



**Foothill-De Anza Retirees Association Scholarship Recipients
June 2022 Recipients 4 @ \$1,000 (2 at each campus)**

De Anza – Danny/Daniella

Major: Biological Sciences

My Story:



When I was introduced to this world, I was called Danny. Danny is a shy little boy that helps people with homework despite not being a tutor. He enjoys playing with girls even though their parents warned them to stay away from a boy that does not play with other boys. He loves and takes care of his parents, and he remembers to to-go food home from parties to share with his family. But beyond Danny was the coming out in eighth grade of Daniella. Daniella is a transsexual female that dons a black Adidas jacket on her head which she identifies as black hair. She loves to dance, so she got herself involved in 13 different dance opportunities in high school: from high school clubs to Catholic organizations. She loves to wear jumpsuits and dresses and lashes and very short shorts. As Daniella lives in the same body as Danny, she found herself helping people with choreography despite not being a dance teacher. The confidence that Daniella that was built from the multitude of performances she partook in gave Danny more self-assurance to pursue more independent actions. Both of them love to volunteer and still volunteer to this day. With this realization that both Danny and Daniella are united, I was able to accept that I had the ability to be magnanimous and brave no matter which character I decide to play. Today, I live and acknowledge myself as both Danny and Daniella.

Being a transfer student, I am determined to continue exploring certain concentrations of Biological Sciences. It would be an honor to diversify my understanding of the major through the concentrations of microbiology as well as cell and molecular biology. Microbiology stood out as necessary to my education after I was exposed to the study of bioremediation. Learning about how modified microorganisms are able to clean up oil spills was remarkable in the sense that I could induce a solution that can potentially impact a significant part of our world: in this case, our oceans and the organisms on Earth. As I expand my knowledge in Microbiology, my hope is to devote more research to the abilities of microorganisms to combat other environmental detriments such as air pollution. My current exploration of cell and molecular biology has also captivated my interests as I am exposed to the unending research on infections. As a homosexual male, I feel an innate duty to continue finding treatment for AIDS: the virus that has stigmatized the love among my culture. After furthering my education in this field of biology, I have ambitions to hop into projects such as the DNA editing technology of CRISPR to maximize the extent of potential health solutions.

My run in education consisted of sacrifices that were derived from the financially tight lifestyles that I grew up with. After my father had lost his job and became a stay-at-home parent, I quickly realized that my mom becoming the breadwinner of the family was not enough to support my brother attending the University of Irvine if he did not acquire a job while living there. Especially during the quarantine, my mom's workplace has been experiencing more frequent inactivity. The reduced income per month dawned on me with the burgers from Carl's Jr that my parents more frequently only had for me to eat during dinner. To reduce the financial weight on my family, I delayed the expenses of

attending a university to pursue two years of free education at a community college. As I prepare to transfer for the Fall quarter, I will require financial assistance to jumpstart my own independent life since I am not able to fully provide for myself yet. Since my two years at community college are coming to an end, one of my financial needs will be tuition and fees to complete my upper-division coursework. The schools I am pursuing have ample hands-on research opportunities and advanced levels of biological expertise, so my involvement in building a well-rounded education so I can find a job to support my family will require funds to reside near the school. Although my affordability may still be a hindrance, I will strive to prove the determination and capacity I have for my educational goals.

Thank you:

Dear Foothill-De Anza Retirement Association,

On behalf of both my characters Danny and Daniella, I am extending my greatest gratitude for the De Anza Foothill-De Anza Retirees Association Scholarship. To President Michael Paccioretti, Vice President Bill Lewis, Scholarship Director Mike Brandy, and all of the directors of the Foothill-De Anza Retirement Association: thank you for acknowledging my story and educational path. And to every member of the Foothill-De Anza Retirement Association: thank you for being an integral part of the possibility of the Scholarship taking place each year, and thank you for all the time and work you have put forth for the Foothill-De Anza school district. Having been a teacher at my Catholic school for three years, a cafeteria worker at my high school for three years, and a notetaker while simultaneously taking the college course, I am very appreciative and mindful of the time that all staff members dedicate every day and the labor it takes to cater to each student's needs.

I just finished my second year at De Anza College. Despite the pandemic, I continue to volunteer at El Camino Hospital discharging patients with warm and engaging conversations. I have not lost touch with my roots as an entertainer: I was invited by Ashna Singh to host and perform at my high school club's Creativity Lifestyle Unity Balance showcase. Moving forward in my educational career, I recently submitted my intent to register at University of California, Davis. I will be starting a life away from my family and diving head-on into the multitude of opportunities that the school has to offer in Biological Sciences. With the Scholarship that I have received from the Foothill-De Anza Retirement Association, I will be able to afford to further my education and take advantage of these opportunities. I will also be able to afford to take care of my physical and mental health. With this acknowledgment from the student workers that I look up to very dearly, I will continue to explore my options of working in healthcare or research to continue providing support and finding answers to help our world.

Once again, thank you for bestowing me with the De Anza Foothill-De Anza Retirees Association Scholarship. Thank you for supporting my journey as a student and two characters living in one world.

