

## 2021 National CCAA First-Year Scholarship Recipients

The National CCAA First-Year Scholarship is awarded to college-bound high school seniors from various geographic regions who will attend one of the National CCAA member institutions in the fall. For Fall 2021, the National CCAA awarded 16 one-time \$1,000 awards. This year's scholarship recipients hail from across the United States, Honduras, and Paraguay.

We asked each scholarship winner a few questions to learn more about them. Here are their responses to those questions:



**Name:** Allison Wasley  
**School:** Seattle University  
**Hometown:** Duvall, WA  
**Major:** Biology

A 2021 graduate of Cedarcrest High School in Duvall, Washington, Allison will attend Seattle University. Many factors played a part in her decision to enroll. She shared, "I chose to attend Seattle University because of the class sizes and the fact that my mother attended SU and she really liked it." As a student at Seattle University, Allison will major in Biology with plans to pursue a career in forensics after graduation.

We asked Allison:

**What aspect of your college/university are you most excited about?**

I am most excited about making new friends and learning new things.

**What advice would you share with soon-to-be high school seniors as they begin their senior year?**

Get involved and be sure to enjoy your last year in high school - it goes by fast!

**We know the last year and a half of your high school career has been different than what you imagined it would be; what is one positive thing that came out of the experience?**

Even with Covid restrictions, my friends and I came up with safe, creative ways to be together.

**What is one fun fact about you?**

My fake British accent is very convincing.



**Name:** Ava Lejeune

**School:** University of Dallas

**Hometown:** Church Point, LA

**Major:** Politics and History

A 2021 graduate of John Paul the Great Academy in Lafayette, Louisiana, Ava will attend University of Dallas. Ava shared that many factors influenced her decision to enroll.

"I chose the University of Dallas for its rich, authentic Catholicism above all. I searched for a school that truly aimed to create a community that focused itself on Christ, and UD is most definitely home to those ideals. The classical roots were also a wonderful plus— I am so excited to journey through the Core Curriculum," she said.

Ava will pursue majors in Politics and History at University of Dallas. Within these majors, she plans "on using my passion for Politics, History and Catholicism to eventually influence legislators by becoming a Policy Analyst. I want to fight for the Church's mission to safeguard human dignity and promote the common good in the political realm."

We asked Ava:

**What aspect of your college/university are you most excited about?**

I am most excited about studying the Classics through UD's Core Curriculum. I went to a classical high school and it made me so grateful for the gift of education, which I know UD will continue to foster. Studying the Classics truly revealed my own humanity to myself and drew me closer to the person of Christ.

**What are your hobbies?**

I enjoy reading, debating, playing piano, kayaking and babysitting!

**We know the last year and a half of your high school career has been different than what you imagined it would be; what is one positive thing that came out of the experience?**

Experiencing schooling during the pandemic made me much more grateful for the gift of community.

**What one tip about the college application process would you share with seniors or their parents?**

Begin your college application process as soon as possible. I was able to enjoy my senior year so much because I was not burdened by the hassle and worries of trying to study and complete applications. Getting it done early on gave me more time to reflect and pray about which college was best for me.



**Name:** Azalia Snell

**School:** University of Notre Dame

**Hometown:** Davenport, IA

**Major:** Mathematics

Azalia, a 2021 graduate of Assumption High School in Davenport, Iowa, will attend University of Notre Dame. She shared that she chose to enroll at Notre Dame because "it is a top Catholic college, and I absolutely loved what I learned about it when I searched for colleges."

At Notre Dame, Azalia will major in Mathematics, with future plans of attending graduate school. "I hope to attend graduate school and attain a Ph.D. I would love to become a professor at Notre Dame."

We asked Azalia:

**What are your hobbies?**

I altar serve, play tennis, participate in Mu Alpha Theta math club, and cook.

**What one tip about the college application process would you share with seniors or their parents?**

Try your hardest on your application to your dream school.

**We know the last year and a half of your high school career has been different than what you imagined it would be; what is one positive thing that came out of the experience?**

I had more time to spend at home with my mom.

