



High school: CU awards nine future scholarships

Nearly 80 students attended Denver Visit Day

By Whitney Bryen

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A group of Denver high school students came to the University of Colorado Wednesday for a college visit and left with a scholarship.

Nine Overland High School juniors received \$1,500 in scholarship money per year, for four years, after winning the Campus Challenge during CU's annual Denver Area Visit Day - an annual CU event promoting diversity among low-income high school students.

The Aurora students are slated to attend CU in the fall of 2012 and will participate in CU-LEAD Alliance, a student diversity program.

More than 80 underrepresented students from high schools in Denver, Aurora and Jefferson County participated in the event.

During the Campus Challenge, different schools compete with hands-on academic projects in journalism, engineering and design fields.

Denise Villalobos, an Overland High School junior, said the scholarship will give the students hope that they can afford college and achieve their higher-education goals.

"The scholarship definitely motivates us to come here and to further our education after high school," Villalobos said. "For a lot of us, we need help paying for college, so anything will help.

"It helps us believe we can do it if we just put our minds to it."

Vikki Otero, assistant director of CU admissions, said Denver Visit Day is a chance for underrepresented students to get information about admissions and financial aid in a personal setting.

"We didn't get many applicants from these schools in the past," Otero said. "But since we started the campus challenge about six or seven years ago, their applications have gone up."

The students spent the morning learning about financial aid opportunities, the admissions process and CU-LEAD Alliance.

Baylee Hughes, Rangeview Senior High School junior, said diversity programs are an important part of education, as they help underrepresented students connect.

"The LEAD Alliance reminds me of the Diversity Student Alliance at my school," Hughes said. "I definitely would get involved with them if I go to CU."

Some of the high school students, including Hughes, said they were considering CU before their visit, but are much more likely to apply and attend the university after getting more information about the opportunities offered on campus.

Sandra Minoz, Adams City High School junior, said the visit helped to clarify the cost of attending CU and the options for paying those expenses -- a defining factor affecting the future of many of the students in attendance.

"I'm kinda poor so for me it's important to have these opportunities to help me find ways to help me pay for education," Minoz said. "We all need programs like this. We don't have many opportunities like this."



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