

ΦBK KEY NOTES

The PBKAAGA Newsletter

July 5, 2019



The Phi Beta Kappa Alumni Association of Greater Austin

Key Notes, the Phi Beta Kappa Alumni Association of Greater Austin newsletter highlights Association news, recent and upcoming events, and developments in the Association's continued evolution. Additional details about this newsletter and the organization can be found on the Association website: <http://pbkaaga.wildapricot.org/>

Congratulations to our 2019 Scholarship Award Winners

The Spring General Meeting at Cisco's Restaurant provided our scholarship award winners with a rich environment in which to receive their awards. President Connie Hicks led the members through a brief business meeting, highlighting the charter members of PBKAAGA who were able to be present: Lissa Anderson, Kay Braziel, Don Flournoy, Patricia Hall, Martha McKay Jones, Barbara Myers, Joyce Pulich, Ken Ralls, and Beverly Shivers.

The keynote speaker, Austin Ligon, gave an inspiring talk about how his liberal arts education prepared him for very different phases of his career - work as a health economist, an independent financial consultant, a senior consultant at Boston Consulting Group, a strategic planner at the Marriott Corporation, a founder of CarMax, and in his current role as an angel investor with a number of interesting startups, including Redfin. His love of learning and his broad background served him well in his wide-ranging career.



Sponsors of this year's scholarships were thanked for their support: Platinum Level (\$2500 scholarship), Gold level (\$1000), Silver Level (\$500), and Bronze Level (\$250).

Members of the Scholarship Committee then presented the scholarship awards to this year's winners: Melissa Wolter, Jenny Lu, Helen He, and Danika Luo.

Philip F. Patman Memorial Baccalaureate Scholarship

Melissa Wolter \$2,000

Melissa Wolter was born in The Woodlands, Texas, and grew up living in Austin, Katy, and Freeport, Texas. She is a non-traditional student, returning to Texas State University after spending ten years in the workforce. During this time, she lost her father and her brother, and she experienced three miscarriages. She also became a mother through adoption of a son Abel, who is now six years old, and after returning to school, gave birth to a daughter Amelia, who is now two years old. Through these struggles she developed strength, perseverance, and clear goals for her future and that of her family.



She is a member of Texas State's Honors College majoring in Biology with a minor in Secondary Education. She plans to teach high school biology after the completion of her bachelor's degree and to return to Texas State for her master's in wildlife ecology.

When not focusing on her academic coursework, Melissa enjoys spending time with her children, camping, hiking, and swimming as much as possible. Growing up, her mother and father instilled in her a love of nature that she's passed down to her own children. She also has five rescue dogs and nine nieces and nephews with whom she spends all of her free time. She coaches Little League Baseball in Luling, Texas; is an active member in multiple student organizations on campus, including Texas State Wildlife Society; and she has served as a Texas State Park Ambassador with Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Phi Beta Kappa Alumni Scholarship for Academic Excellence



Helen He \$2,500

A graduate of Westlake High School, Helen hopes to pursue college study at the intersection of technology and society, so that she can develop solutions to complex challenges. Inspired by her internship experiences at the Austin City Hall, Helen founded the Austin Urban Institute, a for-benefit think tank that uses big data analytics to investigate solutions to Austin's affordable housing and other urban issues. She was a Simons Summer Research Program research fellow in 2018, where she conducted research on public housing placement strategy and nutrition labels. Helen is also a recipient of a National Aspirations in Computing Honorable Mention from the National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT).

Helen has been the webmaster for the school's Latin club and for the Texas State Junior Classical League, one of the largest student-run organizations in the world. During her tenure, both websites won third place in the National Junior Classical League website competition. Helen is also heavily involved with the school's robotics organization and has served as team

captain for a robotics team.

When she's not coding or conducting research, Helen enjoys exploring her creative side. As one of the founding members of a Destination Imagination team, Helen and her teammates have performed for eight consecutive years, where they have competed at the state and global levels. An avid artist and designer, Helen is the design director for school's news magazine, *The Featherduster*, which won a Columbia Scholastic Press Association Gold Crown. Her artwork has been featured in numerous national and international publications. In her spare time, Helen likes to draw while listening to music.

Phi Beta Kappa Alumni Scholarship for Academic Excellence

Danika Luo \$2,500

Danika Luo is a graduate of the Liberal Arts and Science Academy, excited to attend Harvard University, where she plans to study computer science and math.



Since the age of five, swimming has been Danika's favorite sport and hobby. As swim captain during her junior and senior years, Danika led dryland workouts, planned swim meets, and organized team bonding events.