De Anza – Anahi

Major: Political Science for Transfer

My Story:

Raised by a single, first-generation, Mexican-American mother, my life has been surrounded by the importance of independence, education, and resourcefulness. I grew up in the low-income, predominantly Latinx, Salinas, CA; however, later, my mother decided to move my brother and I to Silicon Valley, for us to attend the best public education. This move was the greatest obstacle I overcame, which has shaped my development today.

I experienced a sense of displacement because although I was born in this country, my transition from Salinas to Silicon Valley made me feel like a migrant of societies, feeling too white for one and too Mexican for the other. I even fell behind in my education because of the imminent difference between the education I received before to the one Silicon Valley had to offer. I failed to catch up and received lectures reminding me of the sacrifices made to receive this quality

education. Because of this, I found my priorities had changed to match Silicon Valley's mold: a survival of the fittest methodology in a world of educational, academic, and social hierarchy.

Thus, Silicon Valley, Salinas, and my mother have shaped the person I am today. While one taught me empathy and hard work, another taught me rigor and drive; all traits I use towards pursuing my education.

My goals are to graduate from a four-year institution, attend law school and become a defense attorney. I have made my time at De Anza worthwhile, by maintaining a 4.0 GPA, participating in extracurriculars, and working part-time. Last year, I was hired as an intern for the VIDA Public Policy School, where I lobbied to legislators on behalf of California Community Colleges. This year, I am currently the De Anza Student Government president and a tutor for the Puente program at De Anza after being a Puente student myself.

While pursuing a degree in Political science, I hope to keep myself on track by joining cohorts or support programs. As a Latinx student, I've learned to overcome my greatest challenge of imposter syndrome by finding help and support from others who share the same experience. After building an academic foundation and community for myself, I hope to participate in political internships that allow me to build accreditation toward applying to law school.

Currently, I am being trained under an attorney in Young Adult Deferred Entry of Judgment. In this program, first felony youth can avoid the juvenile justice program and receive probation, treatment, and educational opportunities. I plan to work my way up as an assistant to the judge to gain important experience and hope to continue my advocacy for justice and prison reform by becoming a defense attorney to push for more alternatives to incarceration. I'm confident that with my drive and ability to find opportunities, I can achieve both my educational and career goals.

As mentioned earlier, my mother sacrificed the comfort of owning a home for my brother and I to have public education here in Silicon Valley. Our living situation currently consists of 3 twin beds side by side in one room we rent. Upon graduating high school, although financially unable to attend a four-year university, I have still made higher education a possibility for myself. As a promising student, I constantly found avenues to succeed academically while taking advantage of the opportunity De Anza has given me to continue pursuing my education. As I look towards transferring, my appreciation for education will continue to motivate me in finding ways to succeed. I am grateful for the many opportunities De Anza has already gifted me and even the final consideration to continue supporting (financially) me till the end of my educational journey.



Foothill – Lillian

Major: Engineering

My Story:

Throughout my life, I have faced extreme adversity. Born to a white teenage mother and a Puerto Rican gang-banger father, this marked the beginning of my rough road to adulthood. The day I turned six months old, for the nth time, my father became incarcerated. After his family blamed my mother for his actions and refused to offer her any support, she decided to start fresh and moved us across the country. It was the first of many relocations throughout my childhood. For the next 14 years, we would move over 14 times, and I would attend ten different schools before graduating high school. While chasing rent and stability, there were years I had to transfer schools mid-year, which created numerous gaps in my education. The final stop happened when I was about 14, near Sacramento, and it was the first place I ever called home.

Right after high school, I started community college. I changed my major more times than I can remember because I was scared to go down the wrong path. After two years, a transcript full of Ws, and no real progress on a degree, I dropped out. I thought of myself as a failure for a long time because I felt like I was getting in the way of my success. This

perspective changed in 2018 when, at 23 and after being misdiagnosed, I was diagnosed correctly with Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Depression. As a result, I realized that my struggles were not my fault, and I had to learn not to blame myself for something I never had the tools to overcome on my own. Therapy helped me learn coping skills and strategies that have allowed me to live a happier, more fulfilled life without the crippling fear and anxiety I had experienced for years.

When the pandemic hit, I was worried I would backtrack in my mental health progress, and I did for months. As a result of both my diagnosis and the tools I gained, I became motivated to register at Foothill in October 2020 to pick up my dream of getting an education. At Foothill, I found a community so vibrant and supportive that I felt like I was getting the college experience I had always imagined, even when fully online. The support system at Foothill gave me the confidence to believe in myself, which encouraged me to find a psychiatrist where, at 25, I was finally diagnosed with ADHD, which helped me cope even more with tools to help me succeed. While my previous diagnosis gave me the confidence to step outside my comfort zone, this diagnosis of ADHD, in conjunction with medication, has given me a new lease on life. I have discovered my true talent and potential, and I finally feel like I am thriving.

