

VIU President's Scholarships give students head start

First Nations student Meagan Stewart is one of the recipients of VIU's first ever President's Entrance Scholarships.

Meagan Stewart will start the academic year at Vancouver Island University (VIU) with few financial worries.

That's because the 18-year-old Grade 12 graduate is receiving one of VIU's first ever tuition free entrance scholarships for top high school scholars.

Stewart, a First Nations student from Port Alberni, received a President's Entrance Scholarship valued at approximately \$3,500. The award is available to the top academic student from each Vancouver Island and Powell River high school.

"It's just wonderful and gives her a huge head start," said Meagan's mother, Cindy Stewart. "We're very proud of her achievement."

Stewart, who graduated from Alberni District Secondary, will start VIU's Bachelor of Business Administration program in September at the Nanaimo campus. "It suits me more than any other program I've looked at," she said. "I want to pursue a career in accounting and VIU offers exactly what I'm looking for."

As the top graduate in her school, Stewart accepted VIU's offer of free tuition for her first year. The scholarship is renewable each year during her undergraduate studies as long as Stewart maintains a first class grade point average and takes a full course load.

The entrance scholarship is one of a series of new awards announced by VIU last fall. There are three other categories of President's Scholarships, including six Chancellor Scholarships for Aboriginal students who achieve a minimum of an "A" average in high school.

"Eligible recipients for the Chancellor Scholarships may come from First Nations communities, Friendship Centres and Metis organizations on Vancouver Island (including Powell River)," said Karen Stant of VIU's Financial Aid and Awards office. "The students can be recent graduates or mature students who are coming back to school."

"We hope to spread the word to Aboriginal students that these exciting scholarships are available. They are also renewable each year, up to a maximum of five years if the recipient maintains an 8.0 grade



point average (first class level) and one hundred percent program course load (15 credits in a Bachelor of Arts program) while at VIU.”

The Chancellor Scholarships are named after VIU Chancellor Shawn Atleo, BC’s first Aboriginal University Chancellor who was recently elected as national chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

“VIU is an institution of choice for many Aboriginal learners,” said Stant. “One of our goals is to enhance Aboriginal learner success and offering financial support to deserving students is one way of achieving that.”

Under the new President’s Scholarships Program, eight awards also are available for scholar athletes. Eligible students must be top academic varsity athletes as selected and recruited by the coaching staff in the men’s and women’s volleyball, basketball, soccer, badminton and golf programs.

Another six scholarships are available to the top academic student in each academic faculty who will be continuing their studies at VIU.

“I believe these scholarships will benefit students and the institution,” said VIU President Ralph Nilson. “As VIU continues to grow and evolve, our priority remains directed toward the needs of our students. We anticipate many ‘Presidential Scholars’ in the years to come.”

The development of these prestigious awards represents a significant enhancement to VIU’s current scholarship offerings.

The President’s Scholarships cover tuition only. Additional fees, including student union fees, student activity fees and medical/dental plans must be covered by the student.

For more information, please contact VIU’s Financial Aid and Awards office at (250) 740-6423 or FinancialAidInfo@viu.ca

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