

Honors Student Awarded Prestigious Transfer Scholarship

Mt. San Antonio College honors student Hoang Tran has been chosen to receive the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship, valued at up to \$40,000 annually.

Tran is one of only 50 community college students selected from a nationwide pool of 1,500 applicants based on academic achievement, persistence, desire to help others, and leadership. He has a 4.0 GPA and plans to transfer to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Md., where he will study medicine.

"This has opened a new door for me to go to my dream school," said Tran, a first-generation college student. "Hopefully one day I can make a difference in the world and work on a cure for diseases, like cancer."

On Thursday morning, the 21-year-old received a call to open an Amazon box secretly placed on the porch of his Baldwin Park home. Inside was a giant-sized replica check with his name on it. Soon, faculty, and staff members and directors from Financial Aid, the Honors Program, and Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) paraded down the street in their balloon-decorated cars, honking their horns and cheering congratulations out the windows.

"As educators, there is no greater sense of pride and joy than to have the sacrifices and accomplishments of our hard working students recognized," said Dr. Audrey Yamagata-Noji, vice president of Student Services. "Hoang Tran is an exceptional symbol of hard work, dedication and humility. His achievements are a true inspiration to all of us. During the application process, he encouraged other students to apply and supported their efforts to compete for the same recognition. This young man is extremely deserving and is a testament to what students can accomplish with a combination of family sacrifice, individual hard work and determination, and a network of support from Mt. SAC faculty and Student Services programs."

Tran credited EOPS and his counselor Tony Rivas for helping him succeed at Mt. SAC. "Without EOPS, I wouldn't be the person I am today. They got me through step by step," Tran said. "I'm so thankful to them."

Tran moved to America from Vietnam with his mother, a traveling nurse, and sister in 2016. He did not know the language, but persevered, partly due to the willingness of a high school teacher who taught him how to read, write and speak English each day after school.

For the past year, Tran has volunteered at Queen of the Valley Hospital in West Covina, where he came to understand the disadvantages of the quality of healthcare for underserved populations. "As an immigrant in a low-income family, I can empathize with the patients that I see," he wrote in his scholarship application. "This has encouraged me to become a physician even more because I want to not only help others to improve their health but also to improve our healthcare system by decreasing disparities in access to health care. I want to make contributions to our health care system to ensure that everyone has access to good health care regardless of one's socioeconomic status."

Every year, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation selects high-achieving, low-income students from community colleges for scholarships that provide funding for tuition, room and board, fees and books. Cooke Scholars are eligible for graduate school funding after completing their bachelor's degree. That award provides an additional \$75,000 for graduate study.