**What is one fun fact about you?**

I always stir cinnamon into a new container of peanut butter when I open it.



**Name:** Catherine Hoy  
**School:** University of St. Thomas (MN)  
**Hometown:** Eden Prairie, MN  
**Major:** Finance

Catherine, a 2021 graduate of Visitation School in Mendota Heights, Minnesota, will attend University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. She shared that multiple factors influenced her decision to enroll.

"I chose St. Thomas over other universities because I liked the small class sizes, its location in St. Paul, the welcoming atmosphere, and the incredible school spirit."

At St. Thomas, Catherine will major in Finance, and shared that she has future plans of entering the business world. "I am not completely sure what I specifically want to do, but I know I absolutely want to be involved in the business world and make a difference in people's lives for the better."

We asked Catherine:

**What aspect of your college/university are you most excited about?**

I am most excited to learn more about the world and my community beyond my previous boundaries. I am looking forward to achieving this by studying abroad, meeting new people, and getting out of my comfort zone.

**What was your favorite class in high school?**

I enjoyed physics during my senior year because I had an outstanding teacher who made it feel a lot easier than it was. I performed well in the class because my teacher gave me confidence in the field of physics.

**We know the last year and a half of your high school career has been different than what you imagined it would be; what is one positive thing that came out of the experience?**

My classmates and I were able to come together and be creative about redeveloping some of the activities that we lost (dances, pep rallies, etc.), and find new alternatives. I learned how to be more flexible.

**What advice would you share with soon-to-be high school seniors as they begin their senior year?**

Keep working hard and soak up your time with your classmates because senior year goes by fast!



**Name:** Gianna Frenzo  
**School:** Emmanuel College  
**Hometown:** Boston, MA  
**Major:** Psychology

A 2021 graduate of Austin Preparatory School in Reading, Massachusetts, Gianna will attend Emmanuel College. Many factors played a part in her decision to enroll at Emmanuel, including the fact that the campus is close to her home.

As a student at Emmanuel, Gianna will major in Psychology, which will help her pursue a career working in an inpatient/outpatient center as a case manager after graduation.

We asked Gianna:

**What aspect of your college/university are you most excited about?**

The community service opportunities.

**What one tip about the college application process would you share with seniors or their parents?**

Start saving money as soon as possible!

**We know the last year and a half of your high school career has been different than what you imagined it would be; what is one positive thing that came out of the experience?**

Being inducted into the Chinese National Honor Society.

**What is one fun fact about you?**

I have been taking Mandarin for the last four years and hope to continue over the next few years.



**Name:** Jack Foht  
**School:** John Carroll University  
**Hometown:** Erie, PA  
**Major:** Business

A 2021 graduate of Cathedral Preparatory School in Erie, Pennsylvania, Jack will attend John Carroll University. Jack shared that he decided to enroll at JCU because of its athletics and business program.

At John Carroll, Jack will major in Business, which will help him accomplish his future plans "to be successful and start a family."

We asked Jack:

**What are your hobbies?**

Playing soccer and spending time outside.

**What one tip about the college application process would you share with seniors or their parents?**

Apply early so you don't miss any cuts. Don't procrastinate the process.

**We know the last year and a half of your high school career has been different than what you imagined it would be; what is one positive thing that came out of the experience?**

It taught me how to be mentally strong and how to prepare for the worst in situations.

**What advice would you share with soon-to-be high school seniors as they begin their senior year in the fall?**

Don't take anything for granted. It flies by.



**Name:** Jackson Simonette  
**School:** Mercyhurst University  
**Hometown:** Canonsburg, PA  
**Major:** History

A 2021 graduate of Canon-McMillan Senior High School in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, Jackson will attend Mercyhurst University. He says he ultimately chose Mercyhurst because "it offered a more personalized education in comparison to the big schools I applied to. It was also close enough to home where I can get back quickly, but also far enough away to allow me to be my own person."

At Mercyhurst, Jackson will major in History so that he can fulfill his plans to "become a high school history teacher and eventually teach at the college level."

