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WKU names first lotto winners in vaccine incentive program

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Provost Robert "Bud" Fischer (right) presented WKU student Laurel Beckley with her prize in the vaccine incentive program contest. Photo courtesy of WKU

Submitted

Western Kentucky University held the first of several lottery drawings for students and staff who've received the coronavirus vaccine, doling out scholarships and cash prizes to winners.

Each week through the beginning of October, WKU will select 26 vaccinated employees and 40 vaccinated students. Prizes include full-tuition scholarships, iPads and, for staff, \$1,000 bonus checks.

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WKU drew the first batch of winners last week, and they had 72 hours to verify their vaccination status with the university.



“We’re glad to be able to reward people for doing the right thing,” WKU spokesman Jace Lux said, encouraging students and staff to get vaccinated and report their status via an online notification form.

“The reporting form also gives our COVID-19 Task Force a better idea of the percentage of our campus that is vaccinated. We know that the vaccine is the best way to prevent the spread of the virus and to prevent serious illness if contracted, and having reliable data about WKU’s overall vaccination status helps guide our Task Force as it makes decisions to keep all of us safe,” he said in a WKU news release.



As a matter of policy, WKU hasn’t required students and staff to get vaccinated, instead “strongly encouraging” them.

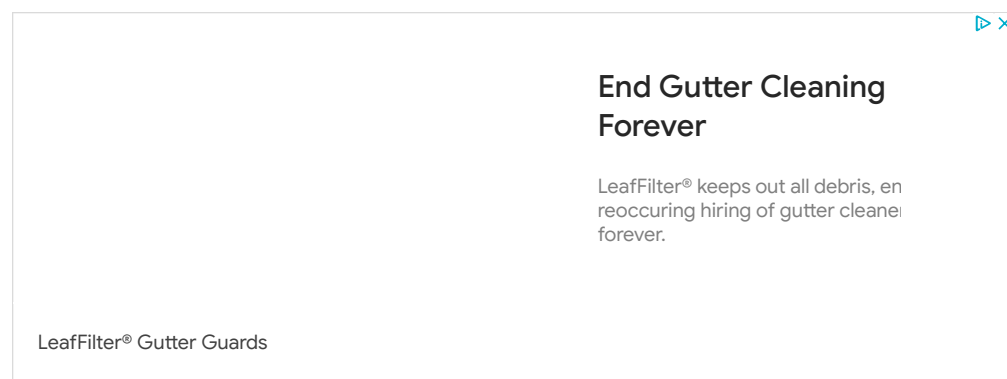
On Thursday, President Joe Biden announced a plan to require staff vaccinations at large employers, which Lux said WKU is reviewing.

“The WKU COVID-19 Task Force is working to gather additional information about President Biden’s recent announcement regarding vaccination and testing for employers with more than 100 employees. The Task Force will communicate changes to WKU’s current vaccine and testing protocols as soon as federal agencies provide additional guidance. Vaccines are readily available in the community and at the Graves Gilbert Clinic on campus. We continue to encourage faculty, staff and students to get vaccinated,” Lux said.

Initial student winners of the vaccine incentive program include Laurel Beckley and Nena Howard. WKU also selected two staff winners: Andria Henry and professor Ritchie Taylor.

Beckley, of Bowling Green, is a pre-nursing transfer student in her first semester at WKU. She was the first individual selected to receive a full-tuition scholarship through the drawing.

“I couldn’t believe that my first semester at Western was going to start with so much support,” she said.



Beckley stressed the importance of providing WKU with information about vaccination status: “Reporting your status is always helpful. It’s so easy to do, and it gives us a better idea of where we are.”

Howard, a sophomore interior design and fashion merchandising major from Bowling Green, was another one of the first student winners selected in the initial drawing, according to the release.

“I got vaccinated because my parents are high risk and I live at home,” she said. “I think it’s a win-win for everybody to get vaccinated so that we can return back to normal,”

She won a \$500 book scholarship from the WKU Store.

Henry, an office associate in the Gordon Ford College of Business, was among the WKU employees whose names were drawn last week. She won a \$1,000 prize and said she’s pleased the university is encouraging others to become vaccinated.

“I’m a pretty healthy person generally, and I just wanted to help protect those around me,” she said.

Taylor, a public health professor, also received a \$1,000 prize.

Taylor said he was surprised his name was drawn. “I was about to delete it, and I looked and the email was from someone at WKU so I realized this might be real.”

He also shared his reasons for being vaccinated. “I chose to be vaccinated because it’s the first line and best line of defense. I think it’s really important that other people are protected,” he said.

Prize drawings will take place each Friday for the next four weeks. To be eligible, an individual must have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

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