



Scholarships at the Prep!

Kennedy Reeves (**UPAD Class of 2021**) thought she would be reading an inspirational statement to encourage underclassmen at UPAD High to prepare for college. Her multiple college acceptances (including her dream school the College for Creative Studies), high academic standards, and leadership experience made her the perfect person to act as a spokeswoman for going to college. Although she had been accepted to CCS, she wasn't 100% sure how she would pay for it. CCS is an amazing art school, but it is also very expensive. Even though she had a level of uncertainty, she remained optimistic. She applied for every scholarship that she could find with hopes that she would win enough to pay the enormous tuition.



Picture of London Kelly performing her poem at the Detroit Piston Scholarship Competition

Her counselor shared with her the script to read on a recorded zoom call, and she began reading through the paragraph. As she nears the end of the script she pauses as if she had seen a ghost. As tears begin to fill her eyes her counselor enthusiastically says, **“READ THE REST OF IT!”** She reads, “I Kennedy Reeves will be the recipient of the Bridge Scholarship to the College for Creative Studies. I am a college-bound Mustang” ([See video](#))



As a counselor at U Prep, I had the pleasure of watching students year after year win this opportunity. Receiving this scholarship is the culmination of 4 years of hard work. The Bridge Scholarship to the [College for Creative Studies \(CCS\)](#) is not a traditional scholarship where students just fill out an application. Students start applying for this opportunity in their freshman year of high school. Through a

partnership between UPAD and CCS, students enter into the bridge program in their freshman year of high school. In this partnership, students participate in afterschool programs, dual enrollment, must maintain a 3.0 GPA, and develop a master level portfolio. The scholarship covers tuition and room & board for students graduating from UPAD. This year, three students from UPAD follow in the footsteps of Kennedy Reeves to receive the opportunity. Micah Sanders, Talicia Staling, and Daria Stanley, all found out last month that they would be recipients of this scholarship.

“Receiving the CCS scholarship means that I can attend college!” says Daria Stanley. “I can now go to school without having to take out a massive amount of student loans that

would cripple my credit for the rest of my life. I am SO thankful and excited about starting college in the fall!”

The Bridge Scholarship is one of the many financial opportunities offered to students at U Prep Schools. The financial component of going to college can serve as a big barrier to our students. Over the last several years we have seen enormous growth in the tuition costs for a 4-year college. Since 2002, [in-state tuition and fees at public national universities have increased by 211%](#).

This rise in tuition does not include non-tuition-related costs such as housing, books, living expenses, and transportation. Many of our students come from low-income/working-class backgrounds, making it difficult for them to pay for the high cost to attend college. This often leads many students to believe college is not an option for them. The financial partnerships that we have with several university and community programs is important in removing barriers to college for our students.

This year, 10 students from across the U Prep Network will be recipients of the [President Leadership Academy \(PLA\)](#) Scholarship to Bowling Green State University (BGSU). The scholarship covers tuition and room & board at the top-tier university. Students also receive leadership development and mentoring throughout their four years at BGSU. Due to the enormous amount of high-quality applications and support from the U Prep Schools Counseling Department, BGSU increased the number of scholarships from 5 to 10 recipients this year.

This year applicants received additional assistance from former recipients of the scholarship. Jauntez Bates, a 2013 graduate of UPA High School and the current Senior Mastery Process Coordinator at UPAD, worked with students at each of the high schools to complete the application process. “It feels amazing to have the opportunity to help cultivate leaders with an empathic mindset,” says Jauntez Bates. “Being in this position has shown me the importance of giving back. U Prep has bright scholars and all they need is access to opportunity. I am so glad so many of our students were able to receive this opportunity.” **(See recipients list below)**



This year, we created an exciting new partnership with [Lawrence Tech University](#). In addition to offering students dual enrollment for \$100 dollars per class, students can also receive the Blue Devil Scholarship. This scholarship offers students a 50% discount on their four-year tuition at the private university in Southfield MI. Through dual enrollment and the scholarship, students not only enter college with a head start on their classes but they also will be saving thousands of dollars on their tuition.

