

## Jack Kent Cooke Graduate Scholarship

[www.jackkentcookefoundation.org](http://www.jackkentcookefoundation.org)

**Deadline:** national deadline: March 14, 2008; WPI campus deadline: February 15, 2008

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### Fields of Study

Any subject.

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### Description

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation offers three scholarship programs: 1) Young Scholars Program for high school students; 2) Undergraduate Transfer Scholarships for community college graduates to earn four-year degrees; and 3) Graduate Scholarships for graduates of any U.S. university to pursue further study. These scholarships embody the Foundation's mission to help young people of exceptional promise reach their potential through education.

To be eligible for any of these Jack Kent Cooke Scholarships, students must demonstrate UNMET financial need. An implicit goal of the Foundation in making financial need a requirement is that the Jack Kent Cooke Scholarships will enable students to get an education that they could not otherwise afford, or to do so debt free. According to the Foundation, the scholarship is "not only to give students greater opportunities to further their education, but to give them freedom. Without the burden of graduate school debt, these Scholars will be free to pursue their artistic passions, to serve humankind through public service or medical research—to answer their highest calling."

The Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship may be held at WPI or any other four-year institution, but students who wish to apply for it must be nominated by the community college they attended. From 2004-05 onward, the undergraduate scholarship has focused exclusively on community college transfer students. Undergraduate Transfer Scholars automatically become semi-finalists in the Graduate Scholarship program.

The rest of this information sheet is devoted to the Graduate Scholarship. The Graduate Program is a national competition accepting nominations from universities across the U.S. To be considered students must be nominated by their colleges. Approximately 30 Graduate Scholarships are awarded each year, valued at up to \$50,000 a year for up to six years. Awards have varied from \$5,000 to \$50,000 (at the upper end mostly for medical school). The awards are portable, and may be used at any accredited university in the U.S. or abroad to pursue any graduate degree or any professional degree, including medicine, law, or business. Each award will be renewable annually as long as the student maintains high academic performance, exhibits good conduct, and makes significant progress toward a degree. Scholars are also required to attend a weekend event in August in Washington, D.C.

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## Criteria for Selection

To be eligible to apply, a student must 1) be a graduating senior or have graduated within the last five years; 2) have a bachelor's degree by the start of the fall semester; 3) have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher; 4) be nominated by WPI; 5) have unmet financial need; 6) not previously have been nominated for this scholarship; and 7) plan to attend a full-time graduate or professional degree program at an accredited university in fall 2008. This must be the first graduate degree the candidate has ever pursued.

Selection criteria for the Graduate Scholarship are academic achievement (or artistic achievement), financial need, a will to succeed, leadership and public service, critical-thinking ability, and an appreciation of and participation in the humanities and arts. The two main criteria are academic achievement and financial need, which are weighted at approximately 35% each. Previous grades are a significant indicator of academic achievement, and nearly all Cooke scholars have GPAs in the range of 3.8 to 4.0. Students may demonstrate a will to succeed by overcoming obstacles or by showing a real drive to excel. The Cooke Foundation describes the Scholars as "a special, industrious group of students, most of whom have found the time to help others while also distinguishing themselves in the classroom." Involvement in the humanities and arts is also important, and might be exemplified by a love of music or art, or appreciation for literature.

Applicants must demonstrate UNMET financial need for graduate school. To measure financial need, applicants must present information about the level of financial aid they received while in college, as well as personal and parental resources. Even applicants who are financially independent must submit the parental information figures to determine financial need.

Graduate Scholarships may be awarded to citizens of any nation who are graduates of universities in the U.S., and there are no age limits or restrictions.

The competition is intense: the Foundation awards approximately 30 graduate scholarships annually chosen from more than 1,200 students nominated by colleges and universities nationwide. Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to read the profiles of Scholars on the Jack Kent Cooke website to see how previous winners have met the selection criteria.

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## Application Procedure

Applicants for the Graduate Scholarship must be endorsed by WPI. Each university in the United States may nominate **two** students for the Graduate Scholarship. Nominees may be graduating seniors or alumni up to five years after graduation. Nominees must be about to begin graduate school at the time of nomination.

The application forms on the Jack Kent Cooke website include a form with brief answers to questions, a transcript, resumé/curriculum vitae, financial aid forms, letters of recommendation, and a narrative autobiography commenting on leadership roles, and family, educational, philosophical, or other life experiences that have influenced the applicant's achievements and career decision. It should also include professional and civic activities that are important to the applicant, keeping in mind the selection criteria.

The **preliminary deadline** to be considered for nomination by WPI is February 15. Please submit the *complete* application (available from the [Jack Kent Cooke website](#)) to the WPI Cooke representative, Professor Peter Hansen, Department of Humanities and Arts, WPI, 100 Institute Road, Worcester, MA 01609. (Use this address ONLY if you are a WPI student or alumnus; students at other universities *must* contact their own institutional representative.) The Cooke competition is moving to an online application this year—check this infosheet again for more information about electronic submission. The application materials must be received for nomination by February 15.

- **Nominee Information and Application Form** – fully completed and signed by applicant
- **Copy of Acceptance Letter from Graduate School** – (if available at the time of application for nomination) including details of any financial awards. The original letter is not required.
- **Financial Information Forms** – signed by applicant and both parents; include copies of requested attachments
- **Official Transcript(s)** – for all undergraduate coursework
- **Two Letters of Recommendation**

WPI nominees will be notified shortly after the campus deadline and will submit their final application online. Nominees will be required to provide to the Cooke Foundation a copy of any graduate school financial award letters and information on any other grants as they are received. The electronic applications will be released to the Foundation to meet the national deadline by March 14. The deadline occurs at this time of year so that the Foundation will be able to see the amount of any financial aid that the student has received from other sources when it makes a decision on an award.

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### **Additional Information**

A businessman, philanthropist, and patron of the arts, Jack Kent Cooke was a well-rounded person who dropped out of high school despite a college scholarship which he could not take because he had to support his family. He made several fortunes in the US, eventually owning media companies, a portfolio of real estate, and sports franchises in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. He left the majority of his estate to the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, which has assets of upwards of \$500 million.

Previous Jack Kent Cooke Scholars have studied various academic disciplines including aerospace engineering, archeology, public policy, medicine, public health, philosophy, religion, music, psychology, nursing, law, journalism, veterinary medicine, and the fine and performing arts. Eligibility allows for applications up to five years after graduation in recognition that many students go to business school only after working for several years. Traditional students as well as nontraditional students who have returned to college later in life are welcome to apply. The academic standard expected is very high, but to be selected a Jack Kent Cooke Scholar “individuals had to show not only exceptional academic ability, but also a strong will to succeed and other qualities such as demonstrated critical thinking, a sense of service, a love of the arts or humanities. Each of these attributes was important to Mr. Cooke.”

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