Bridge Scholarship 2019-2020

A need-based scholarship for underserved and disadvantaged students

Scholarship Award: Up to $8,500 per successful applicant

Underserved students and students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds face significant challenges accessing and transitioning to college. Low-income students, first-generation students, and students from historically underrepresented groups experience the difficulty of navigating an unfamiliar system of higher education with limited resources. In recognition of these challenges, University of the West (UWest) has set aside a special institutional scholarship fund to help increase underserved students’ participation and success in higher education.

Bridge Scholarship is designed for first-time domestic undergraduate students matriculating to UWest whose backgrounds include one or more of the following:

1. Low-income family;
2. Eligible to file a California Dream Act Application;
3. An environment (i.e., social, cultural, or educational) inhibiting the student from obtaining higher education opportunities.

Students applying for this scholarship must self-declare the underserved/disadvantaged status during their application process. A maximum 800-word Statement of Underserved/Disadvantaged Status is required in addition to their family financial data.

Applicants will be invited to an interview with the UWest Financial Aid Committee for further evaluation. The awarded scholarship is contingent on student's participation in UWest’s Summer Bridge2U program including completion of the course College Success: Research & Study Skills (ILR101) with a minimum passing grade per current academic catalog.

A successful scholarship applicant may be awarded up to $8,500 for the first year at UWest and may be eligible to apply for other institutional scholarships (e.g. Lotus Scholarship) in his or her second year if all scholarship criteria are met.

Priority will be given to high school graduating seniors from local area high schools intending to complete a degree at UWest.

Number of Awards per Year: 8
**Deadline:** April 1, 2019

**Eligibility:**

- The Bridge Scholarship is available to **new first-time domestic undergraduate** students seeking a **bachelor's degree** at UWest with a declared major.
- Minimum high school GPA 2.0.
- Must submit Intent to Enroll for the upcoming fall semester.
- Must demonstrate exceptional financial need.
- Must self-declare the underserved/disadvantaged status at the time of applying to UWest.
- Must be available in person for an interview with the Financial Aid Committee.
- Must enroll at UWest full-time (minimum 12 units per semester).
- Must enroll and complete Bridge2U and the summer course College Success: Research & Study Skills (ILR101) with a minimum passing grade per current academic catalog.

**Required Documents for a Successful Application**

1. Completed UWest Financial Aid Application Form;
2. A maximum **800-word** self-declaration **Statement of Underserved/Disadvantaged Status** detailing circumstances that have contributed to the applicant’s underserved/disadvantaged status and explaining why the applicant feels he or she should be considered an underserved/disadvantaged applicant;
3. Submit a **FAFSA** application or California Dream Act application or provide a copy of their, or their parent(s)'/guardian(s)', most recent available tax return and taxation records, letters establishing a student’s status for receiving public benefits, or other similar documentation. All financial documentation will be held in strict confidence.
4. One recommendation letter from the applicant’s high school official.
5. (Optional) Any evidence the applicant feels supports his/her scholarship application.

**Note:** The Bridge Scholarship Application must be submitted together with the Application for Admission to UWest. All required documentation for admissions and scholarship must be submitted by the indicated deadline. Applications not completed by these dates will not be considered.
Other Important Terms and Conditions:

1. The scholarship is awarded in the first year (fall and spring semesters) and is not renewable for any subsequent semester.
2. The scholarship is non-transferable to other students or institutions.
3. The scholarship cannot be deferred.
4. This scholarship cannot be awarded in conjunction with Lotus Scholarship, President’s Scholarship, Dean’s Scholarship, IBEF Scholarship, IBEF Fellowship or UWest Scholarship. Students must return the scholarship funds if other scholarship money is received.
5. Recipients may be required to engage in an academic plan as necessary to receive and/or maintain the Bridge Scholarship.
6. Recipients may become disqualified from the scholarship after the first semester they fail to uphold UWest academic or social conduct standards.
7. Recipients may become disqualified after the scholarship is disbursed if their enrollment status changes during the term of the award, in which case students must return the scholarship funds received.
8. Should the scholarship be declined or returned, it will be considered forfeited and UWest may keep the award or award it to another student.
9. Recipients of the award agree to release to UWest the right to use their images for publication in any format chosen by the university (i.e. print, video, digital image).

Directions for the Self-Declaration Statement of Underserved/Disadvantaged Status

In preparing your maximum 800-word self-declaration statement, please focus on the specific hardships and circumstances that you feel have disadvantaged you educationally, socially, or culturally, and address how you have dealt with these challenges to overcome the hardships and/or how the Bridge Scholarship will support your efforts to overcome such challenges. (Please do not repeat your personal essay.)

Circumstances to be considered include one or more of the following:

Financial disadvantages:

- Low-income family
- Student has to contribute to family income

Educational disadvantages:

- First person or first generation in the family to attend college
- Family members do not encourage attending college
• Absence of a college-going culture at home
• College education is not common for graduates of the applicant's high school

Social and cultural disadvantages:

• Minority status (race, ethnicity, immigration status, religion, sexual orientation, gender identification, physical handicap) that distinguishes the applicant from the mainstream of American society
• Living in a socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhood