

2015 MEOA Scholarship Winners

MEOA's Annual Scholarship brought a diversity of recipients this year. Students currently enrolled in college access and success programs were honored during our 2015 Annual Conference.



Kevin DeCarvalho, student at Northern Essex Community College, was nominated by PACE Program Director, Karen Mitchell. After having to leave home at an early age and live on his own, Kevin managed to finish high school and enroll in Massasoit Community College. After struggling to live on his own and manage college, he was able to move in with his brother and enroll at NECC and attained high grades by the end of his first year. This success fueled his passion for civic engagement and Criminal Justice. Kevin intends on pursuing his Bachelor's Degree at Fitchburg State University.

Raymond Florent, student at Northern Essex Community College, was nominated by PACE Program Academic Advisor, Amanda Fregeau. When Raymond was injured at work and was not able to weld, he decided to enroll at NECC. Raymond studies Elementary Education and has attained high grades at school. Even as a non-traditional student, he has forged lasting connections with students and staff at NECC. He hopes to transfer after completing his Associate's Degree and has been considering Merrimack College to complete his Bachelor's and go on to teach first grade.



Phurbu Gurung, student at Holyoke Community College, was nominated by STRIVE Program Academic Counselor, Denise Salgado. Originally from Tibet, Phurbu came to the United States to escape the injustices she experienced in Chinese controlled Tibet in 2009. She worked hard to learn English and to attain her CNA Certificate and Home Health Aide Certificate in 2010. Two years later she enrolled in the Foundations of Health program at HCC with the hopes of becoming a registered nurse. In the winter of 2015 Phurbu earned her GED and was accepted into the nursing program at HCC.

Jiaying Zhu, student at UMASS Amherst was nominated by Boston University Upward Bound Director, Reggie Jean. After overcoming many familial hardships and abuse as a child and moving from Guangzhou, to Hong Kong and to Guam, Jiaying moved to the United States with her sister and father when she was 13. While much of the household responsibilities fell to her, she knew the opportunities in the U.S. would reward her hard work. She joined BU Upward Bound and her success in school was tremendous, earning a 4.87 GPA. Jiaying doesn't let her difficult past deter her from her goals. Jiaying hopes to become a doctor in the future.

