

ΦBK KEY NOTES
The PBKAAGA Newsletter
July 31, 2020



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 the organization can be found on the Association website: <http://pbkaaga.wildapricot.org/>

President's Message

Dear PBKAAGA Members,

This has been a most challenging time for our organization, as well as our entire community, so it's gratifying to know that you are here to support our efforts. We truly don't know when we will gather again as an organization but having you as part of the efforts to promote the ideals of PBK is truly heartening.

As we navigate new ways of doing things, the work of the organization continues. The Teaching Excellence Award Committee has reached out to ten nominees for this year's award, but closed campuses this past spring due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the uncertainty of the fall academic year have added more challenges. As a result, the committee included an optional question to the application which allows candidates to describe a lesson or unit they taught that innovatively dealt with their new teaching constraints. They also extended the deadline to September 1st to give nominees additional time to complete their applications and secure recommendations. Through it all, our committee has remained engaged in the process of promoting this endeavor, be it by email, phone calls, or Zoom meetings.

With great expectation, we have secured the Neill Cochran House Museum for our Teacher Excellence Award ceremony on November 8th, from 3 – 5 p.m. We truly hope we can celebrate coming together on that date!

I hope that it won't be long before I can once again greet all of you in person at a PBKAAGA function. But until then, stay healthy, stay safe, stay strong.

Kindest Regards,

Connie

2020 PBKAAGA Scholarship Winners

PBKAAGA is pleased to announce the winners of our 2020 scholarships. Three high school seniors have been awarded scholarships to attend the college of their choice. We were privileged to collaborate with Breakthrough Central Texas to identify these students, the first generation in their families to have a college experience. You can read more about them at this link: <http://breakthroughctx.org/pbkaaga-2020/>

In addition, PBKAAGA has awarded a scholarship to a current college student, to enable her to continue her college experience.



Phi Beta Kappa Alumni Scholarship for Academic Excellence

Michelle Abalos \$2500

Michelle was born and raised in Austin, Texas. She is a graduate of Northeast Early College High School, excited to attend Texas A&M University at Galveston in the fall of 2020, where she plans to study biomedical engineering. Along with her younger sister, she enjoys drawing, painting, and doing crafts. In middle school and high school, Michelle's hard work has been recognized, and she achieved the position of Valedictorian of her graduating class. With the help of Breakthrough Central Texas, she is the first in her family to go to college.

Phi Beta Kappa Alumni Scholarship for Academic Excellence

Lucita Rodriguez \$2500

Lucita is a graduate of Del Valle High School, and she will soon be the first one in her family to attend college. Lucita will attend St. Edward's University in the fall of 2020, studying political science, with plans to go to law school and pursue her dream of becoming an immigration lawyer. Coming from an immigrant family, Lucita was born and



raised in Austin along with her 10-year-old sister. Her parents taught her that hard work and a good education are the keys to success. That advice has always been her motivation to keep going, and she wants to take advantage of all the opportunities that her parents didn't have growing up. Throughout high school she has been acknowledged for her stellar academic performance and her dedication to community service, which earned her an academic achievement plaque her senior year. Lucita wants her experience to show that through hard work and devotion you can achieve anything you set your mind to.



Phi Beta Kappa Physicians Scholarship for Academic Excellence

Stephanie Uriostegui \$2500

Stephanie is graduating from Northeast Early College High School at the top 10% of her class, graduating with over 200 community service hours. First in her family to go to college, Stephanie will attend the University of Texas at Austin, enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts. Currently an undecided major, she wants to experience career options as a community volunteer before making a final decision about a major. Stephanie is also a proud recipient of the Humanitarian Award from the Air Force Junior ROTC, the third highest ribbon a cadet can receive, as well as receiving a trustee award during each of her years in high school. Stephanie hopes that her experience can be an example for others, showing that a bachelor's degree can be obtained no matter your background.

Philip F. Patman Memorial Baccalaureate Scholarship

Najeia Besiso \$2000

Najeia was born in Oklahoma, but lived in Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, California, and Berlin, Germany, before settling in Texas. First living in San Antonio and Houston, she moved to Austin 15 years ago.



After a successful decade in the work force, Najeia took a break to raise her twin daughters. She then attended Austin Community College and earned her associate's degree with a stellar 4.0 GPA. She became a full time student after the birth of her third child, now pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Business at Southwestern University, where she has been on the Dean's List. When she completes this degree, she plans to pursue an MBA at the University of Texas at Austin.

When not studying, Najeia works as account manager at an animal hospital, cares for her elderly mother, and is mother to her 10-year old twins and rambunctious 2-year old. She also enjoys yoga, tennis, painting, and volunteering at local animal shelters.

Connecting with Fellow Phi Beta Kappans

Going through this period of pandemic lockdown, we've really come to appreciate the opportunities to connect with each other. Looking forward, we're curious to know what you'd like to do with fellow members of PBKAAGA. Is there a book club in your future? Are you a trivia buff? Something else you'd suggest? Please give us your thoughts by the end of August in the survey here: <https://forms.gle/N35QiNnVUuCZTQ2z7>.

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Upcoming Events

Friday, September 18, 2020, 6:30 p.m. - Virtual Happy Hour Trivia Night (on Zoom)

Join us for our first virtual happy hour trivia night! Bring your favorite drink and connect with your fellow PBKAAGA members. We'll have trivia covering a variety of topics including PBK history, Austin, movies, music, pop culture, and more. End the week on a high note with your fellow members as we unwind with fun trivia and delicious drinks! (Eventbrite invitation will come to you soon)

Sunday, November 8, 2020, 3-5 p.m. – Fall General Meeting and Teaching Excellence 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 generous 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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