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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Winter Break Provides College Students Valuable Time
to Uncover and Apply for Scholarships**
*NextStudent Offers \$5,000 Scholarship to College Students
and one of the Largest Scholarship Search Engines on the Internet*

PHOENIX (November 24, 2003) – With tuition and living costs on the rise, the month-long winter break is an ideal time to begin uncovering and applying for college scholarships and grants. NextStudent, a leading college finance company with one of the largest, most robust scholarship search engines on the Internet, is adding extra incentive for students to go online by offering a \$5,000 scholarship during the holiday break.

“Each year, billions of dollars are given away to college students, but it’s hard for students and their families to find time to do all the research to find scholarships while school is in session,” said Paige Chadwick, vice president of marketing for NextStudent. “Increasing college costs make getting a college education even more of a challenge. With our NextStudent Scholarship Search Engine, we make it easy for students to uncover the scholarship opportunities they have the best chance of getting.”

With more than 800,000 individual awards totaling \$2.8 billion, the NextStudent search engine is one of the largest scholarship databases available. The student answers a series of questions to selectively narrow hundreds of thousands of scholarships to a few dozen that they best qualify for – saving valuable time. Perhaps most important to students, the search engine is free of charge, does not include annoying pop-up ads and is completely private. In other words, NextStudent does not sell student names to marketers or spam students after searching.

Students look for funding alternatives as tuition costs increase nationwide

With rising expenses, finding free money from scholarships, grants and even low-cost student loans has become a top priority for college students. Concerns about paying for college have been underscored by a study funded by Upromise, which indicates that education grants and aid, including federal student loans, pay for only 50 percent to 60 percent of total college expenses.

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“Our first priority is to give students access to the many free scholarships and grants available. NextStudent also provides easy-to-understand tools and personal Education Finance Advisors to assist students with finding the lowest cost federal and private loans to fill the funding gap,” added Chadwick.

The funding gap is due in large part to a national trend of steady tuition increases. According to the “College Cost Crisis” report by the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce, over the past six years there has been an average tuition increase of \$2,000 nationwide for four-year institutions.

“The congressional College Cost Crisis Report states that the increase in tuition is rising faster than the rate of inflation, family income and even increasing state and federal aid,” said Chadwick. “These factors have made NextStudent even more committed to helping students through the complicated financial aid process from start to finish, finding the lowest cost combination of funding available for each individual.”

NextStudent “Holiday Cash for College” Scholarship Adds Incentive to Students

To help ease the tuition crunch, NextStudent is providing a \$5,000 scholarship for college students during the holiday break at www.nextstudent.com. The “Holiday Cash for College” Scholarship is designed to encourage students to search and apply for scholarships while they have the downtime.

The scholarship will be awarded to one college student to help them with higher education costs. Entries are being accepted from December 1, 2003 through January 14, 2004.

“Holiday Cash for College” Application Rules:

- Must be enrolled full-time at an accredited public or private four-year institution (college or university in the United States)
- Parents filling out the form should use their child's name as the scholarship recipient
- Entries will be accepted from December 1, 2003 through January 14, 2004
- Winner will be drawn on January 15, 2004 and notified by January 31, 2004.

To learn more about the \$5,000 NextStudent scholarship or other services provided by NextStudent, visit www.nextstudent.com or call 800-799-7349.