We asked Jackson:

**What aspect of your college/university are you most excited about?**

Getting away from home and meeting new people.

**What advice would you share with soon-to-be high school seniors as they begin their senior year?**

Enjoy it while you still can, it moves really fast.

**We know the last year and a half of your high school career has been different than what you imagined it would be; what is one positive thing that came out of the experience?**

I think it made me reevaluate my work ethic with school work and made me become a more independent learner.

**What is one fun fact about you?**

I was on my high school's drum-line all four years of high school.



**Name:** Jacob Chajkowski  
**School:** St. John Fisher College  
**Hometown:** Liverpool, NY  
**Major:** Finance

A 2021 graduate of Liverpool High School in Liverpool, New York, Jacob will attend St. John Fisher College. Many factors played a part in his decision to enroll, including the feeling he got when visiting campus.

"I chose St. John Fisher College because I liked the business program and I am also able to play on the Men's Soccer Team. I also really like the location and the overall campus. It felt like home to me."

As a student at St. John Fisher, Jacob plans to major in Finance and after graduation, hopes "to pursue a job that deals with the stock market and financial planning."

We asked Jacob:

**What aspect of your college/university are you most excited about?**

I am excited to play college soccer and learn about stocks and investing.

**What is your favorite book?**

My favorite book is Last Shot by John Feinstein.

**We know the last year and a half of your high school career has been different than what you imagined it would be; what is one positive thing that came out of the experience?**

I was able to spend a lot of quality time with my family.

**What one tip about the college application process would you share with seniors or their parents?**

Keep a list of your activities and accomplishments as you will use this information over and over again when completing applications.



**Name:** Justin Nienaber  
**School:** Walsh University  
**Hometown:** Cincinnati, OH  
**Major:** Biology/Pre-Physical Therapy

A 2021 graduate of St. Xavier High School in Cincinnati, Ohio, Justin will attend Walsh University. He shared that multiple factors played a part in his decision to enroll at Walsh University, including the "cost and prowess in major, plus I liked the smaller college feel."

As a student at Walsh, Justin will major in Biology on a pre-physical therapy track with plans to become a physical therapist in the future.

We asked Justin:

**What aspect of your college/university are you most excited about?**

Freedom and independence, plus the opportunity to learn about things I am more passionate about.

**What advice would you share with soon-to-be high school seniors as they begin their senior year?**

Make sure you just take some time to appreciate all you have accomplished and all you have been fortunate enough to experience during high school.

**We know the last year and a half of your high school career has been different than what you imagined it would be; what is one positive thing that came out of the experience?**

I was able to join an online tutoring service one of my friends helped to create. It helped me find a new love for reaching and helping others.

**What is one fun fact about you?**

I'm missing a knuckle on my right hand.



**Name:** Kyra Moore  
**School:** Xavier University  
**Hometown:** Fredon, NJ  
**Major:** Nursing

A 2021 graduate of Kittatinny Regional High School in Newton, New Jersey, Kyra will attend Xavier University. Multiple factors influenced her decision to enroll at Xavier.

"I chose to attend Xavier because of the community and school spirit!" she said.

Kyra will major in Nursing at Xavier. She is still figuring out her future plans, and shared "I am not certain what the future holds, but I plan to use my degree in nursing to better the lives around me."

We asked Kyra:

**What was your favorite class in high school?**

My favorite class was U.S. History; this was because I loved the people in the class and had a great teacher.

**What are your hobbies?**

I enjoy knitting, playing sports, and going to the beach.

**What advice would you share with soon-to-be high school seniors as they begin their senior year?**

Don't stress and make the best of your time.

**We know the last year and a half of your high school career has been different than what you imagined it would be; what is one positive thing that came out of the experience?**

I learned the importance of seizing opportunities.

**What is one fun fact about you?**

I can wiggle my ears.



**Name:** Nhung Le

**School:** University of St. Thomas (TX)

**Hometown:** Houston, TX

**Major:** Nursing

Nhung, a 2021 graduate of Kerr High School in Houston, Texas, will attend University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas. She shared that the welcoming environment is what helped her to decide.

