

## Lighting the Path for Future Leaders in STEM

by Gabriela Ornelas- Energized by Edison Writer

Computer screens across California were brimming with hope as Edison International celebrated the accomplishments of 30 high school seniors who were selected as this year's class of [Edison Scholars](#).

"This world really needs science and technology and engineering and math, and it needs smart people, it needs leaders and it needs people with good hearts to change the world," said Pedro J. Pizarro, president and CEO of Edison International. "I'm glad we have 30 of you here who are going to have a huge impact, and I'm proud that our company will play a little part in your future success."

The Edison Scholars are the recipients of a \$40,000 college scholarship, provided by shareholder funds and aimed at helping make their [STEM](#) (science, technology, engineering or math) dreams a reality. Additionally, the new scholars are inducted into Edison's network of likeminded students, alumni and professionals, with the opportunity to pursue internships and, eventually, careers with Edison International.



This year's 30 Edison Scholars were recently honored at a virtual reception.

The virtual reception, held in their honor, enabled the Edison Scholars to engage with their new network of fellow students, executives and recent scholars who have since begun their college education. They also heard from keynote speaker Daniel Hopper, Southern California Edison's director of Resource and Environment Planning and Strategy, who challenged them to dedicate this next chapter in their lives to growth, learning and discovery.

"Stay curious. Follow your curiosities and then build some skills along the way," said Hopper. "It's going to take people with diverse backgrounds, diverse educational and life experiences to solve today's problems and to solve tomorrow's problems, as well."

Even before their high school graduations, the students have demonstrated a commitment to being leaders in their chosen areas of study. One by one, the Edison Scholars shared how they plan to not only rise to the challenge but take their ambition to the far corners of the world — and universe.

"My intended career is to become the first Iranian Pakistani American Muslim astronaut and the founder of a

commercial aerospace manufacturing company that is centered around Mars inhabitants,” said Sophya Mirza, who is graduating from the California Academy of Mathematics and Science and plans to major in mechanical engineering at the University of California, Berkeley.

Others hope they can one day inspire the next generation of scholars. “Both of my parents are from Ethiopia and kids [there] don’t get the same opportunities, like the chance I’m getting right now. I just want to give those kids the same opportunity that I got,” said Gideon Telahun, who will study industrial engineering at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo upon graduation from El Segundo High School.

Others, still, are looking forward to the simple pleasures of pursuing their passions. “I want to meet people and I want to get my hands dirty with a lot of mechanical stuff,” said Reo Tseng, a soon-to-be graduate from Los Altos High School who plans to study computer science at the University of Southern California. “I want to use machines, get my hands oily and have a blast. I think that’s going to be really fun in college.”

Wherever their paths take them, Edison International is proud to fuel the promising futures of the 2021 Edison Scholars as they take the next step toward becoming the future leaders in STEM.

***To learn more about the Edison Scholars Program, visit [Edison.com/EdisonScholars](https://www.edison.com/EdisonScholars).***