

Honors students named Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship semifinalists

Cilah Ndofor and Emily Blumentritt Recognized

Lee College has the distinction of having two of its honors students selected as semifinalists for the Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship. Cilah Ndofor from Cameroon, West Africa and Emily Blumentritt from Baytown, Texas are both currently enrolled in Lee College's Honors Program. The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation has selected 534 high-achieving community college students from across the U.S. as semifinalists to compete for its Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship, from a pool of nearly 2,500 applicants. This highly competitive scholarship will offer selected finalists as much as \$40,000 per year for up to three years to complete their bachelor's degrees at selective four-year colleges and universities.

Cilah Ndofor, a General Studies student tracked to transfer to a four-year institution as a pre-medicine major has her sights set on eventually becoming a neurosurgeon.

"Words can't express how overjoyed I was when I received the email stating I had been selected as a semifinalist." Says Ndofor. "I really wasn't confident about myself because I know this scholarship selection is highly competitive but I just kept my fingers crossed and I'm still keeping them crossed!"

Noting what a boost it was to her confidence, Ndofor says of the nomination, "I now believe I can succeed in anything I do in life."

She continues by saying that she would, "characterize the significance of being selected a semifinalist as beneficial. Mentioning in my transfer applications that I am a semifinalist for this prestigious scholarship will definitely improve my chances of getting accepted and getting scholarships as well. I am very honored for making it this far in the competition."

Ndofor is currently pursuing applications to Harvard, the University of Texas at Austin, Rice University and the University of Houston – Main Campus. She plans on pursuing a major in Biology with a minor in Mathematics prior to applying to medical school.

Emily Blumentritt, from Baytown, Texas is a General Studies major with plans to transfer into a Wildlife Biology or related program.

"I'm very passionate about nature, wildlife, and giving back to my community, so I hope to pursue a career in which I can contribute to scientific knowledge, help preserve nature and wildlife for future generations, and connect others to the natural world in a way that brings value and meaning to their lives. I'm considering applying to various universities, including Cornell, Texas A&M, and UCLA."

As with Ndofor, Emily was surprised and excited to be chosen as a semifinalist.

"Being considered for this prestigious scholarship has really opened things up for me. As a Jack Kent Cooke semifinalist, I've already been invited to apply at an ivy league school, something I had never truly thought of as a possibility before. Being selected as a semifinalist is a recognition of the hard work and talent that a student displays in their community college years. It's truly an honor to be selected."

The honors program at Lee College has cultivated a national reputation for the rigor of its coursework and the high caliber student it produces. Its impact on the lives of its honors students is evident.

"I sent in my application expecting to be disappointed," says Blumentritt. "I am incredibly grateful to the wonderful professors here at Lee who helped me apply for the scholarship and who have supported me and my work throughout my time here."

Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholars will be selected in April, based on their academic performance, leadership, perseverance, and service to others. "Community colleges hold many of the nation's most gifted students," said Harold O. Levy, Executive Director of the Cooke Foundation. "Yet too often these students are denied the opportunity to fulfill their potential due to lack of adequate resources and support. Our scholarships help to remove these barriers so that talented students with financial need have a chance to complete their college education and pursue their goals and dreams."

Cooke Scholarships fund the costs of attending college not covered by other financial aid, plus intensive academic advising, stipends for internships, study abroad opportunities, and the ability to network with other Cooke Scholars and alumni. After earning a bachelor's degree, these Cooke Scholars will also be eligible to apply for a scholarship for graduate school worth up to a total of \$75,000.

The Cooke Foundation is dedicated to advancing the education of exceptionally promising students who have financial need. Since 2000, the foundation has awarded \$175 million in scholarships to more than 2,300 students from 8th grade through graduate school, along with comprehensive counseling and other support services. The foundation has also provided over \$97 million in grants to organizations that serve such students. www.jkcf.org