

Purpose and Background

This contest provides an opportunity to earn a scholarship by writing a personal narrative recalling a time you experienced or witnessed a Bearkat embodying our university motto, “The measure of a Life is its Service.”

Sam Houston State University adopted the official motto, “The measure of a Life is its Service,” to pay tribute to Henry Carr Pritchett, who served as the fourth president of SHSU when it was Sam Houston Normal Institute. Excerpted from Mary Raymond Shipman’s short story, *The Militants*, the motto was inscribed on a memorial window honoring those who served in the Texas Revolution, where it became the official university motto. The quote is prominently displayed in the SHSU Plaza as a reminder that service to others is a tenet of our university.

Essay Prompt

As a Bearkat, what have you done or seen other Bearkats do that embodies our university motto, “The measure of a Life is its Service”?

Eligibility

The contest is open to all SHSU students currently enrolled full time at Sam Houston State University in undergraduate programs in the Spring 2025 semester.

Application

Essays may be submitted anytime and must be submitted by end-of-day, Sunday, March 23, 2025 to measureofalife@shsu.edu. All submissions must be electronic submissions and must be sent as email attachments (Microsoft Word documents, RTF files, or PDF files only).

Rules of the Contest

1. All applicants must be enrolled full time at Sam Houston State University in undergraduate programs in the Spring 2025 semester.
2. Essay must be students’ original work.
3. All essays must be typed on white, 8 ½” x 11” paper and free of any remarks or grade. Essays should be double-spaced.
4. To permit blind reviewing, there should be no self-references or other identifying elements within the papers; please do not include a heading the with author’s name.
5. A student may submit only one entry.
6. Submit your essay from your official SHSU email to measureofalife@shsu.edu and include your full name, SAM ID, e-mail address, telephone number, and the following statement of authenticity in the body of your email: “I am submitting an original essay to the Sam Houston Academic Success Center essay contest. I certify that this essay is my own work. I understand that my essay will not be returned to me and may be used by Sam Houston State University for publication in promotional materials.”
7. There will be a first, second, and third place prize. First place will be awarded \$1000. Second place will be awarded \$750. Third place will be awarded \$250.
8. Maximum length is 500 words.

Criteria	WOW!	Strong	Effective	Developing	Not Yet
Idea: Is the content of the narrative appropriate to the prompt?					
Organization: Does the narrative follow a logical sequence of events that support and enhance the essay’s ideas and emotions?					
Content: Does the writer use appropriate conventions of writing (grammar/mechanics/syntax/spelling)?					
Voice: Is the language of the essay specific, compelling, and engaging?					
Emotion: Does the essay demonstrate passion and evoke emotion in the reader?					