

THE SCHOLARSHIP SCOOP

Fall 2020 | Volume 2

UCI Scholarships



Scholarship Applications

Get ready for scholarship applications to open on November 2 for the 2021-2022 academic year. Make sure you submit it in on time!



Resources: LGBTRC

The Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Resource Center is an open space for students, staff, and faculty in the LGBTQ community.



Editor's Note: 2020 Elections

With less than 1 month away, it's time for voters to get ready. Be an informed. Read for voting resources. Try to vote early if possible.



Improved Scholarship Platform

Continuing the discussion of the new centralized scholarship platform, readers will get to hear from two important leaders from this project. Becki Sanchez, Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships, will explain how the Scholarships Unit was able to transform itself to execute this project. Then Kara Correa, Executive Director of Development, will talk about the donor side of the platform. Their interviews explain how the platform is inclusive of everyone involved with scholarships: students, donors, and staff members.



**Director of Financial Aid
& Scholarships,
Becki Sanchez**

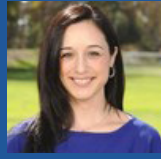
How did you start such a large project that transformed the scholarship process?

The project started off very collaborative. Fabian Firoozi, Director of the Scholarships Unit, proposed a centralized scholarship team and platform, so he was chosen as a project manager. The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (OFAS) worked with University Advancement (UA) to ensure the student and donor side of scholarships would be attended to. Patricia Morales, Associate Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management, and I met with the Provost to gather support for the project. Overall, the project was a lofty goal, but it was completed under budget and on time. I am so pleased with the results, and the project has exceeded what I expected of it.

How does this project address past scholarship issues?

Previously, the Scholarship Unit consisted of only two positions, so it lacked the ability to expand and improve the scholarships it offered. We have since expanded the team from two to seven to increase the unit's efforts to offer and manage more scholarships while also handling the increase in applications with the new platform. The UCI scholarships available to students posted online wasn't being heavily marketed, so they had no idea of what was available to them. By building this platform and using Slate as our online application site, we were able to better reach students.

Additionally, schools had dozens of scholarships offered within its own departments and were fundraising in different ways compared to other schools. The entire process lacked continuity and collaboration that would benefit donors and students. Therefore, OFAS and UA also worked with development officers from different schools to bridge the divide and have everyone operating on the same page. The response received from our school partners have been positive. I am pleased to see how much more accessible the scholarship application process is thanks to Fabian's work of building this platform from the ground up.



**Executive Director of
Development,
Scholarship Programs,
Kara Correa**

How does the new scholarship platform improve the donor stewardship process?

Donor stewardship is such a critical component of the fundraising process. When donors make a financial investment in UCI students by supporting undergraduate scholarships, it is our responsibility to then ensure that donors understand the tremendous impact of that investment. The new scholarship platform opens the door and presents several timely avenues for stewardship opportunities. The new platform provides us with more student stories that can be placed into impact reports for donors, we now have a centralized way to monitor the trends and the financial needs among our undergraduate student population, and student "thank you" letters and videos can be gathered more quickly. Donors will have opportunities throughout the year to engage with their scholarship recipients whether it be via Zoom or through video and emails. Overall, donors who support undergraduate scholarships will now have a more complete understanding of how their support impacts a student or students.

How hard was it to collaborate with all schools and departments?

The schools and departments across campus were all great and willing to work with both OFAS and University Advancement to improve upon the existing system. We worked with the schools and departments for a couple of years to assess their specific needs while still providing a transparent, consistent approach that accommodated the needs of our students and donors. We are also welcoming feedback from our colleagues across campus so that we can continually improve the process.

What do you see in the future for the matching program and fundraising efforts?

Undergraduate scholarships are essential, especially during times of social unrest and economic uncertainty, for opening doors and creating pathways for ALL students to pursue their dreams at UCI. Within University Advancement's *Brilliant Future Campaign*, fundraising for undergraduate scholarships is a top priority for "*Advancing the American Dream*".

New Scholarships Added to 2021-2022 Scholarship

All students who submit the single scholarship application, will automatically be considered for these scholarships.

Independent Achievers Scholarship

The Independent Achievers Scholarship supports independent students who demonstrate academic promise, courage to carve their own paths and strive for their careers while working to support themselves and their education.

Resilient Family Scholarship

The Resilient Family Scholarship supports high achieving students raised by single-parents and was created to financially reward students with academic promise, who depend on one parent's income to afford their college education.

Resilient Parent Scholar Award

The Resilient Parent Scholar Award supports high achieving students who are single-parents and care for their dependents while attending UCI. This scholarship was created to ease the financial burden of students who are single parents with academic promise, whose goals are to improve the quality of life for themselves and for their dependents.

Athanasiou and Gonzalez-Leon Scholarship

The Athanasiou and Gonzalez-Leon (AGL) Scholarship supports Biomedical Engineering majors who are interested in doing research and internships through a mentorship program.