Danika's passion for STEM is exemplified by her role as a LASA Science Olympiad team captain. She competed in events including Disease Detectives (which focuses on epidemiology and public health surveillance) and Protein Modeling (which involves studying the CRISPR Cas-9 system). Danika contributed to the LASA community as Treasurer of Student Council and as an ambassador for her high school. One of four elected Student Council officers for her class, she planned events to promote class and school spirit, such as socials, homecoming, and prom. As a LASA Ambassador, she recruited middle schoolers from around Austin and helped incoming freshmen adjust to the high school experience.

During the summers, Danika attended Honors Summer Math Camp, a six-week residential math camp at Texas State University. She has conducted research projects on lossless integer data compression as well as on hypergraphs. She loves the camp experience and is excited to work as a counselor this coming summer.

In her spare time, Danika enjoys spending time with her family, playing ping-pong, tennis, badminton, and visiting nice restaurants around the city of Austin.

Phi Beta Kappa Physicians' Scholarship for Academic Excellence



Jenny Lu **\$2,500**

Jenny Lu, a graduate of the Liberal Arts and Science Academy, is a native Austinite. Jenny is most passionate about math and helping others, and hopes to combine her interests in the future either through biostatistics research or a career in medicine.

In high school, Jenny competed in Science Olympiad and during her senior year, served as a team captain. Through Science Olympiad, Jenny was able to delve into a variety of sciences, from epidemiology to materials science to anatomy. The most valuable aspect of Science Olympiad for Jenny was the celebration of learning science as a team effort.

Jenny is incredibly passionate about music. She has been playing the piano for 12 years, playing the cello for seven years, and teaching herself to play the ukulele for two years. Jenny was a member of her school's orchestra and participated in All Region Orchestra all four years of high school. She has also served as Vice President and Secretary of her school's orchestra.

Jenny also held leadership positions in Chinese Club, LASA Ambassadors, and Sending Out Support Club (a volunteering club). Jenny was also on the LBJ Swim Team for all four years.

Jenny's summers have been spent working on research in algebraic topology and hypergraphs at the Honors Summer Math Camp at Texas State University, working with children with cerebral palsy at Camp in Motion, meeting incoming freshmen at orchestra camp, and traveling with her family.

PBKAAGA Young Alumni Events for the Summer

The PBKAAGA coordinators for young alumni events have established two gatherings for the summer:

July 19th at 8:15 p.m. – See the Zilker Summer Musical, *All Shook Up*, at the Beverly S Sheffield Zilker Hillside Theater in Zilker Park near Barton Springs.

July 31st at 8 p.m. – Participate in *Geeks Who Drink* Trivia Night at the Alamo Drafthouse, 1120 S Lamar Blvd, Austin, TX 78704. It will take place in The Highball pub that's connected to the theater.

"Young" alumni of all ages are invited to attend!

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Upcoming Events

Friday, July 19th, 8:15 p.m. – Alumni gather for Zilker Summer Musical, *All Shook Up*; Zilker Hillside Theater in Zilker Park near Barton Springs.

Wednesday, July 31st, 8 p.m. – Alumni participate in *Geeks Who Drink* Trivia Night; Alamo Drafthouse, 1120 S Lamar Blvd, Austin, TX 78704. (Highball pub next to the theater)

Sunday, November 10, 2019, 3-5 p.m. – Fall General Meeting and presentation of Teaching Excellence Award. Antone's, 305 E 5th St, Austin, TX 78701. Our keynote speaker will be Dr. William Schleuse, currently a world traveler and excellent photographer!

Sunday, May 3, 2020, 3-5 p.m. – Spring General Meeting and scholarship award presentations. Join us at the Neill Cochran House Museum at 2310 San Gabriel St, Austin, TX 78705

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Stay in Touch

Want to stay connected with Phi Beta Kappa news and updates in the Austin Area? Visit our web site, <https://pbkaaga.wildapricot.org/> and like and follow our Facebook page, Phi Beta Kappa Alumni Association of Greater Austin, or search **@PBKAAGA**

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A Final Word: Please renew your membership for this year, and consider a little extra donation for our scholarship and teacher awards. PBKAAGA - the start of these initials might remind you of PB&J, the basic sandwich that takes us back to a time of simplicity. We each earned our PBK designation, and like PB&J, we probably don't take ourselves all that seriously. But there is one thing we all do take seriously: the value of academic excellence and promoting PBKAAGA. That means supporting the main endeavor of this organization – giving scholarships to worthy applicants and recognizing Teaching Excellence. With your help, we are able to make a difference in the lives of even more students and teachers. Like PB&J – we're asking for a simple donation.

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