, potential, and future, that you were willing to invest your own money in me/us.

iv. How much more confidence can you have than knowing someone else believes in you enough to put money on you.

4. *What a scholarship means to military members:*

   a. Some are covered 50% some are covered 75 or even 100%.

   b. But we still have fees; we still have housing, (and some get housing covered) but not all of us.
c. Scholarships to military members mean they don’t have to work and they can focus on school, they can focus on getting involved, and making a difference.

5. Here is the reality of what my scholarships meant to me. “ENABLEMENT”
   a. I didn’t have to work, so what did I do? I got a job, multiple jobs actually, not all at the same time though.
      i. I started out with an offer to tutor for an OMIS class. It was fun and I learned a lot about teaching, a lot about OMIS, and a lot about people.
         1. I was able to do this because I didn’t have to worry about getting a job.
      ii. I then moved to a student Senate position and got involved in student organizations, Volunteer work with Junior Achievement.
1. I was able to do all of this because of your scholarships

iii. Then it really got good; I got involved as the Director of Governmental Affairs for the NIU student association. I was a member of the COB SAC, I was the Treasurer of The BASA, I was a Voting member of University Council for NIU, I was a Voting member of the IBHE SAC, and I was a Deputy registrar for DeKalb County during the last presidential election.

1. I was able to do all of this because I didn’t have to work because of your scholarships.

And now I stand before you today as an NIU alum and a current MBA Fast Trak student.
And I say Thank You, from the bottom of my heart
Thank You for having enough confidence in me and
other students, that you went out of your way to create
scholarships in order to, offer us the best chance at
success.

Thank You and Semper Fidelis