The President’s Equal Access Scholarship

Portland State University is committed to ensuring all students have the access and support they need to achieve their goals. Through the President’s Equal Access Scholarship, PSU is able to support students from diverse backgrounds and experiences, including racial and ethnic backgrounds, that are traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

Since it was established in 2011, the President’s Equal Access Scholarship has awarded nearly $1.2 million and helped more than 800 students fund their education.

The President’s Equal Access scholarship has helped students in significant ways:

- Provided crucial support to diverse first generation college students to obtain a higher education degree.
- Provided critical funding to pay for tuition for students with little to zero expected family contribution (EFC), often times averting the need for a student to drop-out due to lack of funding.
- Provided opportunities for service learning and campus involvement.
- Facilitates student engagement around issues relevant to our desire to be an equitable and inclusive community.
- Supported students who have typically being underrepresented in higher education.
- Supported non-traditionally aged students.

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Meet the Scholars
2019 – 2020

Angeline Booth  She/her/hers  |  Sexuality, Gender, and Queer Studies Major
I currently serve as the Trans Womxn’s Affinity Group Coordinator at the Women’s Resource Center and a Peer Educator and Administrative Support for PSU Illuminate. I plan to pursue a graduate’s degree in social work, and want to become a sexual educator and sex therapist for LGBTQ+ youth in the south.

What I love about PSU: I love PSU because of the staff and faculty that give students the tools to be critical and informed members of their communities.

Ashis Ramtel  He/him/his  |  Chemistry Major, Pre-med
I was born in a refugee camp in Nepal, and in 2009 I moved to Beaverton, Oregon. I consistently volunteer with Beaverton Foursquare Church. I love to play soccer and lift weights in my free time. My long term goal is to finish pre-med at Portland State University and attend OHSU medical school to become a Physician.

What I love about PSU: I love PSU because it has given me an opportunity to further my education, and it has been very supportive of my diverse background.

Ashley Landis  She/her/hers  |  Chemistry Major
My biggest achievements in high school include creating a competitive, school-wide fundraiser for victims of Hurricane Michael, as well as earning a 4.2 GPA upon graduation. I am proud to be a part of the Upward Bound program that teaches first-generation students about college. In the future, I plan to use my degree in Chemistry to focus my studies on water quality assessment in the Portland area.

What I love about PSU: I love PSU because of the unity and acceptance it radiates.

Bedour Al Manea  Architecture Major
I am proud of finishing my first year of college with a 4.00 GPA. I also worked two different jobs during my first year, at TRIO student support Services Front Desk during fall term and PSU Library Circulation desk during winter and Spring terms. My long term goal is to earn my bachelors degree in Architecture, which will pave the path for me to earn my master’s degree in that major.

What I love about PSU: It’s in Downtown.
Benjamin Turner  He/him/his  |  Social Work Major, Civic Leadership Minor
I’m proud to have worked at Chemeketa Community College, helping people expand their horizons through education; AmeriCorps NCCC FEMA Corps, helping people and communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters; and more. I can’t wait to continue serving my community in new ways through the skills, knowledge and experience I will gain at Portland State University. Go Vikings!

*What I love about PSU:* I’m very pleased that the School of Social Work will afford me the opportunity to work a year-long internship during my senior year.

Benjamin T. Thomas  Community Development, American Sign Language Majors
I am 28 years old, born and raised in Portland. I was adopted at a young age and would like to reach a position where I can help improve the same communities that helped raised me. I am currently learning American Sign Language in hopes that maybe one day I can also help advocate for those in the Deaf community. In my personal time I enjoy playing sports, watching movies, and writing short stories.

*What I love about PSU:* I love the diversity at PSU and I also love how PSU is right in the heart of Portland because this city has always been my home and I truly love my home.

Brittany Flaherty  She/her/hers  |  Applied Linguistics Major
My main achievement is in supporting myself and being close to finish my degree with no support from family after moving out at 18. I work as a barista at New Seasons Market, and my hobbies include gardening, makeup, learning new languages, and meeting new people.

*What I love about PSU:* The amazing professors.

Carina Nunez  She/her/hers  |  Social Work Major
Growing up everyone around was involved in gangs and were addicted to drugs. I turned the negative into the positive by making Latino community my main focus. I spent most of my afternoons writing a proposal to the city of Gresham and other organizations in the community informing them about my idea of helping Latino kids get jobs and become educated so they could follow their dreams and choose a different life style. I was able to get these Latino youth a summer job in hopes that they focus their energies into positive growth.

*What I love about PSU:* It offers a great Social Work program.

