

Foothill-De Anza Retirees Association Scholarship
4 awards (\$1,000 each) at each campus
June 2020

Chancy (Foothill)

Major: Psychology for Transfer

My Story:

I am a psychology major with the long-term goal of becoming a Clinical Psychologist working for the Veterans Affairs. My own struggles with mental illness and drug addiction after the military has inspired me to achieve this goal. I overcame my addiction with the help of the VA and I actively give back to the veteran community. I want to inspire veterans and be living proof that they can overcome their challenges if they work hard at it and want to change their lifestyle. I went from being homeless in 2016 to becoming a recipient of a \$16,000 scholarship in 2019. This scholarship was for Stanford's Veteran Accelerator Program. It was an opportunity for me to live on Stanford's campus and take my summer classes with 11 fellow veterans from around the nation. Having that opportunity allowed me to truly see my potential and assured me that academia is the right path for me to pursue. Since being at Foothill Community College I have maintained a 4.00 GPA and I am a member of the Honors Institute. The Honors Institute has allowed me to step out my comfort zone and take classes that are outside my major. I love learning new knowledge and challenging myself. This quarter other group members and I are conducting a case study to investigate the level of knowledge and awareness of faculty regarding their students' challenges with mental illness. This research is important to us because good mental health is an important factor in the success of students in a college setting. We will present these findings this year at the Western Psychological Association in San Francisco. I applied to the Bay Honors Research Symposium in hopes to present research I conducted on how the U.S. public policy solutions for the opioid epidemic are directly impacting individuals at risk of relapse or addiction. Outside of school I work with Dr. Stephanie Wong. I assist her by recruiting dyads in the United States for a cross-cultural research study we are doing with researchers in Korea. The research is approved by the Institutional Review Board and is examining the subjective well-being of patients and caregivers in Korea and the United States. I recently found out that I have been accepted to attend Palo Alto University's for their Psychology and Social Action undergraduate program. I am especially interested in learning about social action.

Throughout my life I have encountered institutions that were far from ideal and I understand how they can have a negative impact on our society. I know what it feels like to be at the mercy of an institution and not having the ability to stand up for yourself or be heard. I want to learn how to work efficiently with others to impact society and our institutions in ways that can improve peoples' lives. An obstacle I am trying to overcome at the moment is securing funding to cover me all the way through graduate school. I am extremely grateful that as a veteran I have resources that allow me to focus primarily on school. I am currently attempting to get 84-months of funding through Vocational Rehabilitation, chapter 31, to cover my school cost up to a Ph.D. I feel that Foothill has given me the opportunities to discover myself within an academic environment. The amazing Professors have opened my eyes to what higher education has to offer. My view toward myself and the world is constantly evolving. I am 100% dedicated to learning. Before academia I served honorably in the Navy for 8 years. I spent 5 years deploying on and off to the middle east supporting the troops on the ground by launching aircraft off of

the USS Ronald Reagan. I participated in Operation Tomodachi, aiding Japan after the 2011 tsunami. My last three years was spent as a Navy Recruiter.

Rose (Foothill)

Major: English for Transfer

My Story:

On a partly cloudy Monday, in the afternoon, I was sitting in my mother's car as she drove me to the dentist. During the ride, my mother asked me what I wanted to do in the future. Trying to find an answer, my mind went a hundred miles per hour. I felt the need to say something other than "I don't know," and after a few minutes, I told my mother that I wanted to be a pharmacist. My mother approved of it and said that this job fitted my calm, organized personality. However, I wasn't satisfied with what I said. I didn't want to become a pharmacist. In fact, I didn't know what I wanted to do for a living. Yet, I still kept with it — until college. During my first year at Foothill College, I came to realize that I'm very good at English. Plus, I excel in and enjoy all my English classes. When my English 1B professor complimented me on one of my essays, "Impressive work, Rose. You'd make a great academic. I hope you got for it," I figured out what I wanted to do in life. I want to become an English professor and teach English composition and literature at a community college or a university, improving students' reading and writing skills, as well as helping them see the power of language.

To reach my goals, I plan to obtain an Associate Degree for Transfer in English at Foothill, transfer to UC Santa Cruz to obtain a Ph.D. in literature, get my teaching credentials during my time at UCSC, and pursue teaching internships and tutoring. In pursuit of an ADT in English, I've been taking the English courses required for this degree at Foothill. To guarantee my transfer to UCSC, I applied to the Transfer Admission Guarantee program. During my time at Foothill, I've also been tutoring a lot of students in English for the school's EOPS and Pass the Torch programs, which has been a fulfilling experience for me. I learned how to effectively tutor students by attentively listening to them, asking them positive feedback questions, and giving them the time to think about what they need to do. This experience also allowed me to hone my English skills and my knowledge, which will help me excel in future courses related to my major and become a successful English professor. However, in pursuit of becoming an English professor, I have to overcome obstacles that include not having a car, parental pressures, and my financial situation.

