

Foothill-De Anza Retirees Association Scholarship - June 2018 Recipients - \$1,250 each

Foothill – Aidan

Major: History for Transfer

My Story:

Weary from the climb, I reach the top of the hill in my San Mateo neighborhood. Looking over my shoulder, I admire the view of the Bay Area stretched out like a postcard. With a tug on the strap of my bag, I continue my walk home from the Caltrain station. Three days a week I take transit into San Francisco for my job and the other two days I head in the opposite direction to Foothill Community College.

I am transferring because my intention is to receive a PhD in History, and Foothill is a two year college. I also want to expand my horizons and gain new experiences at an institution that could provide challenging new opportunities to help me develop as an individual. During my time at Foothill, I have been an embedded History and English tutor and I work part-time at the Department of Homeland Security.

My objectives are to teach History at a university level, be politically active, and become a well-rounded individual. Ever since I was little, I loved learning about history and thought it would be a joyful subject to teach. From Jericho to the modern age, I could imagine the settings and people; such as a goldsmith in Ancient Egypt to an Arabian woman breaking free of tradition to a silversmith apprentice in New England. As an embedded tutor, I gained insight into the power of teaching. I enjoyed helping others overcome their own personal hurdles so they have the confidence to complete their assignments.

Another objective I have is to be instrumental as a public servant. When I interned at a local Assembly member's office, I once spoke with a man who was upset about his local beach. As a child, he had visited the beach with his family and as he grew older he saw the increasing

trash left on the sand. Every day, he would walk down to the beach and pick up the trash, only to return and find it in the same state. He wanted to know how the Assemblyman could help him fix the issue. I knew I couldn't do anything to solve the problem at the time, but I realized then that I wanted to act in a capacity that enabled me to listen to people and find productive ways to assist them.

I know solutions for issues can be created by listening to those who have expertise, researching material that relates to it, and speaking to affected individuals. The issues I care about are women's rights, healthcare, court reform, and campaign finance laws. The reason I want to address women's rights is because women represent 50% of the world's population, yet continue to be stifled by toxic masculine culture present in the United States. I would like to fix healthcare so that people like my single mother wouldn't need to worry about the additional burden of paying for insurance costing over six hundred dollars a month. The United States should provide the same level of care that other countries are capable of with the costs that those countries maintain. I would like to pursue court reform so that checks and balances are present at all levels such as removing the harmful plea deal, reducing the power of prosecutors, especially in regards to Brady violations, and increasing funding for public defenders. Finally, I want to fix campaign finance laws to prevent the abuse of money. Money isn't free speech, it is a form of bribery.

My final objective is to become a well-rounded individual by being a lifelong learner and achieving a higher education is part of climbing that personal hill.

De Anza - Lin

Major: Accounting

My Story:

A dream is heavy, and achieving one's dream is never easy. I come from a low-income family in China, and I am the only child of my mother and father. When my father was laid off during his late 40s, and when my mother, a person with a disability, was a cashier at a cafe, I could not afford the tuition fee. I had to drop out of college when I was a freshman to work in order to feed my family because the financial responsibility fell on my shoulder. In spite of my responsibilities, attaining a higher education has always been my dream. I feel blessed that I am married to my husband and have immigrated to the U.S. Now, I have an opportunity to chase my dream. My parents are proud of me because I am the first and the only person in our family to attain a higher education.

Once settled in the US, understanding the English language and culture became an obstacle to fulfilling my dream of attaining a higher education. It was difficult to fully understand what people were saying when they spoke to me. Even if I understood what they said, I only had an idea of how to respond in my mind in Chinese, but I didn't know how to express myself verbally in English appropriately. At that time, I knew if I couldn't overcome the language obstacle, I could not survive in the United States. I realized that I must learn how to translate Chinese to English. So, I decided to take English classes at De Anza College to improve my English proficiency. During my first two quarters, I enrolled myself in an English-speaking class for non-native speakers, an English writing course, an English grammar course and a developmental reading course. I attended my professor's Office hours every single time to

discuss materials, which I didn't understand in the class; I signed up the weekly individual tutoring in Writing and Reading Center; I used the walk-in tutoring service in the Listening and Speaking Center. I pushed myself to become more exposed to English, taking every chance I could speak and write in English. Learning and practicing a little every time, added together, turned into major progress within those first two quarters.