Clarence J. Zack-Cade  He/him/his  |  General Science Major, Pre-Dental
I am the treasurer of the Pre-Dental Organization, an Ignite Scholar, a volunteer at Medical Teams international, a volunteer at OHSU On-Track and conduct pancreatic cancer research at PSU.

*What I love about PSU:* PSU serves its students and community in a genuine way. The student has great opportunity and resources while the school strives to assist the growth and development of the citizens of Portland.
Cynthia Villanueva-Vargas  She/her/hers | Biology Major
I am proud of graduating as valedictorian and putting forth effort into my work with individuals that possess both mental and physical abilities. In continuation of that, I am interested in one day working with children of all abilities as a pediatrician in order to help all disadvantaged communities receive the care they deserve. I hope to further cultivate my leadership skills these upcoming years as I love to be involved with people of all backgrounds and origins.

*What I love about PSU:* The work they do to increase diversity.

Daadir Shee  He/him/his | Community Development, American Sign Language Majors
I take pride to be the first in my family to go to a university and be a role model for my siblings. I was the Director of Legislative Affairs a year ago at Portland Community College and advocated for students by lobbying at the state capitol and in Washington D.C. I speak English, Swahili and Somali and I am majoring in Supply chain and Logistics management. My long term goal is to become a Chief Operating Officer and own my business.

*What I love about PSU:* PSU is very diverse, welcoming and full of opportunities to prosper.

Daniel Tovkach  Accounting, Finance Majors
I'm very involved outside of school, I'm a youth leader at my church and lead a weekly community group, I'm at church about 4-5 times a week. I work full time go to school full time and in my extra time when I'm not involved with church activities I'm playing sports. I love to play basketball and play as often as I can. My long-term goals are to become an accountant at a successful firm and eventually open up my own firm.

*What I love about PSU:* The people are all friendly and nice and I love the location.

David Phan, Jr.  He/him/his | Health Studies: Community Health Major
I was born and raised on Saipan, in the Northern Mariana Islands. I graduated at the top of the 2018 graduating class at the Northern Marianas College, I am currently participating in the BUILD EXITO program at PSU, and I have been awarded numerous scholarships that will help my goals come to fruition! Scholarships like PEAS have enabled me to pursue a degree in public health; I wish to address health disparities and barriers to healthcare in Pacific Island populations such as my home island, Saipan.

*What I love about PSU:* Its commitment to the success of students from disadvantaged and/or underrepresented backgrounds.

David Hoang  He/him/his | Political Science Major
I was born and raised in Southeast Portland and later in East County. I graduated from Franklin High, where I was the co-founder of the Asian American Association, which advocates for the celebration of diverse Asian cultures represented in the school community.

*What I love about PSU:* It offers a variety of food options from small, locally-owned businesses, and has many public transit options for students to travel!
Erick Allen  He/him/his | Sociology Major
Married father of 2 children, I work in the counseling fields, as a drug and alcohol. I graduated Portland Community with a 3.3 GPA.

What I love about PSU: It’s widely diverse. I see people from all walks of life.

Fatima Mendoza  She/her/hers | Political Science Major
Last year, I graduated with honors from Tualatin High School and was also awarded the State of Oregon Seal of Biliteracy. This summer, I participated in the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA), which is a week-long intensive leadership program. Now, this upcoming year I will join the university’s Explore the Law. In the future, I hope to pursue a career in the legal field.

What I love about PSU: It has provided a strong community of support, as well as a wonderful learning environment for me.

Germán Sanchez De La Paz  He/him/his | Graphic Design Major
In high school I won 5 recognition awards for my progress in my academic classes. I also manage to compete in track and field as a high school student, but not until my senior year of high school because of my brain disability. My overall life purpose is to encourage and motivate Latinos across Oregon that anything is possible and to never give up on your dreams.

What I love about PSU: It’s a place where I been given the chance to grow and learn as a person. I also love the diverse group of students at Portland state university. I also really like how everyone is super friendly and helpful here at PSU.

Habiba Ibrahim  She/her/hers | Biology Major
I’m most proud of my hard work in high school showcased by my 4.3 GPA. I was president of Multicultural club, president of REAP, while also participated in track and field, and held the second annual unity assembly at my school during my senior year in high school. I’m unique because I am a Black Muslim female immigrant who speaks three languages. My long term goal is to attend medical school and become a Cardiothoracic surgeon.

What I love about PSU: Its diversity.

Estefani Reyes Moreno  She/her/hers | Mechanical Engineering Major
I’m proud to be the first in my family to have graduated from high school. My motivation to succeed in college comes from my family and the struggles I’ve faced as a DACA recipient to get to college. With a college education I hope to gain a financially stable occupation that I will enjoy and one that will allow me to support my parents in the future.

