



## **Columbia College Promise Scholarships**

### **PROJECT SUMMARY**

#### **Overview**

The Columbia College Foundation is introducing a new scholarship opportunity for local high school seniors enrolling at Columbia College beginning in fall 2018. This new program, the **Columbia College Promise Scholarship**, will make it possible for every qualified local public high school graduate to attend Columbia College fulltime, tuition free, for the academic year immediately after graduation. The program will be a three year pilot, funded by gifts from individuals and community partners who care deeply about education for local youth.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **What is the Columbia Promise Scholarship?**

The Columbia Promise Scholarship pays for tuition and enrollment fees for up to 30 units of study during the academic year beginning in the fall immediately following graduation - a value of \$1200 to \$1500 based on the number of units taken per semester. In addition, Promise Scholars will receive specialized guidance and support to help ensure success.

#### **What is the goal?**

The Promise Scholarship program will remove the tuition barrier that often stops promising young high school graduates from pursuing their education. Once implemented, the program will increase the number of local high school graduates who attend Columbia College, thereby boosting the population of workforce-ready young adults who complete a degree, certificate or training program or successfully transfer to a 4-year college.

#### **Why offer this program?**

Only a fraction of students in our community successfully complete college or career training after high school, leaving them unprepared for the future. Some students qualify for merit scholarships, those who do not qualify often find that education is unaffordable and out of reach. Others, with no family history of attending college, may need special support and guidance to succeed.

#### **Who is it for – How will it work?**

- Beginning in Fall 2018 and continuing through 2019 and 2020, Promise Scholarships will be offered to every public high school graduate who lives in Tuolumne County or the Bret Harte High School District in Calaveras County and enrolls fulltime at Columbia College for the fall semester immediately following graduation.
- All students must first apply for federal and state grants by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form and accept all federal or state money prior to the Promise Scholarship funding. Some exceptions will apply.
- All students will be eligible to receive a Promise Scholarship whether or not they receive financial aid.
- Promise Scholarship awards will vary according to the total cost of tuition and fees and the amount of federal and state grant awards that are granted to student applicants.

#### **What Schools are Included?**

Sonora Union High School District, Summerville Union High School District (including Connections Academy and Gold Rush Charter School), Big Oak Flat – Groveland Unified Schools District, Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools Alternative Education, Bret Harte High School in Calaveras County and Mountain Oaks Charter School (graduates who live in Tuolumne County or the Bret Harte High School District in Calaveras County). GED graduates who meet the residence requirements and enroll in the fall immediately following graduation are also eligible.

### **Will the Promise Scholarship cover all the costs of College?**

For a fulltime student taking a minimum of 12 units for two consecutive semesters, tuition and fees cost \$1244 per year. Books and supplies cost \$1700 for a total of approximately \$3000 per year per student.

Promise Scholarship funds will provide up insure that a minimum of \$1244 (\$1520 for 15 units) is available to students whether or not they receive other merit or needs-based scholarships. Scholarship funds provided by private donors and philanthropic organizations make it possible to apply funds over and above the cost of tuition and fees toward the purchase of required books and other learning tools.

### **What are the criteria to qualify?**

To qualify for an initial Promise Scholarship, a student must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be a 2018 graduate from a public Tuolumne County high schools or Bret Harte High School.
- Reside within the boundaries of the Yosemite Community College District.
- Apply for FAFSA prior to completing the Promise Scholarship application.
- Enroll in Columbia College in fall 2018 as a full time student carrying at least 12 units.

### **How will the program be administered?**

The program will be administered through a partnership between Columbia College offices of Financial Aid, Student Services, and the Columbia College Foundation.

### **Is there an Application Deadline?**

All students who complete application requirements by **May 14<sup>th</sup>** will receive priority registration status. Students and are **very strongly encouraged** to apply by this date in order to fully access all the benefits that are provided for Promise Scholars including counseling, support, and early access to a full menu of classes. Knowing that this date is not possible for all students, applications will be accepted up until one week before classes are scheduled to begin.

### **Is there a scholastic requirement for enrolling in the second semester?**

In order to receive the Promise Scholarship in the second semester, each student must have completed 12 units and be in good academic standing.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **What about Privately Funded Scholarships?**

Promise Scholarship awards will not replace but will be added to scholarship awards received from private sources. If a Promise Scholar is also the recipient of a privately funded scholarship (paid through the college), dollars in excess of tuition/fees will be given in the form of a voucher to purchase required books at the College Book Store. The combined strength of private donor dollars and Promise Scholarships and will dramatically improve each student's chance for success.

### **How will the Promise program be funded?**

The three year pilot will be funded by gifts and multi-year pledges from individuals and community partners who can support the education of one or more students for one to three years.

During the pilot phase, funds raised in excess of those needed in any given year will be rolled forward for use in future years. Long term funding will reflect a combination of gifts from individuals, community partners, and endowment income from a pledged gift that will be received during 2017.

### **How will we measure success?**

In addition to other measures, we expect the Promise Scholarship program to:

- Increase the number of new high school graduates enrolling fulltime from 16% to 25%.
- Increase financial aid applications from new high school graduates from 68% to 80%.