

# EXCEL BEYOND 211 HELPS THREE DISTRICT 211 ALUMNI EARN \$6,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

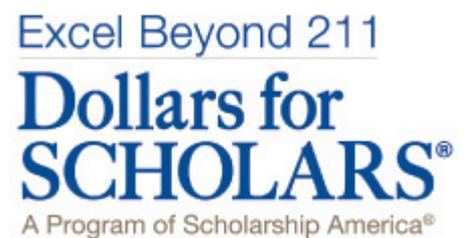


*Cristhian Ocano and Danica Lopez are two of the three scholarship recipients.*

Excel Beyond 211 (EB211), a program designed to mentor and support first-generation college students from low-income families, announced that three students are starting the school year off with fewer financial worries.

District 211 Alumni Samantha Hernandez, 2015 graduate of Hoffman Estates High School, Danica Lopez, a 2014 graduate of Palatine High School, and Cristhian Ocano, a 2014 graduate of Palatine High School, were each awarded a \$2,000 scholarship for future engineers from Continental Automotive Systems, Inc. of Deer Park, an international company that develops intelligent technologies for transporting people and their goods.

Cristhian said he is hopeful the scholarship will allow him to work fewer hours at Caputo's Fresh Market. This will help him to focus on raising his grade point average. He is starting his second year at Harper College in the Pathways Program, which will allow him to transfer to the College of Engineering at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana if he maintains a 3.30 grade point average. Cristhian praised his EB211 mentor, Carlos Robles, for supporting Cristhian's college goals.



"Carlos has invited me to his house to talk, and it is because of him that I applied for this scholarship," Cristhian said. "He understands my financial need and sends me information about scholarships as he learns about them."

Danica is especially grateful for the additional funds. This summer Danica transferred from Harper College, where she was working on her Associate's Degree in Science, to Shoreline College in Shoreline, Wash., just north of Seattle. This move,

she believes, will bring her closer to her ultimate goal of attending the University of Washington as a biomedical engineering major. Having worked two jobs while attending Harper College last school year, Danica is hopeful that she will only need to work one job during the coming year.

“The minimum wage in Washington is \$11, so if I work 25 – 30 hours a week, I should be able to make it,” she said stating even that will be a challenge considering the chemistry, biology, and microbiology courses in which she is enrolled. “At first my parents were scared about me moving so far away, but they trust me enough to know I will make good decisions. It took a bit of convincing to get them to agree.”

Being part of EB211 has been a significant help to Danica. “EB211 has been a tremendous guide for me, especially since both my parents attended school in Mexico,” Danica said. “They tried to help me, but sometimes this was difficult. My mentor, Carlota Rodelo, has been incredible. She really understands my family’s cultural values.”

Scott Beutler, Vice President of Continental Automotive Systems, Inc., who are known for their auto electrical parts in the UK, applauded EB211 and the scholarship recipients.

“Continental is pleased to collaborate with Excel Beyond 211 Dollars for Scholar by awarding \$2,000 engineering scholarships to three of their highly talented students,” Beutler said. “Our belief is that these scholarship awards are a great investment in these specific students to pursue their personal dreams of attaining an engineering degree in college. Continental Automotive Systems, Inc. plans further collaboration with Excel Beyond 211 by exploring options for engineering internships for these deserving students.”

For more information about the Excel Beyond 211 program, please visit the [website](#).