What I love about PSU: Its diversity and the support there is for students.
Hector Gonzalez-Montiel  He/him/his  |  Mechanical Engineering Major
I am proud to be part of the upper division program of the Mechanical Engineering Department at Portland State University. Working for Portland Parks and Recreation has allowed me to develop ideas I can investigate as I continue with my career. I am a young leader who considers every small detail so that everyone can experience success. Also, I love to play basketball.

What I love about PSU: It is located close to home.

Hoang Nguyen  He/him/his  |  Electrical Engineering Major
I am a junior/senior majoring in Electrical Engineering here at PSU. Throughout my year at PSU, I have been involving in extracurricular activities such as being a PSU student ambassador, helping put together international student activities and events as part of the international culture service program and the organization of international student. I enjoy all my memory at PSU and the communities at PSU have been very special to me. My goal in the future is to become a successful signal engineer or test engineer.

What I love about PSU: PSU gives me the feeling of a community and I always feel I have supports here.

Isidro Chan  He/him/his  |  Psychology Major, Pre-Med
My ultimate goal in life is to work as a physician and serve the underserved. I’ve found a passion for working with the Hispanic community and staying active at my church. Currently, I serve as the Youth Director at my Hispanic church and I love it. Outside of being a student, I also love to volunteer with NW NOGGIN and OHSU’s T-RAP!

What I love about PSU: I feel included. I also love the fact that OHSU is right next door, which means open opportunities!

Jacklyn Hardy  She/her/hers  |  Health Sciences Major
I am a life long student with an Associates Degree in Medical Office Administration. I did extensive volunteer work at a local church as a women’s leader for ten years and have a passion for helping others. I am currently pursuing a nursing licensure and plan to continue schooling until I become a Nurse Practitioner.

What I love about PSU: The diversity and unique culture.

Janvier Gasabato  He/him/his  |  Computer Engineering Major
I am proud of getting myself in college. I have been playing soccer since I was 5 years old. I want to graduate with a bachelor degree in Computer Engineering and would like to Intern or find a job at one of the small engineering companies, so I could gain more pieces of knowledge on my career.

What I love about PSU: I love PSU because it makes me feel like at home when I’m on campus.
Jasmin Vera  She/her/hers  |  Business Marketing Major
By receiving a higher education, I plan to enroll in the business program and pursue a bachelor’s degree in Marketing and a minor in Graphic Design. In doing so, I hope to achieve my ultimate dream; to open up a manufacturing business and create my own brand. Therefore, I plan to incorporate my Hispanic culture and open up opportunities for people to overcome poverty. These goals will not only allow me to provide a stable live for my family, but compensate all the hard work my parents have done for me and my siblings.

What I love about PSU: It has a good business program

Jessica Squires  She/her/hers  |  Psychology Major
I am a non-traditional student returning to school after life experiences. I have been involved with TRIO, WRC, DMSS, and Women’s outreach. I am a Sexual Assault Survivor, and I am available to talk if anyone needs to just be listened to!

What I love about PSU: I am allowed to be myself safely and we are a community that serves the city!

Maryam Meshkattehrani  She/her/hers  |  Architecture Major
I was born and grew up in Tehran, Iran, and she is now living in Portland, Oregon. I am studying a bachelor degree in architecture major Portland State University. I am proud of all of activities that I did to support LGBTQ+ community during my life either as a volunteer or a student advocate. I want to become an architect in the future to build shelters and multifunctional centers for LGBTQ community.

What I love about PSU: PSU is a diverse community, which gives apportioning to all of of students with any background to achieve their goals.

Motutama Nogotau Sipelii  He/him/his  |  Health Sciences, Biology Major
I aspire to become a physician-scientist (MD-PhD) to one day go back to American Samoa where I was raised to improve the quality and accessibility to healthcare services though research-based approaches. Becoming a student leader on campus is both challenging and rewarding because nothing gives me greater joy knowing the initiatives I’m working on will help other students along their journey at Portland State University. I’m excited to serve as the Student Life Director for ASPSU as well as being a Resident Academic Mentor for Housing & Residence Life.

What I love about PSU: Its unique demographic and its urban campus.

Nahla Hamilton  She/Her/Hers  |  Political Science  Major
My involvement in high school clubs helped me to get a deeper understanding of my abilities and goals, which I believe will give me an advantage in accomplishing my goals of changing my community for the better. Specifically, I plan to find a career within the field of community development so that I can help better my community and give others a chance to improve their lives by providing them with a better quality of life.

