Gifts to the Scholarships Impact Fund are one of the most effective ways to make a difference in the lives of students today. This flexible, immediate-use fund allows the university to boost financial aid packages each year and reduce the amount of debt students carry to afford the opportunity to attend William & Mary.

“My scholarship opened up doors that by myself I couldn’t access, or that my family couldn’t access. It lifted a huge burden off my family’s shoulders. I didn’t have to feel guilty about the expense of school for my family — I could enjoy time with my friends and focus on learning.”

NUHAMI ALEMU ’21
Government and Africana Studies
Alexandria, Virginia
“Scholarships mean opportunity,” says Nuhami Alemu ’21. “Not just the opportunity for an education, but for a good life and a chance to make a difference in the world.”

Nuhami has seen firsthand what it means to pursue opportunity — to pursue an education for the chance of a better life. Growing up in Ethiopia, she always knew it was her parents’ plan to send her and her sister to America for school, in the hopes that an American education would help their daughters create good lives for themselves. The girls arrived after Nuhami finished fifth grade and lived with their grandmother in Alexandria, Virginia.

At first, Nuhami wasn’t sure she liked her new school or this strange new country, but after the first year, she could see a future for herself here and wanted to stay. Her mother moved to America to join them, and Nuhami began thinking about where high school and college might take her.

Neither of her parents had attended college, and the many schools to choose from and the maze of applications seemed daunting. Her sister was starting VCU, and Nuhami considered following her there. But in her junior year of high school, Nuhami received a leadership prize from William & Mary. She decided to apply, unsure she would get in — or if she could afford it.

When she was accepted and found out she had received a scholarship, Nuhami was overjoyed. It wasn’t always easy, though, adjusting both to college life and being in a small town where not many people have a background similar to hers. Her sister helped guide her in some of the social aspects, and she found student organizations, the Africana Living Learning Community and the many resources available on campus to be helpful as she navigated the world of William & Mary.

“I’ve been introduced to a whole new world of people, resources and ideas to explore — without this scholarship, had I gone somewhere else or not gone to college, I wouldn’t have had the same opportunities,” she said. “I’ve learned a lot about myself, too.”

At first, she sometimes felt an internal pressure to excel at everything — to make the most of the opportunity she was given by taking as many classes as possible, participating in many extracurriculars and getting good grades.

Now, though, she’s found her balance, focusing on her passions, finding a place for herself here and thriving. She is double majoring in government and Africana Studies and delved into international development, a topic she particularly enjoys, in a winter seminar on international security and development hosted at William & Mary’s Washington Center. She is on the impact committee of Alma Mater Productions, bringing diverse speakers and performers to campus. She also serves as philanthropy chair for the African Cultural Society, working with the nonprofit ZanaAfrica to provide health education to girls in Kenya. The society shares diverse African cultures by hosting events for the William & Mary community.

Building bridges between people of different cultures is a passion for Nuhami. Over the summer, she was a summer intern at PYXERA Global, a consulting firm that facilitates public, private and community partnerships to tackle the world’s challenges, such as promoting sustainable development, increasing food security and improving access to healthcare in countries around the world. When she graduates, she hopes to return to PYXERA or enter the Peace Corps, working to improve the lives of others in all corners of the globe.

The scholarship support she received is part of why she wants to help others. “My scholarship has given me the gift of education. I’ve seen how it can make a difference for me and those around me,” she says. “I want to open up opportunities so communities here and around the world can have what I’ve had. Scholarships are giving me a better life now and into the future.”

For now, Nuhami is focused on graduation, sad to leave her community here next year but excited for the future.

“I’m excited for graduation, being able to show my family I could do it — but more than that, showing myself. This is for them but it’s also for me,” she says. “I’m really proud of where I’ve come from, my background and my family, and I’m proud of how far I’ve come.”

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SCHOLARSHIPS
AFFORD
OPPORTUNITIES

To pursue passion without burden
To empower the best and brightest from any background
To ensure great minds meet
To compete for exceptional talent
To build a vibrant community of diverse perspectives
To fuel our legacy of leadership

MAYA KIM ’21
Biology
Rockville, Maryland
Thank you so much for your generosity. My family doesn’t have a lot, and I have two younger brothers, 18 and 16, who are preparing for college. My scholarships help me and my parents worry less about how to pay for school, and I can focus on my research lab, my sorority and even study abroad.*

JASON VARGAS-ORTEGA ’20
History and International Studies
Alexandria, Virginia
Thank you so much for your generosity and support. This scholarship means so much to me and my family and enables me to continue my studies next year at William & Mary. As a first-generation student, it is an honor to receive this scholarship and be able to further my life’s pursuits.*

CHRISTOPHER SHORT ’20
Computer Science
Toano, Virginia
As a computer science major and a student-athlete, there’s a lot on my plate, so I am grateful for the support that scholarships provide. Thank you for your generosity, which means I can concentrate on my classes and enjoy my time on the track team this year, knowing I’ll start my life after college on better footing.*

JENNA KITTS ’21
Middle Eastern Studies
Alexandria, Virginia
William & Mary was always my dream school. Being here has been challenging, enriching and rewarding – and it’s all possible through your support. My scholarship enables me to pursue my academic interests, opens up the world for me and gives me a campus community that feels like a family. Thank you!*

SCHOLARSHIPS IMPACT FUND
BY THE NUMBERS

THROUGH FOR THE BOLD, WE HAVE RAISED $128 MILLION OF THE $225 MILLION GOAL FOR UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS, AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2019

$128M
$10,000
$1.1M
$168K

$25
1,933
$128M

84.5%
15.5%
4.21
76%

ENROLLED AS FRESHMEN
TRANSFERRED FROM COMMUNITY COLLEGE OR ANOTHER FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION
AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL GPA OF ENROLLING FRESHMEN*
RANKED IN THE TOP 15% OF THEIR CLASS*”

$10,000

STUDENTS RECEIVING SUPPORT FROM THE SCHOLARSHIPS IMPACT FUND IN THE 2019-2020 ACADEMIC YEAR

103

MORE THAN

$1.1M

WAS RAISED IN FISCAL YEAR 2019 TO AFFORD OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDENTS, NEARLY DOUBLING THE AMOUNTRaised in FISCAL YEAR 2018

$10,000

WAS THE MEDIAN AWARD PROVIDED TO RECIPIENTS

*Consistent with averages for all incoming students.

This year through the scholarships impact fund

$1.1M

$10,000

1,933

43.7%
15.5%
4.21
76%

FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS
PELL GRANT ELIGIBLE
TOTAL DONORS IN FY19
AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL GPA OF ENROLLING FRESHMEN*
Gifts of all sizes to the Scholarships Impact Fund are welcome and all donors will receive special updates on student recipients, including an annual Scholarships Impact Fund report highlighting the progress of our fundraising efforts.

Donors who have given $2,000 or more to the Scholarships Impact Fund will be invited to meet some of William & Mary’s remarkable scholarship recipients at Homecoming & Reunion Weekend.

For more information about scholarships, please contact:

Suzie Armstrong
Senior Director of Development for Scholarships and Special Projects at smarmstrong@wm.edu