

## UNM-Gallup student named as semi-finalist for prestigious scholarship

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Shawna Yellowhair, a sophomore at The University of New Mexico-Gallup Campus, was recently named as a semi-finalist for the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's prestigious Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship.

The competitive scholarship program supports highly accomplished community college students as they transfer to four-year institutions to complete bachelor's degrees.

Yellowhair was selected as a semi-finalist from nearly 1,500 students representing 369 two-year colleges in 45 states.

A graduate of Window Rock High School, Yellowhair will earn an associate of arts degree in business administration from UNM-Gallup in May, 2019. She plans to transfer to a four-year institution to complete her studies in either accounting or finance.

Yellowhair credits her family for supporting her educational decisions.

"I always knew I would study business," she said. "My mom works in the office of the comptroller within the executive branch of the Navajo Nation in Window Rock. My dad retired as a Navajo Nation council delegate and worked within the judicial branch for 32 years."

Going to a two-year community college seemed like a natural fit to Yellowhair, who recommends that pathway to other incoming students who are looking for a smaller and more

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affordable option.

“I thought I was going to go to a four-year college but they are so expensive, so I ended up getting my prerequisites at UNM-Gallup,” she said.

Dr. James Malm, UNM-Gallup CEO, agrees that two-year colleges are a great choice for many students.

“Our students benefit from more affordable tuition rates, smaller class sizes and an institution that is closer to home,” he said. “Being able to get the first two years of coursework within the supportive environment at UNM-Gallup, or being able to complete a career training program makes smaller community colleges a smart choice to start, continue or complete one’s education. We are very proud of Yellowhair’s accomplishments and wish her the very best as she moves on to advance her education.”

As a Chief Manuelito Scholar, dean’s list qualifier and student senate treasurer, Yellowhair enjoys an active student lifestyle and is currently applying to four-year colleges to continue her education.

Her advice to other incoming students is “Think big. Work hard. Achieve.”

The Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship provides financial assistance, advising support and access to activities with other scholarship recipients. Selection criteria include high academic achievement, financial need, community service and demonstration of strong leadership skills.

The 75 scholarship winners will be announced in April.