What I love about PSU: The student body is so unique and diverse.
Noemi Jimenez-Arenas  She/her/hers  |  Mechanical Engineering Major
I have done so many things since I started school here at PSU but I am proud of what I have been doing this summer, I have helped kick start the beginning of a foundation dedicated to raising money to support breast cancer research, and raise awareness about the impact breast cancer has around the world. Although this is not my major area, when a friend recruited me to help start the foundation I felt the need to help bring attention to the disease that is rampaging women.

What I love about PSU: The diversity and support first generation students get.

Parsa Mohammad Ghezelayagh  He/him/his  |  Architecture, Computer Science Major
I am a trans man who grew up in Tehran, Iran and is now living in Portland, Oregon. I have advocated for access and affordability of community colleges for LGBTQ+ students by piloting new resources, coordinating events, and providing peer education for ESOL students from other cultures about the LGBTQ community. Also, I completed the 12-month leadership training at Basic Rights Oregon and now am interning at the Q Center to work on a Health Equity Project, which allows further advocacy for my LGBTQ community to someday have access to an inclusive medical system.

What I love about PSU: I feel PSU is my new second home.

Patricia Quintanilla  She/her/hers  |  Management & Leadership Major
I was a Full-IB student in High school and I was able to achieve my diploma. It is one of my biggest achievement in High school due to the fact that English is my second language. I was in College Possible in High school and I was thankful to them for helping me applying to PSU. My long-term goals for this year is being able to balance my personal and my school time because I want to be able to succeed and graduated from PSU, but I also want to have free time during my school year.

What I love about PSU: It is a campus that is able to provided many resources to students with different backgrounds.

Roxanna Mckibben  She/her/hers  |  Social Work Major
I am a proud mother of a thirty year old adult son, six year old granddaughter and ten year old daughter. I recently obtained an Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education from Chemeketa Community College then transferred to PSU to continue my education in social work. Also, I am working towards Certification for Drug and Alcohol Counseling, in which I hope to have done by next summer. My long term goal is to work with families who need help with over coming substance abuse and help with parenting skills.

What I love about PSU: Its positive learning environment and the TRIO Support Services.

Russell Javan  She/Her/Hers  |  Applied Health and Fitness Major
Since transferring to PSU as first-gen, a women of color and coming from a low-socioeconomic status, being here has opened many opportunities for me. I became a BUILD EXITO and Ronald E. McNair scholar, and earned scholarships that helped finance my education. After completing my degree, I plan to go to graduate school and pursue a public health career in hopes of helping underserved communities and minority groups.

What I love about PSU: it’s a place that promotes diversity and inclusion.
Stevie Taylor  She/her/hers  |  Electrical Engineering Major

My club, Portland State Product Innovation, and I am proud that we built a beautiful automated greenhouse in a wall this year. I happen to be the type of person both interested in technical fields, like my major electrical engineering, and in bringing people of many backgrounds, interests, and abilities together. It’s because of these two skills that I want to start my own employee-centered company building agricultural automation someday.

*What I love about PSU:* PSU is an incredibly diverse school, which I believe is what makes us a resilient and positive force in the world.

Wilondja Mashimango  He/him/his  |  Criminology/Criminal Justice, Int. Studies Major

I once had a been a president and the cofounder of the Pain African Club at Madison High School, which monthly go visit during school year and hoping to eventually start something related here at PSU. I am hoping one day that I will be able to stand and fight for equality as it is the major reason why I am pursuing such a major. I am blessed to be in the number of the many future leaders who will lead the whole world to taking time and recognize the worth and dignity of all human beings in order to express the sense of equality among all.

*What I love about PSU:* PSU is one of the greatest schools I have came to know of - especially when comes to the campus; it is such a great campus.

Tatiana M. Garcia  She/her/hers  |  Child, Youth and Family Studies Major

Being able to further my education at PSU has been an amazing opportunity. Contributing to my community has always been important to me, I currently work on the programming team at La Casa Latina and for this year I am really looking forward towards creating more connections with those all across campus. With my time at PSU, I hope to earn my degrees to work as an Educational Community Worker in the Portland area to improve educational opportunity for all youth.

*What I love about PSU:* It has given me a space to grow as an individual but has also taught me about the power behind collaboration.

Yuliana R Cerrud  She/her/hers  |  Spanish Major

I’m proud of reaching the point where I am right now but more of what I will become. I’ve done leadership in more ways than I thought in the past few years, I have also tried new hobbies like Judo, piano and singing. I have earned scholarship awards and positions in my work life worth being proud of. I plan on continuing my educational, physical and mental growth as it has been over the years and more.

*What I love about PSU:* Its convenient