

American Association of University Women (AAUW) Awards

Scholarships To Women That Succeed Despite Challenges

Each year the Fremont Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) awards \$1,000 scholarships to four deserving female Ohlone College students, one of which will be an art major. Students must be transferring to a four- year institution, and must be a resident of the Tri-City Area. The four recipients selected for the 2016-2017 year have demonstrated their determination to succeed despite the challenges they face.

Juliana Hancock, Janelle Gaya, Catherine Tran, and Sian Zhou faced many challenges in the early years of their educational career but they never gave up their dream of pursuing a four-year college education and using their skills to make a contribution in their chosen fields. These young women have worked diligently and tenaciously to succeed and contribute in the classroom and in their personal lives. They have learned cooperation, caring and responsibility as they work with their peers and instructors.



As an acting student, **Juliana Hancock's** greatest challenge was learning to be patient with herself and stop comparing herself to other actors. Juliana has learned that, as a storyteller, she has something to offer the art world that no one else can. She learned to always just keep trying to do her best. Juliana would like to pursue being a voice actor but she has also chosen to get a degree in psychology. Juliana finds that psychology really helps her understand the characters she is playing while acting. She also likes the stability of having a psychology degree while not knowing what lies ahead in her future.



As a second generation Filipina-American, **Janelle Gayac** struggled with navigating her identity. She studied Tagalog and became interested in the history of the Philippines to please her family because they thought she was “too American.” Her peers then labeled her as “too Filipina.” She realized that she was shaping her identity based on the preferences of others. Janelle now understands that she can be both Filipina and American in her own unique way. She wants to be an Asian American Studies major. Her goal is to integrate the Asian American history into the mainstream curriculum. She seeks “to bring not only my people’s history, but the history and contributions of all marginalized peoples, to national consciousness.”



Catherine Tran was stunned when she learned that her parents could not afford to send her to college just months before she was planning to depart for university. Instead, she attended Ohlone College and “transformed a challenging life event into a humbling life experience.” Catherine showed determination when faced with the setback of delaying her dream of enrolling in a four-year college and she made her experiences at Ohlone rewarding and fulfilling. Catherine learned not only academics at Ohlone; she learned about herself and how strong she could be. She was admired by her peers and chosen to be a peer mentor. Catherine is studying to be a User Interface/User Experience Designer. Her goal is “to create products and experiences that people love, and love to share.”



In the summer of 2012, **Siyan Zhou** moved to America from China with her mother. She was only 16 and her mother often left Siyan at home alone because her mother had to work. Along with her schoolwork, Siyan was responsible for cooking, cleaning and buying groceries. Schoolwork was not easy because Siyan had to translate all her work into Chinese. This took her many long hours every evening. Siyan worked very hard to learn English. Gradually the work became easier as Siyan began to master English. Siyan began to realize that she needed to focus a little more on her social life. Slowly she made friends and became more comfortable in her new school in this strange new land. In high school Siyan developed a project in which she studied the educational challenges facing low-income children. Her research and volunteer work at Brier Elementary in Fremont confirmed that socioeconomic status directly affects children's educational progress. With an economics degree from the University of California, Siyan hopes to one day evaluate and create policy that benefits others.

Fremont Branch AAUW is proud and honored to award scholarships to these amazing young women. They have proved that they are willing to work hard to achieve academic success. We look forward to the contributions that each recipient will make in her chosen field.