

# **The Donald A. Strauss Scholarship Foundation**

## **Bulletin of Information**

**CAL POLY SAN LUIS OBISPO  
CAL STATE CHICO  
CAL STATE FULLERTON  
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY  
SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY  
SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO  
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

**Deadline for Receipt of Applications  
February 14, 2024**

**[www.straussfoundation.org](http://www.straussfoundation.org)**

## Important Information for Students, Faculty, Administrators, and Project Sponsors

### The STRAUSS AWARD is \$15,000.

- A minimum of **\$8,000** of this award should be used as a project grant to fund the student's service project expenses.
- Up to **\$7,000** of this award can be used as a scholarship to be applied to the student's educational support.
- The entire award of \$15,000 may be used towards the project.
- Applicants from our 9 new schools will apply directly to [apply@straussfoundation.org](mailto:apply@straussfoundation.org)
  1. California Polytechnic State University, SLO
  2. Cal State University Chico
  3. Cal State University Fullerton
  4. San Diego State University
  5. San Jose State University
  6. Santa Clara University
  7. University of San Francisco
  8. Univ. of Southern California
  9. University of San Diego

# INFORMATION ON THE APPLICATION PROCESS

## I. PHILOSOPHY

The creation of the Foundation pays tribute to the vision, ideals, and leadership of Donald A. Strauss, and to his life-long commitment to public service and to education. The Foundation promotes the value of public service in the education and preparation of our future leaders. In financing innovative student-generated projects which foster leadership skills, we encourage optimism and an enduring interest in public service. The Foundation annually awards \$15,000 to no fewer than 10 and no more than 15 California college sophomores and/or juniors. A central part of the application package is a proposal for a project to be carried out between the end of the sophomore or junior year and the spring of the following year; these proposals shall become a major focus of the selection process.

## II. ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

1. Eligible students are full time students with one or two years remaining until graduation who are enrolled at one of our pre-selected four- year California colleges or universities. Applicants will have:
  - Demonstrated interest in public service.
  - Outstanding leadership potential.
  - Developed and can demonstrate effective communication skills.
  - The desire to “make a difference” in local, regional, national or international communities.
  - A GPA in the upper 1/3 of the class.
  - Submitted an innovative, original, public service project proposal.
2. The Strauss Foundation will award no fewer than ten and no more than fifteen \$15,000 awards each year; these will be used to pay expenses of the public service project and for some tuition, fees, books, room, and board.
3. The Foundation invites students to submit applications with well-designed project proposals from each of the following institutions:
  1. California Polytechnic State University, SLO
  2. Cal State University Chico
  3. Cal State University Fullerton
  4. San Diego State University
  5. San Jose State University
  6. Santa Clara University
  7. University of San Francisco
  8. USC
  9. University of San Diego

This list of colleges is in addition to our 14 college campuses from the prior years, bringing the eligible school count to 23 in total.

### III. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Only students who meet the Eligibility Criteria above may apply for a Donald A. Strauss Public Service Award. Please email completed applications to [apply@straussfoundation.org](mailto:apply@straussfoundation.org).

Each Applicant must include the following:

#### **From your letter writers**

1. Letters of Recommendation. Two letters of recommendation from individuals who are well acquainted with the student's work (academic or service); these can be from the current academic institution, organizations (including community or public service organizations), former professors, employers, community representatives, etc.
  - Please note: the letters of recommendation must be emailed directly ([apply@straussfoundation.org](mailto:apply@straussfoundation.org)) with the applicant's name and school in the subject, in this format:  
Email subject: "Letter of rec for: <<STUDENT NAME>>,<<COLLEGE>>  
For example: "Letter of rec for: Adam Smith, Cal State Fullerton"
2. Letter of Support. Not all applications will need a Letter of Support, but those that work with a partner organization must include one. See below, "Planning for the Project" section, for details.

#### **From the Applicant**

1. An application summary (as shown on Page 10 of this document) that lists
  - The university name and applicant's information
  - The Project title and a one-paragraph executive summary of the proposal.
2. A one-page resume
  - Include current and past community service.
3. A one-page personal essay: We will learn all about your project in your proposal, but we want to learn more about you. In one page or less (500-600 words), please help us get to know you better by sharing your passion, a significant life experience or part of your life story. Please don't repeat your resume.
4. In addition, you may take the option to tell us what you want to be doing 10-15 years from now (100-200 words)
5. Transcripts from all colleges attended; copies are acceptable.
6. The Project Proposal
  - Please describe your project. Include a detailed budget, timeline, and why you feel passionate about this project.

