

**FODARA Scholarship Winners from Foothill College
June 2015 Recipients**

Foothill 3 @\$1,000

1. Mingzhuo (Foothill)

Major: Economics

My story

For as long as I've known what I really want to do in the future, my passion for Economics has grown stronger and stronger. Now I'm studying at Foothill College, majoring in Economics. Throughout high school and college thus far, I have taken rigorous curriculum and maintained 4.0 GPA. I have explicit short-term and long-term plans for future and I think I'm the best candidate for this scholarship.

I'm currently taking transfer-level courses and plan to transfer to UC Berkeley next year. Then I hope to get my Bachelor of Science degree after two years in the economics program. I'm interested in environmental economics and ultimately want to be an environmental economist working for international organizations. I'd like to introduce advanced theories to some developing countries that are suffering from the problems brought from unhealthy economic structure.

Even though I am only 19, I have already had many firsthand experiences with economics. During a tough period living with my elderly grandma, I had to shoulder the financial burden to make ends meet. That's the beginning of my path towards economics world. When I was in middle school, I was the accountant of the whole class. So I tried to make every dollar of our class fund go to the most useful place.

But I quickly realized I only had some shallow views about economics. In high school, I launched a project called "Economics and life", through our team's cooperation and exploration, my horizon was broadened and I grasped some essential parts of economics. Before this project, I never thought new energy was so significant in changing the national economic structure until one of my teammates showed us Chinese energy shortage problem: we rely too much on coal to satisfy the growing need for energy consumption which brings heavy air pollution. As a result of unsuitable use of energy, new energy is strongly needed to solve the problem which is restricting economic development. Inspired by his aspiration, at the first time, I began to realize economic is not only a small and practical unit for making money as I had thought. I was so concerned and interested in the environmental economics and decided to begin my path towards environmental economics.

I have to thank my role model Jack ma who gives me courage to chase my dream. Jack ma who is the chairman of Alibaba uses B2B E-commerce to boost the prosperity of Alibaba which is a combination of Ebay, Paypal and Amazon. When I recall his speeches at Columbia University, Stanford University and Tsinghua University, I remind myself again and again: as a wild dreamer, go forth to meet the shadowy future, without fear.

Considering my financial situation, I need some money support from scholarship. I plan to join the Student government next quarter and compete for the position : budget

analyst. Also I am applying for the fund development associate at Sustainable Silicon Valley. Even though I am a volunteer at PTA Terman and a member at Episcopal Lutheran Campus Ministry at Stanford. The biggest obstacle for me is that I lack a car. My family cannot afford it at a short time. So I need a car to save time on road, then I can do more things efficiently. Also since my family and I move from China to the US, there is too much pressure for my parents to support the education of my brother and I.

When I recall the days past and dream of the bright future, I didn't regret and a voice from my deep heart remind me: You can do more! Economics accompanies me growing up. I'm infatuated with the changeable market. I feel it's my responsibility to deal with various frauds in market. I think healthy economy can benefit daily life, environment and a country's development. It's significant and worthwhile for me to contribute my efforts in economics.

2. Nina (Foothill)

Major: Accounting

My Story

This past year has been very stressful, yet very eye opening. There were several times this year when I felt completely out of place and had no motivation to do anything. My most terrifying concern coming out of high school was what I was going to do with my life, and I still have those moments where I wonder what the future has in store for me. I felt trapped and restricted by my fears, but I am constantly surprised by my ability to shake them off and think on the brighter side. I have certainly become stronger mentally and emotionally, and the only thing I can do from here on is continue to persevere and put my best effort into everything I take on because that alone, I know, will get me very far.

Last year, I was writing about my dad's tragic, yet life-saving car accident that led to the discovery of his lung cancer and a cyst in his brain. To this day, my parents are still paying the costs of the hospital bill for the surgery that removed most of the cyst while bearing the cost of more medication. Nevertheless, I am just glad that our family has been able to get through this hardship by praying and staying strong. Just last year, my dad was fearing for his life; today he is still going strong at 65 years old but certainly has those days where the fatigue from his medication kicks in and makes him feel very weak. My dad has always been the one who handled our family's finances, and I don't want him stressing out over the costs of my education. The least I can do is relieve some stress off of my parents' shoulders by applying for scholarships.

Considering that most students change their majors and life plans three to four times before they graduate, I am lucky to have found a pathway in which I see myself being successful and, most importantly, happy. Last spring, I applied to Foothill as a psychology major in order to keep myself from applying as the dreaded undeclared. But, after taking aptitude tests and thinking about where I see myself in the next forty or so years, I decided that the most realistic choice was to take on accounting. Now that I have taken two courses in accounting and am going to take another in the spring, I am

very happy with my decision because I had the chance to work with an amazing professor and know that I made the right choice.

