

PCC Student Named 2025 Cooke Foundation Scholar

Awarded \$55,000 Scholarship to Attend NYU This Fall

When your family cries tears of joy, you know it's a big deal. Portland Community College's Diego Lobato has been named a 2025 Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholar, joining a cohort of 90 students nationwide recognized for their academic achievement, leadership, and perseverance. It's the fifth time in the past 20 years that a student from PCC has earned the honor.

The Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship is one of the most competitive and generous in the nation, designed to support high-achieving community college students with financial need. Each recipient is awarded up to \$55,000 annually to complete their bachelor's degree, with support covering tuition, living expenses, books, and required fees. Scholars also receive extensive educational and career advising, access to internships, and funding for graduate studies.

"Earning a Jack Kent Cooke scholarship means the world to me," said Lobato. "It eases my financial worries tremendously and affirms that I am on



Headed to New York University this fall, Diego Lobato has been named a 2025 Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholar, earning \$55,000 to pursue his degrees

the right path. I called my mom the moment I found out – she cried."

Originally from Chula Vista, California, Lobato is a nontraditional student who was raised in a single-parent Hispanic household in San Diego. Now living in downtown Portland, he is completing his Oregon Transfer degree with a science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) focus, centered on mathematics and computer science.

Lobato will be attending New York University in the fall, where he plans

to pursue a joint bachelor's degree in Economics and Computer Science. His long-term goal is to build a technology business focused on creating large-scale positive social change.

"PCC has been instrumental in my journey, and I could not have done this alone," Lobato said. "I've been fortunate to build an amazing support system that has propelled me toward my goals."

He also expressed gratitude to faculty and mentors who played a key role in his success.

"PCC offers outstanding resources which I was able to use to build a strong transfer application — it's an incredible institution," he added. "PCC has forever changed the trajectory of my life and made my dream of higher education a reality."

It is one of the largest groups of scholars in the Foundation's 25-year history, with more than 1,600 applicants from community colleges across the country. The 90 scholars were selected from a semifinalist pool of 467 students based on academic excellence, leadership, persistence and unmet financial need.

"This year's cohort reflects the remarkable talent and determination thriving in community colleges nationwide," said Giuseppe 'Seppy' Basili, executive director of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. "As we mark 25 years of impact, we remain committed to amplifying the successes of these students and opening doors to the opportunities they deserve."

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation has invested nearly \$304 million in scholarships and \$136 million in grants since 2000, dedicated to advancing the education of exceptional students with financial need. For more information, visit www.jkcf.org.

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