Although I have a driver's license, I don't have my own car to drive myself to school. My mother can't drive me to school either because of work. To compensate for this, I take public transportation — in particular, the VTA and CalTrain — even though it takes me two hours to get to school. I also take the VTA more often than the CalTrain, because I have a Clipper Card for the VTA that saves me money. With a scholarship, I will be able to buy a car and drive myself to school, especially when I transfer to UCSC next fall. UC Santa Cruz is far from where I live and getting there by public transportation takes longer than Foothill. Even though I plan to live in the dorms at UCSC, having my own car to drive myself around Santa Cruz to buy groceries and school supplies will be more convenient than taking public transportation.

Under parental pressure to take care of my mother in the future, I'm working very hard to obtain a Ph.D., staying on top of my classes and meeting with my EOPS counselor to make important academic decisions. This isn't to say that I'm striving for a Ph.D. only to take care of my mother in the future. I'm also doing this for myself. So many people have a bachelor's and a master's degree, and as the

workforce becomes more competitive and the country more expensive to live in, a doctorate will give me an advantage over many job-seekers. With a doctorate, I can also earn more money in wages, making it easier to support my mother and me in the future. A scholarship, therefore, will help me achieve this goal by providing me some money to pay for graduate education without having to pay back that money.

As a first-generation college student of a low-income, single-parent family, I am on my own when it comes to paying for college. My mother doesn't have enough money to pay for my educational expenses. She works at a barbershop and only makes enough to pay rent and buy some food. With CalWorks and CalFresh, my mother can buy enough food for her, my younger sister, and me. With no money left for my educational expenses, I fill out a FAFSA every academic year. This allows me to receive a lot of financial aid to pay for school fees and supplies. This also allows me to be eligible for the Foothill Promise, which covers my tuition and textbook costs. As a result, I get reimbursed with most of my financial aid. With this money, I can save up for future educational expenses, especially when I transfer to UCSC. Since I want to get a Ph.D. — in other words, attend graduate school — a scholarship will help me pay for this. I learned that I don't get financial aid for graduate school, and all of my financial aid savings will be spent eventually. So, a scholarship will provide me more free money to spend on my education, leaving me with less student debt in the long run.

In sum, I have very big goals in life, and those are to become an English/literature professor, improve students' reading and writing skills, and help them see the power of language. I dream of teaching English in a community college or university, discussing literature with my students, and helping them become strong readers and writers — ultimately benefiting everyone they communicate with in this world. To fulfill this dream, I work very hard in school and take advantage of the financial aid available to me. I also have to overcome obstacles like transportation, parental pressures, and my financial situation. With a scholarship, overcoming these obstacles will be easier, helping me achieve my dream — attain the future that I want.

Luis (De Anza)

Major: Sociology for Transfer

My Story:

In my life emigrating to the United States from Mexico at the age of seven, encountering a demanding academic environment in high school, and being rejected by my top four college options were all challenges that I overcame with the support from my family, which made me the strong person I am today.

I come from a very humble family because my father had to quit school in the second grade to help my grandfather with farm work, and my mother graduated from high school but did not have enough money to attend college. When I was seven years old my family emigrated to the United States in search for financial stability. After arriving my father had an extremely difficult time finding a stable job for our family to make a living, which caused us to be constantly moving around the United States. My father did all types of jobs, from seasonal farmworker to gardeners before getting a stable job at Greenwaste Recovery Inc. in San Jose. I've lived in Mexico, Oregon, Wisconsin, Los Angeles, Salinas, and Watsonville before settling in San Jose, where I began the third grade. Constantly moving around affected me greatly because I hated being the new kid. At the beginning I was making friends and being social but when the

moving around began and that all changed. I did not want to make friends because I knew I would be leaving eventually; therefore, I was never able to connect to any teacher or academic figure. Another aspect that changed due to emigrating was the connection with my family. In Mexico every Sunday all my family from my mother's side would get together at church, and then head over to my grandparents' house for breakfast. I remember playing soccer, tag, and many other activities with all my cousins. After we were done playing and eating my family would head over to my grandparents' home from my father's family to eat and play. After emigrating, I had to wait ten years before I saw my grandparents again, and my Sundays consisted of staying home and watching tv.

