



2020  
COMMUNITY REPORT  
SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS



# Columbia College Promise helps students reach for success



The first graduates in the Columbia College Promise program—who came to Columbia College right out of high school and completed their certificates and degrees in just two years -- are now off to schools such as University of the Pacific, UC Davis, Cal Poly and Stanislaus State, or straight into careers including firefighting, hospitality, business and health care.

“I am one step closer to being able to achieve my goal.” wrote one Promise graduate and future social worker.

“Thank you for making my path easier.” wrote another Promise student, now a health major.

All of them accomplished this despite COVID-19 interruptions and challenges, and with the support and encouragement of our community donors.

“It hasn’t been ideal, but they’re getting it done,” said Counselor Kirsten Miller. “And it’s because of the Promise and what that has meant to them.”

**“I am planning to transfer in the fall to UC Davis...**

**This was unthinkable two years ago...Because of your generosity, it is a little easier for me to make this monumental transition.”**

**—Promise graduate and political science major**

The Promise, a Columbia College Foundation program now in its third year, guarantees tuition and fees will be free for local students who come to Columbia College as fulltime students right after they graduate high school. To date, the program has served more than 570 students, providing a pathway and a powerful message to local students that this community supports their futures.

“The word is out,” Miller said. “What I’m seeing is more students ready to finish and move on in two years. They are taking advantage of this amazing opportunity and putting in the work to accomplish their goals.”

The Foundation launched the program three years ago with support from dozens of private donors, including a \$1 million endowment gift from the Brady Wise Family to sustain annual support. Additional state funding became available last year, allowing the Foundation to offer two full years of tuition and fees (up to 30 units per year), and to enlarge the service area to include all of Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties, as well as Oakdale, Waterford and Mariposa.

This fall, the program welcomed 180 new high school graduates.

With state funding helping to cover tuition and fees, the Foundation and college now are working together to build wrap-around services to help new students navigate college. These include a new textbook lending library, other textbook assistance, dedicated counselors, peer support, free public transportation and additional scholarships.

Miller has a message to donors who helped get the program started and continue to support it as it evolves.

“It’s worth every penny, every day,” she said. “You’re investing in their futures.”

## Columbia College Promise Contributors

*Gifts received through November 1, 2020*

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# Columbia grad comes full circle to help launch new scholarship

Columbia College Research Analyst Matthew Connot says he wasn't a great student back in high school. He was unmotivated, unfocused and had no idea what he wanted after graduation. He had moved to Sonora in his senior year to live with his grandmother and figured Columbia College made sense.

"No one in my family had gone to college, and I hadn't thought much about it," he said. "Columbia was really the only option I could afford, and I didn't expect much."

His first class at Columbia College changed all that – a social science class with professors Ted Hamilton and Paula Clark.

"They had a teaching style that was student-oriented and really pushed students to participate in discussion and engage in tough questions. This is what sparked my interest in academics."

Matt took many of their classes, quickly became a top scholar and connected with the campus TRiO program. Trio, backed by the federal Department of Education, supports first-generation college students like him who hope to transfer to a four-year university. Matt went on to earn a bachelors from UC Berkeley and a graduate degree from

Now 27, he's in the thick of many projects at Columbia, working side-by-side with many of the faculty and staff who helped him through school. He's also working with friends in the TRiO program and the Columbia College Foundation to establish the first Columbia College TRiO Scholarship as part of the program's tenth year on campus.

**“It gave me a sense of community,” Matt said, “and that made a huge difference.”**

“The TRiO program was key to my success,” Matt said, and he wants to help support the program now. It focuses on helping first generation students like him learn skills such

as how to study, use campus resources, manage time, budget money, find scholarships and financial aid, and complete the steps needed to transfer to a four-year college. Matt worked in the program as a peer mentor, and developed strong friendships.

“It gave me a sense of community,” Matt said, “and that made a huge difference.”

TRiO Program Director Anneka Rogers-Whitmer couldn't be more pleased to have Matt back on campus.

“It's fabulous,” she said. “This is what fuels all of us here at Columbia College!”

To have his help starting a new TRiO Scholarship is even better.

“This is something we've wanted to establish for years,” she said. “It's an important way to affirm and reinforce what students in the program are doing – scholars earn scholarships.”