In light of my newfound self-confidence, I have tried to give back to the community the same way it has given to me. As a result, I have been a part of more programs and opportunities in the last two years than I had in the 25 years previous. At Foothill, I am part of the PRE-STEM cohort, a math peer tutor for Pass the Torch, a peer mentor and facilitator in a summer program for incoming students, and joined my first ever clubs. In addition, starting this school year, I commute from Sacramento two days a week to be an embedded tutor in the Math 48 series. I'm most proud of the work I do as part-time support for the Director of the Science Learning Institute, through which I work to help spread inclusivity and innovation to advance equity in STEM for those underrepresented students who would otherwise have no support or opportunity. As a woman in STEM, I wish I had access to resources like these when I was struggling in college, and I am so grateful for the chance to empower those around me and give back to them in ways I never dreamed possible.

My experiences over the last few years have empowered me to make strides toward the unknown without fear. The community I have built around myself and let into my life is a substantial driving force in helping me believe in myself. I can now confidently say I plan to transfer as an Aerospace Engineering major, which was my first major and dream, hoping to one day get to design spacecraft. In the meantime, I plan to apply for as many scholarships and grants as I can to keep the roof over my head and food on the table, as the only way I make rent is with financial aid and work-study money that I get from school and tutoring. I will continue to hold my head high and allow my passion to propel me forward.

Thank you:

Dear Foothill-De Anza Retirement Association,

I am incredibly honored that you selected me to receive the Foothill FHDA Retirees Association Scholarship. Your generosity in creating this scholarship as well as selecting me is something I will never forget. Truthfully, I have recently become displaced and am staying with a friend until I get back on my feet. When I learned that I won this scholarship, the next few months became less uncertain and I realized that I'll be able to take classes this summer instead of only focusing on working. I can't express how thankful I am for that.

Academically, I am planning to pursue a degree in Aerospace Engineering, with the hope of one day getting to design spacecraft. I have been fascinated by the stars ever since I could comprehend what lay beyond the sky and what the sun actually is. Getting to take part in actually reaching those stars is my biggest dream, that and being able to call myself a rocket scientist! I'm still working on my list of transfer schools, but Stanford is at the top. If I was accepted into Stanford's Aerospace program, that would be a crazy dream come true. Something I didn't get a lot of time to mention in my personal essay that I want to highlight, is the influence that working as a peer tutor at Foothill has had on me. When I

first started tutoring, I was nervous and unsure that what I was doing was of help to anyone. Now, after tutoring for a year as a Pass the Torch tutor as well as an Embedded tutor, my confidence has gained new levels I never thought possible. Being able to help students cross one of the most historically difficult humps as a STEM major, has taught me how to lead with compassion and empathy in ways I never thought possible. And it has shown me how a little can really go a long way, like bonding with someone over how difficult proving trig identities can be. I've discovered a love for helping my peers and community, and I'm excited to be able to take these skills to future communities, universities, and workplaces.

I have had a long and rocky road to this point, and I cannot express the amount of appreciation I have for giving me your support with this scholarship. With this benefit, I can rest easier knowing that I can pay my rent and for school supplies (like the internet) for the coming summer.

Thank you so much,

Lillian

Foothill – Drake

Major: Computer Science for Transfer

My Story:

My long-term professional goals are to work in the computer science industry, specifically with the usage of algorithms and machine learning. I'm intrigued and want to learn more about computational methods that "learn" from and improve performance through acquisition of data.

My short-term goals are more focused on school at the moment. I aim to transfer to a four-year university in the Fall of 2022. My major is computer science. Stanford is one of the schools I'm applying to, and I thought this program could potentially assist me in my endeavors related to that school specifically.

In terms of my financial needs, I'm really trying to save up for next school year when I transfer to a four-year university. I want to be financially-capable of providing for myself. I also may need to pay for school costs if I am unable to get enough scholarships and financial aid at my future institution to cover the entirety of my education.

I am worthy of a scholarship on the basis of my academic and professional commitment to my course of study. In the summer of 2020, I went from having no knowledge about coding to programming a circuit board in just three weeks. My journey in computer science started when I took an introductory course in Python. I remember the moment when I first got the circuit board working, watching as it illuminated LED lights and played musical notes upon sensing light, heat, or motion. I felt a great sense of accomplishment and satisfaction because I had learned so much in so little time.

This experience led me to designing my community college course load around STEM-related subjects with an emphasis on programming. I completed the Python series of classes, which familiarized me with object-oriented programming, inheritance, algorithms, and algorithmic test and comparison procedures. While taking these classes, I found that the majority of my learning took place in the process of building tools and finding solutions on my own. This led to me focusing on the process of applying and building upon concepts from lectures in the lab assignments. I would spend many hours of my week sketching out ideas, plugging different strategies into code, and running tests for correctness and optimization.

I have also pursued computer science education outside the classroom. In my internship at SLAC, I was tasked with creating a display for the diagnostic tool I had built. I had never created a visual user interface before, so this required a lot of research on my end. One of the challenges I ran into was figuring out how to embed terminal commands into the file I was running. I had to take a step back and break the code up into manageable chunks to see how each segment fit

together. After drawing out the structure and relationship between classes in my program, I was able to create a working interface.

Altogether, my academic and professional experiences have demonstrated how far I have come since I first started programming. I have learned valuable lessons in computer science-related problem solving. Ultimately, my experiences have made me more suitable to serve society because computers solve problems that serve people's needs.