

THE SCHOLARSHIP SCOOP

**Donor Spotlight:
UCI Town and Gown**

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Scholarships**



DONOR SPOTLIGHT: UCI Town and Gown

Members of UCI Town and Gown gather together every September to enjoy coffee and conversation. They excitedly catch up with each other and discuss upcoming events. More importantly, they meet the scholars who they are directly impacting. Every year, UCI Town and Gown aims to award scholarships of \$5,000 to a handful of deserving and determined UCI students who experienced a five-year or greater break from education. The group's generosity and compassion allow students to afford higher education. The financial assistance is greatly appreciated given that very few scholarships targets students who had to pause their pursuit of education.

Frosty Gerard, the wife of the first Dean of Graduate Studies, met a community resident named Blanche Harvey in 1963. The two shared a mutual interest in creating a greater relationship between UCI and the community. Because they arrived from various parts of the country and the world, they were looking for a group where they could make new friends and build a community here in Orange County. In 1965, the group became UCI Town and Gown; "Town" representing members from the community and "Gown" symbolizing

the members associated with the university as spouses or staff. The first UCI Town and Gown president was Agnes Blomquist, former President of Newport Savings and Loan. The second president was Jean Aldrich. Her husband, Daniel G. Aldrich, was the first Chancellor of UCI. Throughout the many years, Town and Gown has raised well over \$800,000 in support of various projects and scholarships.

Today the group has 140 members who spend the year raising money for scholarships for a very specific group of students. The members attend interest group meetings, contributing \$3 at each one. In addition, the group hosts luncheons and sends annual appeal letters every year to fundraise for the scholarship.

Kathy Frazer is head of the selection committee and a long-time dedicated member. As a former high school guidance counselor, she knows the lack of scholarships that support students who have to take a break in their college careers. When evaluating student applications, the selection committee focuses on what caused the necessary break.



lifestyle is extremely difficult. The easy way out would be to completely quit school and never return. But these students do not let their hardships prevent them from improving their lives for themselves and their families.

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Many times life gets in the way and education has to be put on the back burner. Unfortunately, students experience the loss of a family member which forces them to step up and take on a parental role. Other reasons include sickness/disability, lack of financial and/or emotional support, or pregnancy. The members admire how dedicated these students are to earning a degree. It is already a challenge to graduate, but having to get back into the student

They have had to make a tremendous sacrifice and deserve to be supported as they courageously reenroll in college. UCI Scholarships is proud and honored to host the Town and Gown Scholarship.



MEET OUR SCHOLARS

Bernardo Cortez-Paniagua

- Town & Gown and Osher Foundation Scholarship
- Public Health Policy Major
- Junior



Bernardo, tell me about your journey before attending UCI.

My mom and I moved to the U.S. as undocumented immigrants in 2008. I spoke no English, so I joined an English as a Second Language program. It was difficult learning a new language and culture, but the hardest part was knowing that I was different from everyone else. Certain barriers like not having a social security number prevented me from applying for programs that required it. I could not attend college because there was no DACA program to help me. Luckily, I had the opportunity to apply for my green card and serve in the army as a combat infantry man. During my 8 year of service, I needed medical care. My experience exposed to me the faults in bureaucracy and showed me that I needed to lead change in the medical field. I want to give assistance to people who are in need. My journey is what motivated to go back to school and join this program to pursue a career in the medical field.

How has the scholarships helped you through the process of pursuing your goal?

I heard about scholarships before but never applied. I figured I was not qualified enough to earn one. But after applying to UC Irvine, I received emails encouraging me to apply. I was extremely shocked to learn that I had earned both scholarships. I feel blessed to have two scholarships because I do not have to worry about tuition for this year. I feel supported by the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships knowing that they chose me. Now I can focus on simply being a good student and finding my way in the world. That is what UCI wants me to do.

Juanita Lopez

- Town & Gown and Sylvia Easton Memorial Scholarship
- Political Science Major
- Senior



Juanita, how has your life shaped your education and career plans?

As a 17-year-old high school student, I worked at a bank to financially assist my family and also cared for my younger sister. I attended school, worked the midnight to 8 am shift, then headed back to school. College was not an option after graduation, so I continued working at financial institutions. I worked at different banks over many years and got laid off multiple times. I realized that I needed to go back to school in order to land a secure job and pursue something that I am passionate about. Now I am running to become the mayor of Los Angeles in 2022. Growing up I saw how neglected the city was. I want to clean it up and work hand in hand with various departments. I want everyone to be treated with dignity and respect, including the homeless who need resources to get them back on their feet. I am especially passionate about The School-to-Prison Pipeline program that started in UCLA. It allows imprisoned people to have a second chance through the power of education. I have conducted outreach events where one of the students I advised has graduated and is now a counselor. This program ends the vicious cycle and makes a real impact on their lives.

What has your experience at UCI been like?

UCI is like Disney Land for me. The campus is beautiful; I love walking to my different classes. I appreciate how diverse the student body is. Almost every person I have encountered has been very nice and supportive. I am grateful to be able to actually get to know the professors and faculty. I feel like I belong here.

