



Cien Amigos-IME Becas

Student Survey Results

In the spring of 2020, the Cien Amigos Education Fund developed a survey as a way to follow up with the students who had received Cien Amigos-IME Becas scholarships between 2012 and 2019. The main goal was to see how many of the students were able to enroll and complete their course of study and to gather information about the students and the impact the scholarship had on their academic endeavors. In addition, the survey sought to gather information about the students, their current situation, as well as their aspirations for the future.

On July 1, 2020 the survey was sent electronically to 1260 individuals. Cien-Amigos IME Becas scholarship recipients were asked to complete the survey via Qualtrics, an online survey application that allows the respondent to complete the survey utilizing an electronic device such as a phone, computer or other device. The survey could be completed in about 10 minutes. After a given time period, reminders to complete the survey were sent to those recipients who had not yet responded. The total time the survey was made available online for responses was the month July and the first week of August. At the close of the response period, 345 responses were received. The response rate was approximately 27.4%.

Highlights

All Respondents

- Of the students who received a scholarship, 71.7% attended a four- year college or university, 12.46% attended a community college and 8.2% attended both.
- Based on the responses, 48.7% of the recipients already graduated as undergraduates, while 50.15% are still enrolled and pursuing their undergraduate degrees.
- Interestingly, about 20% of the current students are enrolled in a combination of undergraduate and graduate degree programs. For example, a BA/MA combination.
- Of the students who are still pursuing higher education, 23.8% are enrolled in a graduate or professional degree program while another 17.8% have completed a graduate program.

- However, when asked if they had any plans to pursue additional degrees in the future, 74.5% of all respondents indicated that they did plan to pursue other degrees. These ranged from Masters to Doctoral degrees in a variety of areas and disciplines.

Current Students

- Of the current students who responded to the survey, 79% are seeking a Bachelors degree, 19.11% an Associates degree, and 1.91% are enrolled in a certificate program. The majors they are seeking cover a broad range of disciplines.
- When asked how they used the scholarship, 75% of the current students used the scholarship for books and materials; 55% for tuition and fees; 28% for food; and 21% said they used the money for rent.
- But, 86.6% of the students indicated that they also received some financial assistance from their institution.
- On this same theme of finances, while a few current students had accumulated some debt related to their education, 69% of the students had not had to borrow funds at this point in their undergraduate education.
- In terms of academic performance, 86% of the students said their performance was either good (54.78%) or excellent (31.85%). It is clear that the vast majority (89.63%) of these students are doing quite well as undergraduates.
- When asked about their immediate plans after graduating, 49% said they would work, while 38.2% indicated that they would go on to graduate or professional school. Others indicated that they would take a gap year or engage in other activities.

College Graduates

- Of the survey respondents who indicated that they had already graduated, 92.59% had received a Bachelors degree in one of a variety of fields and disciplines.
- More interesting however, was that 76.55% of this group reported having received their respective degrees in 5 years or less. Of this group, almost half (48.15%) finished in 4 years. These excellent graduation rates are well below the norm for the time it takes for undergraduates to complete their degree; especially here in California.
- While undergraduates, this group of students was involved in numerous activities. For example, 23.4% worked with a faculty member conducting research; 56.79% had an internship; and 12.96% studied abroad. This group also worked for pay (78.40%) but also found time to participate in community service (77.16%).

- When asked how they used the funds from the scholarship, 70.3% used it for books and materials; 51% for tuition and fees; rent 27%; and food 25%.
- Similar to the group of current students who responded, these graduates indicated that 88% of them had received financial support from their institutions. Only 10.49% said they had not received financial aid.
- When asked how much they had borrowed to finance their education, 49.38% responded that they had not borrowed any funds while another 25.93% indicated that they had borrowed \$10,000 or less to finance their education. In the aggregate, slightly over 75% of these former students borrowed nothing or relatively little throughout their undergraduate experience. On the other hand, as indicated previously, the majority of this group worked and was active in securing resources.
- This group also self-reported to having done well academically. When asked to indicate their Grade Point Average (GPA), most respondents reported GPAs well above a 3.0. In fact, only 20 respondents indicated that their GPA was less than a 3.0, and of these, all were 2.5 or better. Additionally, when asked to describe their overall academic performance, 38.27% of these graduates said it was “excellent” while 51.23% said it was “good”. An additional 9.88% indicated it was “fair”.
- When asked what they did immediately after graduating, the majority (70%) of this group indicated that they worked while another 15.45% went on to graduate or professional school. The remainder said they did something else while two respondents indicated that they started their own business.
- Since graduating, this group has been active. Nearly 33% served as an officer or on a committee for a local club, organization or place of worship. Another 31.48% said they were members of a professional, academic or business association, while another 12.35% indicated that they had served as a board member of a non-profit organization. Interestingly, seven respondents indicated that they had started a company while another six said they were currently developing a “startup” company.
- Of this group of graduates who went on to attend graduate or professional school, 34.12% began immediately after graduating while another 22.35% began their studies after one year. Finally, a third group of about the same number (22.35%) began their graduate studies within two to three years after graduating.
- When asked about the graduate degrees they were pursuing or already had completed, the respondents provided a broad array of degrees and disciplines. The largest proportion (35%) were either the Masters of Arts (MA) or Science (MS) degrees. However, two had received the MBA, others were pursuing the Ph.D. and three respondents were either