I plan to transfer to Santa Clara University in order to further my education by taking part in its accredited accounting program and be able to stay at home. While the thought of being accepted into SCU brings me so much joy and excitement, I know that the costs of the private school will eventually add up and put me in so much debt. Still, my dad's saying that he would rather have me at home and take out loans than go off to a school that is hours away but less costly drives me even more to achieve my goal and find ways to relieve my parents' burden of paying not only for my education but my brother's education as well. Should I not be accepted into Santa Clara, the next best thing would be for me to attend San Jose State University, which also has a good business program. Regardless of what school I attend, the most important thing is to be with my family.

My parents have had plans for our family to move to Atlanta after my brother and I graduate, and the thought of starting a new chapter in my life is extremely exciting. After earning my master's degree in accounting, I plan to take the exam to become a certified public accountant and look for a good-paying job at a successful firm in order to give back to my parents for all that they have done for me. Whether I will continue to spend my life in California or move on to newer things in Georgia is still to be determined, but wherever I go, I know that family will be the number one determinant of my decision.

I have always said that the most important things for me personally are health, success, and happiness, and I've learned that happiness should always be number one. From past experience, I have learned that happiness comes from making others happy, so that is why I have been looking for more places to volunteer in my community. So far, I have been helping out in Sunnyvale serving lunch to seniors, sorting and distributing foods for low-income families and seniors, and preparing and serving food at a homeless shelter. To know that I can put a smile on people's faces by doing such little things is a good feeling, and I wish I had known this and started giving back earlier.

3. Deanna (Foothill)

Major: Business

My Story

I was ready. My backpack was stuffed with new notebooks and pencils. I was wearing the new blue dress my mom had bought for me the day before. My heart was beating fast, and I could feel the butterflies dancing frantically within my stomach. It was my very first day of school. I was eighteen years old.

I remember being almost late to my very first class – English 1A – on that terrifying first day. I had not prepared for the amount of traffic there would be coming from San Jose. Plus the campus was super confusing to me. But when I finally found my classroom, literally two minutes before the class started, I was almost too scared to go in. I opened the door to find a sea of staring eyes turn to look at me. I let out a small

“yelp!” like a child scared by the boogiemán, and let go of that door handle as if it was made of fire. I had to remind myself why I was there, why I was doing this. I wanted to learn. I wanted an education. I wanted to go to college. After many deep breathes, I was finally able to open the door again and step inside. I took a seat in the far back corner of the classroom. I looked around alarmingly at my fellow classmates, scared to find out that they were all going to be smarter than me. That maybe my two older sisters were right to skip out on the college experience.

I had been given nothing to gauge my intelligence on growing up. Being homeschooled my entire life before college, I had never experienced an academic setting where there were other students around my own age with whom I could compare myself. I was frightened beyond measure that I would find out that I was stupid.

My first two quarters at Foothill were spent in a dizzy, stressful, and petrified haze. The cafeteria, filled to the brim with loud chatting people, was like a strange cave to me that seemed too dangerous to enter. I ate lunch in my car for the first four months of school. I was too scared to speak up in my classes. Even though I often knew the answers to the questions the teachers would ask the class, I kept my voice silent, sitting in the corner, fearful that if I responded to the query incorrectly that my classmates would laugh at me.

Slowly, however, I began to reach out of my shell and gain confidence. I joined what was then known as the Microcredit Club, and started to participate in campus activities. Eventually, I joined the student government, ASFC, on campus as an Activities Agent, and later became an Activities Coordinator. Today, I am an elected Senator of ASFC and am the President of the Fund the Future club, formerly known as the Microcredit Club. I no longer sit silent in the back of classrooms. Instead, I am often the first to speak up.

I have grown a great deal since my first day at Foothill, but I only was given the opportunity to attend college through the generosity of my grandparents, who often helped to pay for my schooling. My parents have been unable to support me on my journey for an education. I have been working three jobs since my second quarter attending Foothill in order to afford college. Whenever times get tough for me financially, however, I remind myself of what I was like my first day at school. The amount of personal growth I have undergone is invaluable, and I know that somehow I have to afford school in order not to lose more opportunities to grow.

As I have expanded my comfort zone, I have felt the desire to experience more and more new and challenging circumstances. My goal for the future is to not only achieve my Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science, but also to learn more about the world and how I may make a difference in it. I hope when I transfer to be able to intern with or assist federal agencies, non-government organizations (NGOs), or foreign embassies. After I attain my degree, I hope to travel abroad to Europe, where I will pursue a Master’s Degree in International Relations.