- The proposal document should be limited to 4 pages, typed and 1.5 spaced.
7. A signed copy of the Acceptance Agreement acknowledging the responsibilities of a Strauss Scholar (as shown on Page 11 of this document)

**Proposals must be submitted to**  
**[apply@straussfoundation.org](mailto:apply@straussfoundation.org) by February 14, 2024**

## IV. WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

### The Project itself

- Projects focused clearly on social change/public service/social entrepreneurship.
- A demonstrated connection between the project and the applicant's passion, life experience.
- Projects that are innovative and timely; an idea, angle or approach that has not been widely pursued and /or that addresses important current issues.
  - If the project is an expansion of an existing program, there should be a clear demonstration of new features or major additional outreach or impact.
  - It is not the intention of the Foundation to fund internship requirements, research, or creation of a publication.
- Projects which engage other students or local participants in public service. We like to see a "multiplier effect".
  - Tutoring/school-based projects need to be scalable- multiple classes or ideally, multiple schools. (see website, Applicant Information, [Sample Proposal: Environmental Education for the Next Generation](#))
- Sustainability and Continuity
  - Projects sustained over the school year, rather than one or two- day events or projects carried out only in the summer.
  - Plans for future leadership and a timeline for implementation afterwards.

### Planning for the Project

- Include (1) a budget (2) a realistic timeline (3) how success or impact will be measured and (4) strategies for actual implementation (such as how to find and mobilize volunteers, acquire necessary resources such as a permit or a space for workshops, etc., as applicable).
- If the project is to be done with a parent/partner institution, proof of an established relationship with that organization's leadership, and their support for the project (and where the project will be housed) should be included with the proposal.
  - Ideally, this is verified through a Letter of Support, from the parent/partner institution. (See Sample Letter of Support, pg.7)
- A timeline that indicates when the project starts, what occurs during the school year, and closure or evaluation by April in time for the Strauss Spring Meeting.

## **V. PUBLIC SERVICE**

Fields of study which can lead to public service and a Strauss project include (but are not limited to) the sciences, both biological and physical, engineering, agriculture, environmental management, economics, political science, and the other social sciences, English, history, and the other liberal arts and humanities, performing or fine arts, public health, public administration, business, government and education.

While the idea and implementation of the Strauss Public Service Project must originate with the student, partnership is allowed with organizations serving the public interest. These include national, international, regional, or local health organizations, environmental organizations, and non-profit organizations whose primary purpose is to help disadvantaged persons to access education, health care services, or to develop viable businesses.



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Sacramento, CA 95834  
TEL: 916-299-3432  
improveyourtomorrow.org

January 28, 2020

Dear Selection Committee,

It is with great pleasure that I extend our support for Mr. Alejandro Galicia Cervantes' proposal for the "Dream STEM Initiative."

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Greg Gillis  
Valley High School

Michael Lynch  
Improve Your Tomorrow, Inc

Mr. Galicia and I first met during his sophomore year in high school, when he became a member of Improve Your Tomorrow (IYT). IYT is a Sacramento based nonprofit focused on increasing the number of young men of color to attend and graduate from college and universities. Through his personal trials and tribulations, Mr. Galicia has managed to overcome hurdles toward positive outcomes in life and school as a result, in part, to the transformational mentoring programs like IYT and My Brother's Keeper Sacramento that provided him a caring, safe space and place to thrive.

As a long-time community resident of Sacramento with a deep interest in community development and youth empowerment, Mr. Galicia is the ideal candidate to bring his proposal to fruition. His extensive history of actively working as a youth agent of change to positively strengthen and improve accessibility to meaningful mentorship opportunities for young people is evident through his unwavering commitment to his community.

Currently, he has proposed the "Dream STEM Initiative" as a means to provide technical training, professional exposure, legal seminars, and empowerment curriculum to undocumented and DACA-mented youth from Sacramento. We have committed to housing this initiative, implementing the Fellowship component at one of our high school campus sites, provide a space alongside classroom materials, and aid him in developing the curriculum. As I have shared and reviewed his proposal with our management team, our organization is in full support and approves of his work with our community.