seeking or had completed a Law Degree. Finally, three scholarship recipients were on track to receive a medical degree.

- The schools they attended were varied as well as the subjects and degrees they sought. Some attended local institutions while others attended public and private schools in other parts of the country. For example, UC Davis, UC San Diego, and Sacramento State were some of the local institutions. But there were also a few that went on to UC Berkeley and Harvard.

All Recipients

- The largest number of scholarship recipients who responded to the survey were between the ages of 18-24 years old (68.88%). The next largest group fell in the 25-29 years old group (22.73%). So, nearly 92% of the respondents were between 18 and 29 years of age.
- The group was comprised of 71.33% females and 27% males. The group of recipients born in the U.S. was 47.55% while those born in Mexico comprised 43.71% of the respondents.
- Finally, when asked how much their Cien amigos- IME Becas Scholarship influenced their life plans, over 60% responded that it had influenced their life plans either “a great deal” or “a lot”. So, as modest as the scholarships were, they were still very important to the student recipients and their success.

Some Recipient Comments

“I would like to thank you all for this opportunity and giving me this scholarship. It has helped me pay for my education and get me to where I am today. Thank you very, very much.”

“I can just say thanks from the bottom of my heart.”

“With this scholarship, I was able to continue my studies to attend a four-year college.”

“Receiving the Cien Amigos scholarship helped me immensely during my undergraduate years. My parents worked very hard to help me pay what financial aid did not cover, so it was a huge relief to receive this, and it helped my family a lot. It meant less stress and more focus on graduating.”

“This scholarship gave me so much help when I truly needed it in my undergraduate years. I was beyond blessed to receive money to help me pay my school expenses. I hope many students are able to apply to this scholarship again this year so it can help them with their undergraduate expenses.”

"Very thankful for the experience and the help. It gave me more confidence to really apply myself and continue reaching for newer things at my university and education."

"Thank you Cien Amigos for your support. I am now a Registered Nurse. Thank you for supporting young Latino students who want a better life for their families."

"With the help of Cien Amigos, I was able to have less stress when it comes to paying for college. The community of Cien Amigos is something that you don't find in many places—the support, the constant reminders by other scholars that anything is possible, makes going to college and being my better self, worth it, for them and for society. So, thank you Cien Amigos."

"As a student who is the first in his family to go to college, the Cien Amigos-IME Becas offered me the valuable opportunity to truly engage in college and focus on my classes without worrying so much about my ability to pay for college. Thanks to this, I had the opportunity to study abroad in Oaxaca one summer and engage in ground-breaking research other summers. As I approach my final year of college, I am now looking at my ultimate goal of going to medical school—something that thankfully seems within reach thanks to the opportunity I had to really sit down and focus on my studies."

"Thank you. This was one of the few scholarships I could apply to as an undocumented immigrant that didn't have straight A's. Thank you for your support. It honestly meant a lot."

"The year I received this scholarship I almost dropped out of college because I couldn't afford my tuition. Cien amigos helped me stay in school and earn my degree. I am continuing to pursue higher ed. Thank you Cien Amigos!"

"Cien Amigos and the Mexican Consulate were one of the first organizations who supported me in my educational journey in this country as an immigrant, low-income, first-generation student. I am about to graduate with my MD from Harvard Medical School and am serving as a Lieutenant in the United States Air Force."

"Plain and simple—this scholarship along with countless others allowed me to thrive in college. As an undocumented immigrant, never would I have imagined myself writing policy for a U.S. Senator. I am grateful for this opportunity and the countless amount of people and organizations that decided to invest in me."

"I am grateful for the scholarship I received from Cien Amigos because at the time it was the only place that offered me anything. This made me feel that the work and struggle I had gone through to attend college was appreciated. I would like to thank Cien Amigos for being the first ones to give me a chance."

"I feel very fortunate to have received the scholarships. I took my mom and grandmother to the ceremony. They were both so proud of me."