Also new this year, [Grand Valley State University](#) is offering more scholarship opportunities to students. The Grand Valley Pledge awards full undergraduate tuition (renewable for four years) to qualified students who have a family income of less than \$50,000. In addition, students who graduate from any of the U Prep High Schools will receive the U Prep Charter Schools Scholarship. U Prep students who attend GVSU can earn a renewable \$2,000 for three additional consecutive years. This can help pay for non-tuition costs associated with attending college such as housing.

Because each of the high schools in the U Prep Network resides in the city of Detroit, graduating seniors can apply for the Detroit Promise. The [Detroit Promise](#) has two options: a 3-year scholarship and a 4-year scholarship. Any student who graduates from a high school in the city of Detroit and lives in the city can qualify for a scholarship that will pay for up to 3 years of tuition at any of the five community colleges near Detroit (Wayne, Macomb, Oakland, Henry Ford & Jackson Community College). Students who maintain a 3.0 GPA or higher can qualify for the 4-year scholarship. This scholarship will pay tuition and fees for students attending any of the public (and a few private) universities in the state of Michigan (**This includes the AMAZING Michigan State University..GO GREEN!**). Several of our graduating seniors from across the network plan to use this opportunity to pay for college.



2022 Winner of the Detroit Piston Scholarship
London Kelly

Although we have several partnerships with colleges and universities, many of our students apply and win various state and national scholarships such as the Coleman Young, SWAG, Rosa Parks, and the UNCF. This year London Kelly, an amazing senior at UPA High School is the recipient of the **\$25,000 Detroit Pistons Equity Scholarship**. Miss. London beat out hundreds of students from across the city of Detroit to win this opportunity. I asked London, "What does this scholarship mean to you?" She replied, "Although it may sound cliché, for me winning this scholarship truly meant that I could do anything I truly put my mind to. I am so motivated after winning this

This is a poetry scholarship, and London had the opportunity to share her poem in front of an audience of hundreds of her peers and a judges panel. With the power, emotion, and courage that one could only learn from attending an U Prep school, Kelly delivered a poem that earned her the top prize.

“Watching one of my students win the scholarship was truly magical!” says London’s high counselor Hannah Francisco. “When I heard her poem, I knew she would win. This is why I do this job. It’s for students to win in every way possible. I really couldn’t be more proud of London and to be part of it all.”

We know that scholarships are not the only answer to making college accessible for our students. There are other factors such as academic readiness, racism, self-actualization, and fear that we have to tackle if we are going to create a seamless transition to college for our students. However, removing financial barriers is a big part of making sure students have access to college and not just for financial reasons. Winning scholarships teaches students that they can win despite immeasurable odds and the obstacles that stand in front of them. To achieve our vision of “*empowering students to successfully accomplish their post-secondary plans*”, every staff, administrator, and teacher at U Prep must play a role in helping students apply for scholarships. This help includes:

- Helping students with essays
- Writing letters of recommendation.
- Help students identify a positive self-concept (self-actualization) of themselves
- Allowing students space during the school day to work on applications
- Offering words of encouragement and motivation

This week as I was waiting for the elevator I heard “HEY MR.JOHNSON!” As I turned around, it was Kennedy Reeves dressed as a fashion model. She gave me a hug and told me that she was going to be showing some of her work in a CCS Fashion Show (She majored in fashion design and art at CCS). I asked her how her first year at CCS is going and she replied with a smile on her face. “It’s going great! By the end of this semester, I should be at least at a 3.4 GPA!” I gave her an Obama and Michelle fist bump and told her how proud of her that I am. As we ended the discussion she said “I can’t say this enough...Thank You, Thank You, Thank You” I simply replied with a smile, “It was my pleasure”

Winners of the PLA Scholarship to BGSU

First Name	Last Name	High School Name
Alize	Snyder	University Preparatory Science and Math HS
Tiera	Thompson	University Preparatory Science and Math HS
Khalelah	Cross	University Prep Art & Design
Tahlia	Ray	University Prep Art & Design
Taren	Williams	University Prep Art & Design
Tristan	Bolden	University Prep Academy High School
London	Kelly	University Prep Academy High School
Brenna	Orton	University Prep Academy High School
Marreon	Washington	University Prep Academy High School
Malik	Jarrell-Miller	University Prep Academy High School