Anneka will be working with the Foundation to contact program alumni like Matt who are launched in their careers, working as teachers, in business, health care, social work and more.

“This will be a chance to pay it forward.”



**Matt Connot** Columbia graduate, staff member and donor

England's University of Manchester. His focus was research in higher education, and when an analyst position came open at Columbia College two years ago, he landed the job.





## From the Foundation President

### Vision Statement

The Columbia College Foundation promotes quality higher education that enriches the academic, economic, and cultural life of our community.

### Mission Statement

Our mission is to promote student success by providing community resources that support and expand educational opportunities for Columbia College's students.

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Jeff Warren, CCF President

For me to describe these past several months at Columbia College as “challenging” would be an understatement. At the Foundation, we began 2020 full of optimism about the continued growth of The Promise program, reviewing scholarship applications and preparing for the April 16th scholarship celebration and issuing another round of mini-grants that support and expand educational opportunities for our students. But then our world was dramatically changed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Columbia College was forced to close its campus in March and immediately transition from in-class instruction to remote learning.

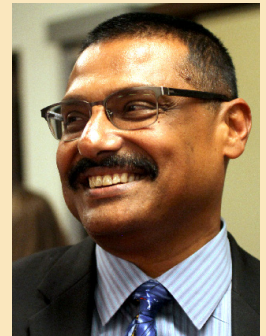
Despite the challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Foundation continued to support Columbia College's students through its Promise, scholarship and mini-grant programs. However, drastic times required new thinking. I am proud of the work the Foundation Board and staff did this past spring in establishing the Covid-19 Student Resiliency Fund. With input from the Columbia College faculty, the Foundation discovered the switch to remote learning created technology hurdles for some students. Within a few weeks of closing the campus, the Foundation was able to award small grants to nearly 250 students who applied for assistance. These grants were not meant to fully address the students' urgent needs, but to help them with immediate basic technology hurdles so they could stay on track with their educational and career goals. We could not have provided this support without the financial assistance we received from our community partners, private donors and Columbia College staff. While the campus remains closed we will continue to support our students through programs financed by the Resiliency Fund and other Foundation sources of income.

As I serve on the Foundation Board, I continually remind myself of what the 3rd century biographer Diogenes Laertius said, “The foundation of every state is the education of its youth.” I am inspired by the generosity of our group of donors who recognize that our students are our future. Thank you for your financial support this past year and I hope you will continue to join us in our future endeavors.

## From the College President

2020 has been a particularly challenging year for everyone because of COVID-19, a once-in-a-century pandemic. Columbia College moved swiftly to convert almost all its courses to an online platform to protect the health and safety of its students and staff. Attending college online needs access to high speed internet service as well as good quality laptops. Many of our students are unable to afford these expenses at a time when they lost their income. Columbia College Foundation stepped in, and raised much-needed funds to provide technology support to the students who need the most. Without the generosity of you, the donor, it would not have been possible for many of our students to continue their academic pursuits. Thank you for your contribution.

The need, however, does not stop at technology alone. Our students face a number of barriers to success such as the high cost of books, food insecurity, and transportation, to name a few. Students from low-income families are often hit the hardest. Lack of access to college often limits the earning potential of students, giving rise to generational poverty. Your donation to Columbia College Foundation helps us to meet the needs of our students. For every successful student, the return on your investment from both an economic and humanitarian perspective is enormous. If you are already a donor, thank you for your kindness. If you have not had an opportunity to donate to the Foundation, please make it a priority this year. Thank you for helping our students!



Dr. Santanu Bandyopadhyay

# Fiscal Report 2019-2020

THE COLUMBIA COLLEGE FOUNDATION is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to raising supplemental funds to support student success and promote quality higher education in our community. Established by Dr. Harvey “Dusty” Rhodes in 1972, the Foundation today has an all-volunteer community board that works to raise the profile of the college and expand partnerships with organizations, businesses and individuals who believe in the value of high-quality, accessible public education.

Foundation income supports a variety of college programs and activities each year, and the Foundation oversees the financial management of more than \$4 million in assets. Assets consist of cash, investments and collections held in unrestricted funds, restricted funds and endowments. An annual audit of finances and record-keeping is conducted by a third-party auditor.