In addition to emigrating to the United States, I encountered another challenge as I began high school. I graduated from a very small class of approximately thirty students in middle school and was awarded valedictorian. All my success in middle school granted me a scholarship at Bellarmine College Preparatory, for some the top high school in the Silicon Valley and even in the state. I began to struggle academically, something I was not accustomed to. I was scared to raise my hand in class as I thought people would judge me for asking a stupid question. I did not tell anyone about my struggles until my sister, who was attending UC Berkeley, called me to check up and I broke down. I told her I could not do it and that Bellarmine was not the place for me. Then she reminded me of all the sacrifices my parents have done for my siblings and me. I needed that tough love from her to get me focused again. After that conversation my sister and I had, all the nervousness and self doubt left my body. I began to ask all my questions without having fear of being labeled as dumb and attended office hours as I needed them. As I look back at this experience, I learned that to prosper in life you need help from others and asking for it does not label me as stupid or unintelligent.

Finally, after enduring all the academic blows from Bellarmine and obtaining a relatively high grade point average I expected to attend one of my top four college options. Unfortunately, I was rejected from all four of them: USC, UC Berkeley, UCLA, and Stanford. I began to fall apart. I would not get out of my bed all day because I felt that I had disappointed my parents and my sister, who all expected me to attend UC Berkeley in the fall. All the confidence I had obtained all my life was gone. Although I was accepted to other four year universities, like Chapman, USF, LMU, and Redlands, I made the decision to go to De Anza because I feel that I belong at UC Berkeley. My family was very supportive of my decision, but it still did not change the feeling of failure I felt. Today I am still coping with all the insecurities and self doubt and hoping that one day I will be at the UC Berkeley campus as a student.

My plans for the future are to attend UC Berkeley in the Fall of 2020 and earn a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology. After graduating from Berkeley I will attend Stanford School of Medicine where I will obtain my Medical Doctor's degree. I want to begin my surgical residency the following year and specialize in neurological surgery. After completing my surgical residency and passing the U.S. Medical Licensing Exam I will become a neurological surgeon.

As I reflect on all my goals I have set for myself, my legacy will be proving the stereotype of immigrants wrong. I want to be a living example of why defending immigration reforms, like DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), and all the Dreamers in our country should be a priority for this nation. I will never stop activating for Immigration Reform in this country because we all deserve to dream big without the fear of deportation.

Katelyn (De Anza)

Major: Business Admin for Transfer

My Story:

Before I begin writing about my goals, I wanted to give background for the activities I listed above since I believe that they have shaped my academic decisions and goals – I'm currently a Business major at DeAnza College, part of the Honors Program and hope to be involved with the student newspaper, La Voz next quarter or year. I love writing, and my interests in business have driven me to take part in activities such as writing on the student newspaper at my high school and ultimately taking on the role of Business Manager. I hope that I can continue to write at DeAnza and even after I transfer to another university. My parents are first generation immigrants, so it was surprising to them that I enjoyed reading and writing English, since it was their second language. Both my father and mother are originally from Taiwan, and the stories they share of their lives has always been an inspiration for me to write – I love collaborating with others in team environments; the end result is something amazing that we all pitched in to produce – I believe that it is this personal belief that draws me to continue seeking opportunities to volunteer with students who have special needs, but it is also due to my own values. Before I was born, my dad was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). I never understood the gravity of this disease when I was young; to me, it seemed like a long word with implications I didn't understand. It was only until high school when I realized how much of him had changed. MS attacks the myelin sheath, a layer around neurons in the brain that facilitate how a message gets sent from the brain to itself and other parts of the body. It affects people differently, and can alter physical and mental ability, as well as emotional stability. For my dad, this meant that he could not remember events that happened during the week, or even in the mornings. During my junior year, he underwent a major hip replacement surgery to replace a socket of his hip that been worn down by early on-set arthritis. He spoke of weakness in both legs and needed more time to think, move, and do all basic family activities that we had taken for granted. My mom supported him and our family, including my younger sister, through his surgeries and MRI scans, and worked extra hard at her job as a kindergarten teacher during my time in high school. She continued to work even as he could not find a job as an engineer, the occupation he had for over 20 years. Even now, she works to support our entire family, and my dad drives Lyft while looking for jobs. It is my mom's resilience that encourages me never to give up. We went through major financial changes my senior year, with piling medical costs and car repairs, minuscule items that been so insignificant but now added up, resulting in having to refinance our home and take out multiple loans to be able to repair the roof and the gutters. I worry constantly about my parents – their lack of 401k investments that ensure secure finances during retirement – my goal is to use the resources I have available and work hard, in hopes that I can secure my future and theirs. Through education, I want to learn more about other people, contribute to society, and give back to those whose support I leaned on in my academic journey.