Mr. Galicia is highly driven, and IYT wholeheartedly supports his proposal to the Strauss Foundation Scholarship Program. His desire to uplift and empower his community is one of utmost admiration, and we hope that you will consider him favorably for this well-deserved opportunity. Please contact me at michael@improveyourtomorrow.org or by phone at 707-497-4430 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Michael Lynch  
Co-Founder/CEO

## **VI. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

Disbursement of the final \$2,000 of the \$15,000 award will be released upon completion of all 7 of the responsibilities listed below. Failure to do so may result in forfeiture of the final payment.

1. Maintain satisfactory academic performance (upper 1/3 of his/her class).
2. Carry out the public service project; \$13,000 of the funds will be available May 1<sup>st</sup>. Projects should be completed by the following April.
3. Submit bimonthly reports on the status of the project to your mentor.
  - a. Updates are due September 15th, November 1st, January 15th, and March 1st.
  - b. Include changes, updates, numbers of volunteers and people impacted and any problems or concerns that you have experienced in the two-month period.
4. Make at least one presentation on the Strauss Scholarship experience and the application process to an appropriate group at their school. Ideally, it would be in the Fall, so that potential applicants for next year have time to create a strong project.
5. In April, attend a mandatory meeting for all Strauss Award recipients at U C Irvine, to make a presentation about the project: How it went, what was learned, etc. (Expenses of travel will be paid by the Foundation.)
6. Email a written assessment of the completed project to the Foundation office one week in advance of the mandatory spring meeting in April. This summary should be limited to 2 pages, typed and 1.5-spaced.

## **VII. SPECIAL CONDITIONS**

The Foundation may withhold or terminate a scholarship due to unsatisfactory academic performance.

In very rare cases, the Board will allow a Scholar to postpone their award due to ill health or other unforeseen circumstances. This requires unanimous Board approval.

## **VIII. UNIVERSITY PUBLICITY**

The Foundation suggests that each year the institution publicize the Bulletin of Information for the Donald A. Strauss Awards and information about the winner(s) of the award.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

**January 22, 2024**

Deadline for all nominations from New Schools to be received by the Foundation

**March 4, 2024**

Deadline for Applications from Original Schools to be received by the Foundation

**April 20, 2024**

Selection of scholars for 2021 Awards

**Week of April 22, 2024**

Winning scholars notified

**May 1, 2024**

\$13,000 of the award is available.

**May 4, 2023**

Welcome Zoom at 9 a.m.

**April TBD 2025**

Scholars must attend a mandatory meeting at U C Irvine to present their projects.

Remaining \$2,000 of the award is given.

**DONALD A. STRAUSS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION SUMMARY**

Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

University/ College: \_\_\_\_\_

How Did You Hear About Us?: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address during School Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

GPA and Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interests and Hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**ONE PARAGRAPH EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

## ACCEPTANCE AGREEMENT

By accepting this award from the Donald A. Strauss Scholarship Foundation, I agree to the following:

1. Maintain a satisfactory academic performance (upper 1/3 of my class).
2. To successfully carry out my public service project by April 15, 2025, as outlined in my project proposal that was submitted to and approved by the Board of Trustees.
3. Between October-December 2023, help build awareness and promote the Strauss on my campus, such as reaching out to student groups/clubs to encourage others to apply, spreading the word via your social media, and/or making a campus presentation to an appropriate group.
4. To Follow the Strauss timeline below, including submitting bi-monthly reports and attending the April 2023 mandatory all-day meeting (travel expenses covered).

I understand that disbursement of the final \$2,000 of my \$15,000 award will be made only **upon completion of all of the above listed responsibilities.**

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Signature

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Date

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### Strauss Scholar Timeline

*Bimonthly reports (below in italics) are brief one-paragraph updates to help keep the Trustees informed about the progress of your project. Please email them to [admin@straussfoundation.org](mailto:admin@straussfoundation.org)*

- May 4, 2024, 9 a.m.: Online Zoom video call. 1 hour video conference for scholars to introduce themselves
- *September 15 and November 1, 2024: First two bi-monthly reports*
- *January 15, 2025, and March 1, 2025: Final two bi-monthly reports*
- March 30, 2025: Year- end survey, to be completed online. Please give honest and candid feedback.
- Early April 2025: Final summary assessment of my completed project to the Board of Trustees. Limit it to two pages, typed and double-spaced, and email it to [admin@straussfoundation.org](mailto:admin@straussfoundation.org)
- April 2025 (exact date TBD): **mandatory all-day** meeting at U C Irvine. Each scholar must make a presentation about their project to the Board of Trustees which includes the project's objectives, what was accomplished, and what was learned in carrying out this project.