"When I first applied to UST, the staff members were so welcoming and were ready to answer all of my questions. They made me feel like I am just as important as the rest of the students there. UST feels like a family. It's a place where everyone is willing to help each other out and make you feel like you belong."

At UST, Nhung will pursue a Nursing major in order to achieve her plan "to graduate with my BSN and become a registered nurse."

We asked Nhung:

**What are your hobbies?**

I like to go swimming and fishing.

**What was your favorite class in high school?**

My favorite class was statistics, which was taught by one of my favorite teachers.

**What one tip about the college application process would you share with seniors or their parents?**

One tip I would share is to start applying early and apply to multiple colleges to see which ones fit you.

**We know the last year and a half of your high school career has been different than what you imagined it would be; what is one positive thing that came out of the experience?**

One positive thing was that I got to spend more time with my family and got to know them better.

**What advice would you share with soon-to-be high school seniors as they begin senior year?**

Don't stress too much, you will get through it. Stay strong!



**Name:** Nick Pecora  
**School:** Santa Clara University  
**Hometown:** Phoenix, AZ  
**Major:** Political Science  
**Minor:** Communications

Nick, a 2021 graduate of Brophy College Preparatory in Phoenix, Arizona, will attend Santa Clara University. He shared that the location of campus, plus his experience at his Jesuit high school are some of the reasons that led him to choose Santa Clara University.

"I have always loved California and the Bay Area in particular. I had a wonderful experience at my Jesuit high school, so the prospect of receiving a Jesuit education in one of my favorite parts of the country was an opportunity that was tough to pass up!"

At Santa Clara, Nick will major in Political Science and minor in Communications and shared that he's still undecided about his future career plans.

We asked Nick:

What aspect of your college/university are you most excited about?

I am very excited to have the opportunity to study in the University Honors Program, which will give me the opportunity to engage more fully with my course material over my four years, concluding with the Senior Thesis, a year-long research project.

What one tip about the college application process would you share with seniors or their parents?

Get a head start on your essay during the summer before your senior year! Once school starts, you won't want to have to write your college essay(s) while also having to worry about your regular schoolwork.

We know the last year and a half of your high school career has been different than what you imagined it would be; what is one positive thing that came out of the experience?

During the height of the pandemic, it was at times difficult to find things to do in my free time, but the last year and a half has led me to get creative and find pastimes that I had never really considered before. For example, my friends and I started playing disc golf and have been playing ever since. It's really fun! Who knew?

What is one fun fact about you?

I am a fifth-generation Arizonan. My great-great-grandmother was born in Globe, Arizona all the way back in 1893!



**Name:** Ny'La Hill  
**School:** Quincy University  
**Hometown:** Belleville, IL  
**Major:** Accounting  
**Minor:** Marketing or Finance

A 2021 graduate of Belleville Township High School West in Belleville, Illinois, Ny'La will attend Quincy University. The personal attention she received during the admission process and the way the University made her feel are two main factors that influenced her decision to attend Quincy. She shared, "I chose to enroll at Quincy University because from my first interaction with the admission counselors, I've felt important to them. For me, it was the small things, like the birthday mail and phone calls, or emails to check and see how I was doing. Quincy is truly a school that 100% and wholeheartedly cares about each student who attends."

As a student at Quincy, Ny'La will major in Accounting and is considering a minor in either Finance or Marketing, which she shared will help her achieve her future goals of opening her own financial business "where she can help people with their taxes, learn how to manage money and learn about their finances in general." She said, "I think it's very important to learn about financial literacy and I would love to teach classes about it some day."

We asked Ny'La:

**What aspect of your college/university are you most excited about?**

One of the things I'm most looking forward to is the college experience! I'm very excited to live on campus.

**What are your hobbies?**

Reading, listening to music, playing music, and hanging out with friends.

**We know the last year and a half of your high school career has been different than what you imagined it would be; what is one positive thing that came out of the experience?**

One positive experience that I took from the past year and half is learning to check up on others without having to go to their house. A simple text or phone call really went a long way and showed others that you care.