Immigrant Resilience Fellowship

The Immigrant Resilience Fellowship financially supports undocumented students seeking to improve their academic standing. Recipients will participate in Pathfinders, a student retention program offered by SOAR in partnership with the Dream Center. A LARC scholarship is provided to cover the cost of tutoring sessions.

Scholarships open Nov 2 to Dec 31

The start of the 2021-2022 scholarship cycle is right around the corner. [Applications are open from November 2nd to December 31.](#)

Below are some pieces of advice on how to write the best application:

- **Write about your experiences or accomplishments.** You can talk about your aspirations, but it's even more important for our Scholarship Officers to see what you have done and how you learned from it. This is the time to brag about yourself!
- **Explain how you learned or grew from the adversity you faced.** Everyone experiences hardships in life. Show us how you grew in the face of adversity or how you helped others in the same position.
- **Provide thorough and detailed explanations of your experiences.** The more details our Scholarship Officers have, the easier it is for them to fully understand your situation. We want to hear your life story!
- **Add personality to your answers!** It gives us a better idea of who you are as a student and person.
- **Proofread your answers.** Read it out loud or have someone else read them. It increases the chances of catching mistakes or typos before submitting.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: Refugee Scholarship



UCI alumna, Iman Siddiqi '18, went on a trip to Turkey during her first year in 2015, where she was inspired to learn Arabic after meeting with Syrian refugees. While taking Arabic at UCI and practicing the language, Iman connected with Syrian refugees online who spoke to her about their desire to go to college. As she learned about their stories, she was motivated to create a scholarship to assist refugee students' pursuit of higher education in the U.S.



Iman applied for and received the 2017 UCI XIV Dalai Lama Scholarship and used the award grant to hold a fundraising banquet that raised \$93,000 to fund and establish the Refugee Students Scholarship Program. The program awards scholarships to refugees at UCI, as well as at other UC and California State University campuses. The Refugee Students Scholarship has awarded eight UCI students under the guidance of the UCI Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships.

Being a college student is already difficult, but refugee students have many added hardships, including fleeing from their home where many have experienced violence, war or persecution. Many of these students do not qualify for federal or state aid, making college nearly unaffordable. They also face the challenge of learning a new language and embracing a new culture all while navigating a complex higher education and financial aid system. They endure tremendous emotional hardships including anti-refugee sentiment, politicization of their identities, and survivor guilt. Asylum seeker students in particular, do not even know if they will be able to remain in the U.S. as they wait years for their pending cases to be heard. The Refugee Students Scholarship Program alleviates the financial burden for these students, so they can focus on earning a degree and expanding their careers. When donors support this scholarship, they not only assist refugee students, but they also invest in the future of their communities. Scholarship recipients seek to use their education to give back to their communities, and their leadership, contributions, and perspectives on campus enhance and enrich the experience of other UCI students.

Resources on campus: LGBTRC



From its opening in 1995, the [Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender \(LGBT\) Resource Center](#) has been a powerful resource on UCI's campus that advocates for students, staff, and faculty in the LGBTQ community. The center itself is a living history with a past tied to action, resistance, and social justice. With seven core values, it prides itself in being a social, communal, cultural, and educational hub for queer and trans people on campus.

The LGBTRC provides many programs and services for students to utilize and receive support. It plans events that serve various aspects of society. For example, students can participate in movie nights, "gayming" events, staff office hours, scholarship opportunities, community knowledge sharing events, and LGBTQ pride reflection workshops. The center also sponsors a housing unit in Arroyo Vista in order to provide gender inclusive housing. Other departments and centers partner with the LGBTRC to assist and guide students who are at intersections with the LGBTQ community and various interests. The center is also responsible for important policy work on campus such as creating gender inclusive bathrooms. It pushed for the first gender inclusive bathroom located in the Student Center in 2009. In 2020, UCI now has over 250 gender inclusive restrooms across campus.



At the end of the day, the center is a family. Staff members cultivate a sense of home and belonging for students, not just because they see a higher retention at graduation when students have a support system on campus, but also because this might be the only family students have. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for a student's family to disown them after being outed or coming out. For that reason, the LGBTRC created the Christien Rodriguez Emergency Fund in honor of a UCI student leader. The center prioritizes the well-being of their students and makes sure no one gets left behind.

Interested in getting involved? Visit the center. Attend events. The center is open to everyone because everyone can learn more and be an ally.



Important Terms to Know

Gender identity: An individual's internal sense of being male, female, both, neither, or something else. Gender identity may not be visible to others.

Non-binary: Describes a gender identity that is neither female nor male; outside of or beyond two traditional concepts of male or female.

Preferred Gender Pronouns: A pronoun or set of pronouns that an individual would like others to use to reflect their gender identity. Everyone has pronouns or ways they want to others to refer to them. For transgender and nonbinary people, being able to routinely share pronouns helps others refer to them correctly and reduces the harm that can be done when people try to guess someone's pronouns. Asking everyone their pronouns and sharing yours creates an atmosphere of inclusion which is an Anteatr value.

