

Fontana Unified School District

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FIVE FUSD STUDENTS SELECTED AS DELL SCHOLARS

FONTANA, CA – On April 11, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation announced its 13th class of Dell Scholars, providing 350 low-income, determined students the support they need to be successful in college, **including five scholars in the Fontana Unified School District.**

A new report sites that Dell Scholars are 25 percent more likely to earn their bachelor's degrees four to six years after high school graduation as compared to students with the same socio-economic backgrounds. To date, The Dell Scholars Program has supported a total of 1,401 Dell Scholars to college graduation.

Established in 2004, the Dell Scholars Program may serve as an important model for how to improve college success for low-income, first-generation students. The program is achieving these high graduation rates through a wide range of support services including both financial assistance and counseling to students.

"We are thrilled that Vivian Badillo Velasco and Breezy Carreno of Fontana High School, Andrew Jelen and Maria Mendoza Del Toro of Kaiser High School, and Alma Hernandez of A.B. Miller High School were selected into the newest class of Dell Scholars," said FUSD Board President Lorena Corona.

Superintendent Dr. Leslie Boozer agreed. "These outstanding students have already shown so much determination in their pursuit toward a degree, and I know this program will ensure that they will have the tools they need to reach their goals."

Each Dell Scholar receives \$20,000, totaling \$68.3 million in scholarships over the 13 years. The program also provides each student with essential technology, such as a laptop and textbook credits to further decrease the cost of college.

While financial support is critical, the other issues that arise can also derail students and cause them to drop out of college before graduation. Navigating rigorous coursework, learning how to live away from home and managing time effectively are just a few of the challenges students face once they get to campus. Those pressures can have real consequences. Up to 75 percent of all college drop-out decisions among historically underrepresented students are non-academic in nature, according to a 2012 report by the National College Access Network and Institute for Higher Education Policy.

To support students through these challenges, the Dell Scholars Program has developed an extensive onboarding process that aims at identifying potential obstacles students might face once they arrive on campus. As soon as Dell Scholars are selected, the program begins to work with them to establish a customized college success plan helping them identify and plan for any potential challenges. By providing support so early in the process, the program helps students avoid “melting” away during the summer between the end of high school and beginning of college, commonly referred to as summer melt.

“We continue to push the envelope by regularly innovating to help students get to and through college,” Oscar Sweeten-Lopez, Portfolio Director of the Dell Scholars Program, said. “We’ll do what it takes until we see graduation rates at 100 percent. That’s our promise to these students.”

Additionally, Dell Scholars receive a private scholar networking community, resources, and mentoring to ensure they have the support they need to achieve their college degrees. Scholars become part of a support network for each other that is made up of themselves, their schools, families, peers and a dedicated Dell Scholar team at the Michael & Susan Dell foundation.

For a complete listing of the class of 2016 Dell Scholars, go to www.dellscholars.org. Follow their stories on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/user/DellScholarsProgram>.

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