## Growth in Total Assets 2014–2020



## Sources of Funds 2019-20

<b>TOTAL CONTRIBUTED</b>	<b>\$281,916</b>
Individuals/Organizations	\$173,397
Osher Scholarship Fund	\$29,383
Columbia College match	\$79,136
<b>INVESTMENT GAIN</b>	<b>\$199,833</b>
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>\$481,749</b>
<b>Disbursements &amp; Expenses 2019-20</b>	
<b>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>\$381,570</b>
Scholarships & Awards	\$184,425
Programs/Projects	\$79,136
Promise Program (fees/tuition)	\$118,009
<b>OTHER EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$50,078</b>
Investment fees	\$22,620
Administration/other	\$27,458
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>\$431,648</b>

## Investing in the Foundation

ALL GIFTS MADE to the Foundation have a direct impact on student success and are greatly appreciated, regardless of size. Donors can choose from a variety of projects and programs to suit their philanthropic interests. All donations are tax deductible to the greatest extent permitted by law. Giving options include:

**Columbia College Promise**—Support local high school graduates.

**Scholarships**—Support students directly through named and/or endowed scholarships.

**Program Support**—Support specific college programs, campus activities and student organizations.

**Unrestricted**—This fund allows the Foundation to provide direct support where it is needed most.

# Finish Line Scholars program offers new student support

CALIFORNIA'S NEW FINISH LINE SCHOLARS program offers an exciting new opportunity for Columbia College students in the next several years.

Columbia College is among 34 California Community Colleges eligible to apply for the new program, which aims to provide emergency grants and scholarships to help students complete their degrees and certificate programs. It will be funded by a \$100 million pledge from the Jay Pritzker Foundation to the Foundation for California Community Colleges over the next 20 years.

As one of the first set of participating colleges, Columbia College is eligible to apply for up to \$150,000 per year for the next five years. This first year of funding will focus on student emergency assistance, and participating colleges can then develop their own proposals for a combination of emergency assistance and scholarships targeted to students who are at least half-way to their goals of degrees or certificates.

"We are excited to learn of this incredible gift and what it might mean for our students," said CCF President Jeff Warren. "This is an amazing opportunity, and it matches the top priority at our foundation – providing direct support to our students to help them reach their educational goals. We work with so many community donors and partners who will be thrilled to know this is coming and this will add to their past and future contributions."



CCF Scholarship recipients moving toward their goals: mother and daughter Jill and Virginia Oellrich are finishing at Columbia College, and Joseph Gantz is at his new campus, UC Davis.



## How to Give

Donations to the  
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may be made at any time  
online at our website:  
[gocolumbia.edu/foundation](http://gocolumbia.edu/foundation)

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COLUMBIA COLLEGE FOUNDATION  
and sent to:  
11600 Columbia College Dr.  
Sonora, CA 95370

For more information  
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## THANK YOU!

## Emergency grants help students cope with COVID



When COVID-19 forced Columbia College to close its campus in March, students, faculty and staff had to scramble to shift entirely to online instruction and services with just a few days notice. Students showed tremendous resiliency and for the most part found ways to stay on track and focused on their goals.

Thanks to generous support from our community donors, the Columbia College Foundation has been proud to help, launching a new Student Resiliency Fund that has supported hundreds of students with emergency grants and technology. Spring semester grants were paid to more than 240 students, and more aid is on the way as Covid-19 impacts continue.

Students used the grants to boost internet access, fix computers, buy books and meet basic needs. Students have let us know how much even small grants have helped. “The peace of mind and reduced stress was exactly what I needed,” one student wrote.

**“It helped with groceries for my son and me. Along with some books for next semester.”**

“This allowed me to have a bit more security and focus on the last weeks of school,” wrote another.

“It’s been inspiring to see how hard our students are working to overcome these challenging times,” said Foundation Director Amy Nilson. “We are grateful to every person and organization that has stepped up to help.”

This is what some of the students shared with us about the positive impact. “This grant helped me finish this semester by helping me pay for my phone bill to keep in touch with school work. Along with helping pay for food to last me through the month.” “I was able to rent my textbooks for the summer 2020 semester, and I was also able to get school supplies to help me complete the spring semester.” “I was having difficulties with my data working with my zoom calls and online class work. With the grant, I was able to get more data and better service.”



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