Resource: Disability Services Center



The primary role of the Disability Services Center is to support students with disabilities with accommodations in the classroom, services, programs, housing, and rides. But almost as equally important, the DSC is committed to eliminating, eradicating, and obliterating stereotypes about disabilities. When everything is created with nondisabled students in mind, it can be very alienating for those who are disabled. There is a perceived stigma that prevents students from registering with the center for fear of being seen as “broken” or “different”. But the Disability Services Center is committed to collaborating campus-wide to create a culture of inclusion at UCI as it is an institutional responsibility. Disabled students must have the same opportunities and a level playing field in order to succeed. It all starts with creating institutional awareness and commitment at UCI.

In order to create that awareness, the center has multiple programs for both non-disabled and students with disabilities. The Zotability Ally Training discusses biases against disabilities and breaks down the wall between both communities. The virtual, 90-minute session includes a panel of disabled UCI students to speak about their college experience. Attendance is phenomenal, and everyone reports how effective the training was. There is even

a separate session for faculty and staff members, so they too can participate and learn how to better serve students with disabilities. The DSC also plans their Siteimprove Learning Circle which assists those with websites by identifying how to make their site more accessible. Navigating a website can be difficult for others; the training teaches people how to use alt text, colors and contrast, headings and styles, meaningful links, and tables to ensure their site can be used by all. It is a very practical session that has real world application. Students also have the option to learn from the Disability Services Center’s staff how technology can better help them through Assistive Tech.



For students who are interested in registering with the DSC and take advantage of its immensely helpful services, you can easily register on their website. Students with temporary disabilities (broken limbs, other short-term conditions or students diagnosed with COVID-19 or long-term symptoms) are eligible to register too. Those with mobility challenges can enroll for Ring Road Rides, and those with injured writing hands can receive note-taking assistance in class or technology to help.



The Disability Services Center is committed to all students who need its services. The center has an underlying message that is foundational to its work -- people with disabilities are not broken. Society needs to stop looking at them through the lens of their disabilities. Some see a student's disability as the reason the student was admitted to UCI, but nothing could be farther from the truth. They would not be at UCI if they were not qualified. Applicants are not required to report their disabilities. Students with disabilities are UCI students, not DSC students.

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Serving this population is an institutional responsibility by making sure they have a level playing field to graduate and succeed too. Many experience imposter syndrome because they feel that they are less than their nondisabled counterparts. Most DSC students have invisible disabilities. People make assumptions about them and they are unable to get the assistance they need. Those are the reasons why the DSC is so committed to its students, staff, and faculty. DSC is here to collaborate with faculty and staff as well as those who need assistance or help to create a culture of inclusion. To ensure the center can keep up its necessary work, its website has a giving tab where generous donors fund scholarships and programming that go beyond its departmental budget.

ScholarshipUniverse

UCI Scholarships moved its scholarships to a new centralized platform -- ScholarshipUniverse! So applying for scholarships for the 2022-2023 academic will look a little different.

You will still be able to apply for all campus-wide scholarships in one place, but you will have greater ability to see which scholarships you apply for. Simply answer the eligibility questions, then the platform shows you which scholarships you may apply to. This makes the application experience personalized to you. Not only are campus wide scholarships available, you may also apply to external scholarships too!

The screenshot shows the ScholarshipUniverse dashboard for user Keiana Kitaoka. The interface includes a navigation sidebar on the left with options: Dashboard, Questions, Scholarships, Applications, Awards, My Docs, and Feedback. The main content area features a top navigation bar with the user's name and a search bar. Below this, a message states: "You still have outstanding questions that may qualify you for more opportunities! Click here to continue answering more matching questions." The dashboard is divided into several sections: a profile card for Keiana Kitaoka, a "Scholarship Opportunities" section showing "1030 Open & Future Scholarships", a "Your Universe" section showing "Open & Future Matches 0 Scholarships", and an "Actions Required" section with a table of action items. The table currently shows "No records available." and "0 - 0 of 0 items".

The screenshot shows the "Tell Us About Yourself" form in the ScholarshipUniverse interface. The form is titled "Please fill out the following information." and contains four questions, each with a text input field and a "N/A" checkbox:

- What is your citizenship status? N/A
- What is your cumulative GPA? N/A
- What is your current or intended enrollment status for the academic year? N/A
- What is your current or intended major(s)? N/A

UCI Paul Merage School of Business Scholarships

[Giving Day Scholarship](#)

Every year, UCI alumni, students, faculty, staff, emeriti, parents, and friends from around the world come together for a day of philanthropy and make a tremendous impact on our campus and community for UCI Giving Day. Through the support of Merage School donors, the Giving Day Scholarship was created in 2019. It is awarded at the undergraduate and graduate levels to students interested in pursuing an education and career in the digital technology sector. The Merage School is committed to increasing the size and diversity of the digital technology workforce and eliminating the “digital divide” present in our society and ensure that all communities realize the potential benefits generated by the digital technology industry.

Eligibility: Undergraduate student interested in pursuing an education and career in the digital technology sector.



[Spangenberg Scholars for Global Leadership Award](#)

In 2019, alumni, faculty and staff came together to celebrate the vision and tenure of Dean Eric Spangenberg. Through this generosity, The Spangenberg Scholars for Global Leadership Award was created. This endowment supports the mission of the Center for Global Leadership (CGL), to build leaders with a sustainable global vision. Creating a more culturally aware student body through access to global travel is at the core of CGL. Providing this access for undergraduate students sparks a lifetime of learning, helping them develop their skills to function professionally in both national and international markets.

Eligibility: Undergraduate student interested in a career in both national and international markets.