MEET OUR SCHOLARS!



Patrick Yang

- Engineering Dean's Excellence Scholar and Rose Hills Scholar
- Chemical Engineering
- Sophomore

Patrick, what are your educational and career goals?

I plan to receive a Doctorate's degree and conduct research to discover how to increase the efficiency of renewable energy sources. I hope to find a career in the field of renewable energy and work to decrease carbon emissions. I am working towards my career goals by participating in the Sustainability Project, Garden Commission, and the Chem-E Car group where I get hands-on experience with sustainability.

What do scholarships mean to you?

The true essence of scholarships is networking. I am able to form great relationships with staff and other UCI scholars that can lead to great opportunities. It also motivates me to work harder. I can show donors they made the right choice in choosing me.

What was your favorite memory at UCI?

It has to be working with my commission to plan events and growing produce that we then donate to the Fresh Basic Needs Hub.

Sirui, describe your journey to UCI. What are your career goals after graduating from UCI?

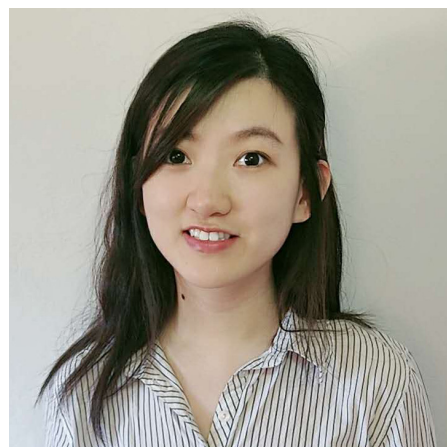
Due to personal difficulty, I was unable to attend college after I finished high school. I worked as a pharmacy technician in a small hospital, and I dreamt of the day I can receive a better education. I was able to fulfill this wish when I came to California in 2016, and I was given the great opportunity of attending community college.

Life stress has been difficult, and my college career progressed slower than others as I had to work many hours as a certified nursing assistant.

Eventually, I finished my lower-division class with good standing at Community College, and I am very honored to have been accepted by UCI. My career goal is to become a Physician Assistant with a psychiatry and mental health focus to help patients with mental illness. I am very interested in medical field because I always enjoy helping others and watching others heal.

Why is it important for students who took a break in studying to continue to pursue higher education?

Not everyone has the opportunity to attend college right after high school. Some may need to work right after high school, some may have bad grades in high school, and some may have had mental illness. College should not be denied to these individuals and they should be offered a second chance in life to pursue higher education.



Sirui Pan

- Town and Gown Scholar
- Public Health Sciences
- Junior

Editor's Note: 2020 Elections

The November 3rd election is quickly approaching. It's time for voters to get ready.

This year marked 100 years since the ratification of the 19th amendment giving women the right to vote. Although the amendment did not apply to all women, it is still a worthy milestone to celebrate. As history has shown us, the right to vote is a right worth fighting for. It is our great duty as American citizens to exercise our right.

No matter where you fall on the political spectrum, everyone is clinging to the hope of the future. It seems like 2020 is trying to throw every disaster our way. As demoralizing as it may be, we must not let it get in the way.

Since many of you are eligible to vote, now is the time to vote for the change you wish to see. The first step is registering to vote. If you are a CA resident, you can visit registertovote.ca.gov to register to vote or check your registration status. For out of state residents, visit Vote.gov to register and learn more about your state's registration rules.

The Presidential candidates receive the majority of the attention when it comes to citizens casting their vote, but there is a lot more to vote on. You also vote for ballot measures, local government officials, Congressional Representatives, judges, and School Board members. Take a look at [this article that breaks down the ballot](#).

It can be overwhelming to see all the choices. Before entering your polling center or receive your mail-in ballot, you can actually preview the candidates and



measures. Visit BallotPedia.org to view a sample ballot depending on what state you are registered in. Other great sites to preview ballots are Vote411.org or BallotReady.org.

These are great resources to educate yourself on all the options. Prepare ahead of time by doing your research on each candidate and proposition. It can be easy to just choose the candidate who you recognize or leave those sections blank, but these elections affect your local community. Change within your district can be easier to enact rather than federal legislation. If you want to see national change, it starts with your own community, so your vote for School Board and City Council members can be just as powerful, if not more powerful than your presidential vote.

Remember that change does not happen overnight. Just because you want something to change will not make it so. Americans need to realize the power in their vote and show up to promote the change they wish to see. Advocacy and peaceful civil disobedience are wonderful ways to promote change and communicate a message. But when it is also supplemented with voting for candidates who fight for your beliefs and vision, it can lead to quicker legislation that improves our nation.

Elections this year will be unlike any other, so vote early! It will take longer to tally votes, but voting early can speed up the process. Send in your mail-in ballot early or vote early at certain polling places. No matter how you choose to vote, make your voice heard. Show politicians what issues you care about. Keep in mind, we are not just voting for ourselves but for the future generations as well.