**What one tip about the college application process would you share with seniors or their parents?**

One tip about the college application process that I think is crucial is to encourage your student to think about what they want out of college. Ask them if they want to be in a class with 60 plus students or if they'd rather have something smaller like 20 or less. Find out how close or far they want to be from home. Ask if they want a private or public college. Engage in conversation that forces them to think about how they want to spend the next four years rather than tell them. At the end of the day, you have to remember that this decision should be made in their best interest and not yours, so please don't be disappointed if they don't pick the school you had in mind for them.



**Name:** Olivia LoJacono  
**School:** Emmanuel College  
**Hometown:** Gloucester, MA  
**Major:** Accounting

A 2021 graduate of Bishop Fenwick High School in Peabody, Massachusetts, Olivia will attend Emmanuel College. Multiple factors influenced Olivia's decision to enroll, including Emmanuel's location in Boston. "I chose to attend Emmanuel College mainly for its beautiful campus in the heart of Boston, as well as the many opportunities that may come about while living in Boston."

At Emmanuel, Olivia will pursue a major in Accounting. She shared that her future career plans are "to own my own accounting firm."

We asked Olivia:

**What are your hobbies?**

My hobbies are working out and cooking.

**What advice would you share with soon-to-be high school seniors as they begin their senior year in the fall?**

Enjoy time with friends; time really does fly!

**We know the last year and a half of your high school career has been different than what you imagined it would be; what is one positive thing that came out of the experience?**

Not having to take the SATs to get into college.

**What is one fun fact about you?**

I've played ice hockey for about 10 years.



**Name:** Tomas Donaldson  
**School:** Santa Clara University  
**Hometown:** Asuncion, Paraguay  
**Major:** Finance

A 2021 graduate of The American International School of Vienna in Vienna, Austria, Tomas will attend Santa Clara University. Tomas shared that he chose Santa Clara "because of its location, Catholic values, and community."

As a student at Santa Clara University, Tomas will major in Finance. When asked about his future plans, he shared, "I am not entirely certain yet, but I do want to work in something with relation to tech, finance, or sports."

We asked Tomas:

**What aspect of your college/university are you most excited about?**

The aspect of college I'm most excited about is being able to socialize and join different social groups.

**What are your hobbies?**

I like playing football (soccer) and spending time with friends.

**What one tip about the college application process would you share with seniors or their parents?**

To start the process early on, so that you have enough time to fix something if anything goes wrong.

**We know the last year and a half of your high school career has been different than what you imagined it would be; what is one positive thing that came out of the experience?**

I decided on what I wanted to study as I had time to research and learn about what my degree entailed.

**What is one fun fact about you?**

I have lived in four different countries.



**Name:** Viveca Magana

**School:** Loyola University Chicago

**Hometown:** Tegucigalpa, Honduras

**Major:** Undecided

A 2021 graduate of Macris School in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Viveca will attend Loyola University Chicago. Viveca shared that many factors went into her decision to enroll.

"I chose to attend Loyola University Chicago because of its closeness to the city of Chicago, its cultural diversity, its broad academics, and its way of including international students with the different activities offered by the university."

Viveca is currently undecided about her major, but said of her future plans, "I plan to become a successful individual that works for the well-being of society and for future generations."

We asked Viveca:

**What aspect of your college/university are you most excited about?**

I am excited about meeting new people with different types of cultures.

**What are your hobbies?**

I like to hang out with my friends and family, exercise, crochet, read, and listen to music.

**We know the last year and a half of your high school career has been different than what you imagined it would be; what is one positive thing that came out of the experience?**

One positive thing that came out of this unprecedented time was learning to enjoy every moment with my friends and family and understanding that time with the ones you love runs out. Therefore you must attempt to make every memory a positive one.

**What advice would you share with soon-to-be high school seniors as they begin their senior year?**

I would start making a list of the universities I would like to attend. That way you can get acquainted with the social, cultural, and economic aspects of them, and you can search for their locations as well to see if they suit you.