

Essays submitted by past scholarship recipients

Applicant 1

- 1) How does your work in the library positively affect your academic progress and/or your connection to the campus?
 - a) I'm an introvert, which means that I find small talk appallingly difficult (I've considered moving to Sweden, though I don't like winter) and for a long time I simply avoided situations that were uncomfortable. College has been a challenge, and being genuinely interested in my major and the arts makes it even more so. And yet it's through these activities that I've come to realize that socializing is like a muscle which weakens with neglect and strengthens with attention, and volunteering at the library is one of the main ways that I tend to my social muscle. I get to interact with people about one of the things that I love most— books. I have enough knowledge to engage with patrons based on their choices and strike up intriguing conversations. Because people wander into the FOL Used Media Store in search of their interests and not because they have to, I've gained a better understanding of the extra-curricular interests of people on campus. I've formed a relationship with a professor, reconnected with two friends, and have a long list of book recommendations, courtesy of friendly strangers. My work at the library has helped me tremendously in feeling more connected with my university community.
- 2) Identify a book that you have read that was not part of any class, and explain how it affected you.
 - a) As a lifelong bookworm, I'm constantly searching for literature that will set me down a rabbit hole of similarly innovative ideas. *Einstein's Dreams* by Alan Lightman is a fictional retelling of the dreams that Albert Einstein had as he was developing the theory of relativity. It is composed of many short stories that detail different worlds, and in each time functions differently; from running backward, slowing at our will, or fluctuating based on where you are, we glimpse many 'escapes' from the strictly marching time we consider so oppressive. Though the scenes are a few short pages each, every alternate universe demonstrates that to concern yourself with time— to thwart it or obsess over it, chase it or hoard it— is futile. In each iteration (including our own) it is obvious that the happiest people are those who live their lives in experiences, not in hours. There isn't a gripping, scandalous plot rife with twists and turns— it's a relatively (no pun intended) simple conceptual novel about mankind's relationship with time, arguing that our (people and time's) relationship doesn't have to be adversarial. And I agree wholeheartedly.

Applicant 2

Personal Statement - Robert E. Collins Endowed Scholarship

My name is [NAME], a sophomore at San Francisco State University, majoring in Visual Communication Design. Since I've been enrolled at SF State I've made the Dean's List each semester and last Spring, I was awarded the Jerold Rosenberg Family Scholarship. During the past two semesters, I have been dealing with intense anxiety and panic attacks, yet I've been able to achieve my academic goals and push forward. I'll be the first in my household to obtain a Bachelor's degree (and a Master's, but let's get to the Bachelor's first). For my short-term academic goals, I'm working to maintain my GPA, remain on the Dean's List, and graduate with honors.

How does your work in the Library positively affect your academic progress and/or your connection to the campus?

In terms of my long-term career goals, I'm juggling my options. I've been working as a Peer Mentor and Circulation Assistant at the J. Paul Leonard Library since my freshman year, and I really enjoy it. I've grown as a student and person, by serving the SF State community, providing research assistance, helping patrons find and request books they need for their courses, and even helping them with enrollment. I've built a strong rapport with a few students, who regularly ask for me by name whenever they need help with their classes. Two of these patrons speak English as their second language, and they've tried to reach out to others for help, but have been told that's not a service the library provides. Personally, I don't mind helping, so whenever foot traffic is low, I sit with patrons at our consultation desk and help them spruce up their writing. Seeing the impact of these small gestures, makes me appreciate the work of librarians even more. I am strongly considering obtaining my Master of Library and Information Science at San José State after completing my Bachelor of Science in Visual Design at SFSU.

Identify a book that you have read that was not part of any class, and explain how it affected you.

Last year, I read *The Color of Law* by Richard Rothstein, to aid in a personal project that I've been working on for a few years. Rothstein explored various forms of public policy that reinforced racial discrimination and hindered self-sufficiency for Black Americans at every turn. My project aims to examine toxic waste across the Bay Area, and the physiological and ecological impacts on poor communities of color. My great-grandfather died in 2010 from cancer due to exposure to asbestos from working at the shipyards in Alameda, Mare Island, and the Port of Oakland for decades. I became dedicated to this particular topic after exploring redlining maps in conjunction with areas that currently experience food insecurity and poverty. Now, I'm looking to establish direct cause and effect between the ailments my community experiences and pollutants in our water, soil, and air. My climate activism professor is currently serving as my mentor to support this project.