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[The Patricia Dempster Scholarship Fund: Behind the Scenes and Real Life Stories \(/blog/post/2016/01/12/The-Patricia-Dempster-Scholarship-Fund-Behind-the-Scenes-and-Real-Life-Stories.aspx\)](#)

by [Western Federal Credit Union \(/author/Western-Federal-Credit-Union.aspx\)](#) January 12, 2016



It's a typical crazy-busy January here in the Marketing Department at Western and there's no time to bask in a glorious hangover from all of the holiday food and festivities. In the midst of the hectic schedules and heavy workloads that hit at the beginning of each year, there is also the hope and promise of making a difference in our members' lives. Each year, Western has the privilege of granting eight deserving young members with Patricia Dempster Scholarship Fund Awards for their outstanding academic performance,

community service, and extracurricular activities. Is this one of the most labor intensive promotions we have? You bet it is! It takes a Western army comprised of computer programmers, online developers, copywriters, graphics designers, compliance staff, accounting staff, mailroom staff, marketing coordinators and volunteer judges to make it happen. But you can also bet we find it to be one of the most rewarding.

Recently, we've had the chance to catch up with two of our previous Patricia Dempster Scholarship Award recipients who were kind enough, despite their own crazy-busy schedules, to let us know what they've been up to.

Amanda D.

2014 Patricia Dempster Scholarship Recipient

My first year at Harvard was amazing! I thought that I would have a hard time adjusting to Cambridge because it's a big city, but it was easier than I thought it would be. During my first year, I became involved in a few organizations, but the one that I stuck with is a non-profit organization called the Small Claims Advisory Service (SCAS), which provides legal information to residents of Massachusetts. In my freshman year, I thought I wanted to major in

statistics, so I took a lot of math heavy courses. Because Harvard is a liberal arts school, they encourage students to try out different subjects. As a result, I realized that I preferred my government classes, so I declared Government as my major just a few weeks ago. My goal after college is to go to law school and focus either on Constitutional Law or Human Rights Law.

I think that it is great that you have the Patricia Dempster Scholarship because it really helps high school students to obtain a higher education and pursue a college degree. Scholarships like Patricia Dempster make going to school possible, and create a stepping stone that allows students to follow their dreams.

Rose C.

2015 Patricia Dempster Scholarship Recipient

Arriving at UC Berkeley, I was accompanied by a whirlwind of emotions. It was, quite honestly, both exciting and terrifying. While I've been here for nearly three months now, it feels as if the time has passed in the blink of an eye. Adjusting to new, unfamiliar surroundings and the culture that accompanies the city of Berkeley has been an adventure in and of itself. The people, the food, and the atmosphere are all unlike anything I have ever had the joy of experiencing before. I miss my family and friends back home, but I am constantly working to become more integrated into my new environment and community.

While exploring my surroundings has been quite the adventure, nothing about my time here thus far compares to my experiences in the classroom. Moving from high school to college, I knew that many things would be different academically. What I did not think to prepare for was the shift in the student body. I consistently find myself surrounded by an amazing group of intellectuals. Also, classes are not to be taken lightly. The academic rigor here is unlike anything I have experienced before. It has most definitely pushed me outside of my comfort zone. While difficult, the material I am learning is also fascinating. This semester, I am taking classes that have allowed me to learn about things such as plagues and pandemics, or issues in public health—all of which I never would have been exposed to in a high school setting. The professors are awe-inspiring. There is something surreal about sitting in a classroom and listening to a Nobel Laureate. I am incredibly thankful for the people and organizations that made it possible for me to attend this university.

I am so excited for what the future holds for me at UC Berkeley. I have already been presented with so many amazing opportunities to become more involved. I was fortunate enough to be offered an externship over this coming winter break with a major healthcare company. In addition, I'm in the process of exploring a Health Service Internship or Field Study Internship for my upcoming spring semester at Berkeley. As opportunities begin to arise and everything starts to fall into place, I only feel more and more excited for what is to come.

From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank everyone at Western Federal Credit Union for allowing me the opportunity to live the adventure that I am now living. Those who have helped me on my journey to UC Berkeley are never absent from my thoughts. Without a doubt, this fuels my motivation and drive to succeed.

Inspired by two of our most recent Patricia Dempster Scholarship Fund Award recipients, we're ready to kick off the 2016 Patricia Dempster Scholarship Fund! Know an exceptional, graduating high school senior? Western is now accepting applications. For more information and to apply, visit [western.org/scholarship](https://www.western.org/scholarship) (<https://www.western.org/scholarship>).



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