Now an acclimated English speaker and De Anza college student, I see how I can now realize my dream— to be an accountant with a CPA credential. To be a successful public accountant, I plan to transfer to my dream four-year university—UT-Austin—to attain a bachelor's degree in accounting. I intend to finish all transfer required classes at De Anza College by Spring 2019. In preparation for this career, I will earn additional job skills as I am scheduled to participate as an IRS volunteer, helping to file tax returns for low-income families. I will practice my knowledge and skills and contribute to my community. In addition, I am applying for a summer internship in public accounting firms, which will provide me with hands-on experience in a corporate accounting setting.

The heavy weight of my dream is the education-related costs. My husband and I are both students. We have to take every opportunity to lower our education costs such as buying used books or renting books. Also, without the financial support, I need to depend on my husband's income or find a job to earn money, which would prolong my career goal to be a CPA. With the financial support from this scholarship, I will be able to focus on the classes I take and put more effort into learning, which will help me to finish the coursework with a great performance, establishing a solid foundation of accounting knowledge for my future career.

My dream of attaining a higher education is heavy and is not easy to attain. Once I set on my journey, giving up is not an option. Once I achieve my career goals, I will pay forward this opportunity to others in my community—immigrants to the US who have had similar struggles, such understanding the English language and culture as I have.

De Anza - Yi

Major: Business Admin for Transfer

My Story:

In Taiwan, instead of solving the philosophical question of "why", my schooling was more focused on the question of "how". My days were spent on learning how to prepare for tests instead of learning the application of these subjects. I soon realized that when we ignore the most simple and important question of "why", we start losing our passion and motivation, and the ability to carve our own paths through our own decisions.

I felt that in this environment, I was limiting my ability to pursue a career in business where executive decisions are made constantly. As a result, I decided to study abroad by first entering a community college which is close to my relatives. In this way, I can minimize the cost living with family and can have more time to prepare and improve myself as an ESL student and a new immigrant. But, little did I know, the shift of environment was only the beginning of the many challenges I would soon face. After coming here, I experienced a huge culture shock. Getting the highest score in the class did not directly correlate to being the most successful. No longer were my courses planned for me and no longer did they exactly match

all my peers. School was not the only priority anymore, as the students around me all participated in extracurricular activities.

I am still processing and working on this adjustment. However, I have learned to be more open-minded and active. I am a member of the Honors program where I am challenged and able to explore a breadth of courses by researching in different subjects. Through the Honors program, I have not only learned deeper in my courses but also have gotten a close relationship with professors. I became closer to my Economics professor and started to be her assistant in the second year at De Anza College. My experience working with her has given me knowledge outside the classroom and has helped me in many ways from major decisions to transfer opinions.

Aside from the extracurricular, my academic interest began to develop during the junior year of high school, when I started the video lecture series "Principles of Economics" from National Taiwan University's OpenCourseWare and an expansive reading of the Freakonomics book series. I came to understand how economics is responsible for all our actions and for controlling our worldview. From then on, my interest in economics has grown and, as a result, I have been drawn to seek out ways to be involved in this subject. I carried this passion to De Anza College, which soon led me to many opportunities in both academically and socially. My desire to explore is now reflected in my major (Economics/ Business). But one cannot reach the peak if his or her knowledge of the field is not enough, which is why I am so excited to explore what business and economics have to offer in upper division.

However, coming from a single parent family and a first-generation immigrant, I currently have to work two part-time jobs to support my financial need. And it still does not pay well enough for me to afford a four-year university tuition. That is why I am applying for this scholarship. I am inspired to continue my work by exploring deeper in economics/business. My passion, my drive, and my strong academic past are why I am ready to carry what I have learned to the next level, and am looking forward to having my higher education in economics/business.