



The Key Connection

Puget Sound Association of Phi Beta Kappa (PSA-PBK)

Fall Newsletter 2025

www.psa-pbk.org

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President's Message by Dennis Yamashita

The days and nights are harmonizing as we experience the twice annual equinox. For me it is a time to bring balance to my own life. It is a chance to remind myself the importance of not only doing things I'm comfortable doing but also trying out things which are out of my "usual" range of activities. I've learned that experiencing a bit of discomfort often brings a new perspective and allows me to think differently. Often this brings a new perspective and personal growth. Recently we've all experienced heightened disagreements and anger seemingly due to different sides refusing to see value to alternative ways of thinking. Phi Beta Kappa embraces and values all perspectives and encourages open discussion without fear. Please keep that in mind as we experience the beautiful changes of the seasons and the vitality of life.

PSA-PBK continues to actively engage our membership through many programs, events and activities throughout the year. It brings me enormous pleasure meeting new program participants and to see them become increasingly engaged with us. Our Young Phi Bete program continues to thrive through multiple monthly events geared specifically towards our younger members. Chhy Chhy Yeak, our YPB leader who has led this group, is sadly moving to the Bay Area to start her career in studying dentistry. Thank you Chhy Chhy for bringing the energy, excitement and engagement to this new cohort of PSA-PBK. This year's scholarship programs have attracted over 70 applications from UW and UPS, and awarded almost \$18,000. The Board voted to include a \$1,000 cash award to the Humanities Award winner for the first time, honoring the importance of the humanities in society.

Since being elected president three years ago, with the active engagement of our Board or Trustees, we have successfully increased program and event offerings to more than one a month as well as seen the started and witnessed the growth of the Young Phi Bete program that is the envy of other PBK Associations.

Lastly, please register for our exciting 2025 Fall Luncheon on October 22th at the Seattle Yacht Club.

*Rhododendron blooms at the
Bellevue Botanical Gardens*

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Finances and Fund Development By Howard Johnson, Treasurer

Over the past several years, PSA-PBK has depended in large part on investment returns to support its annual allocation of scholarship awards. These scholarship awards in 2019-20 (at the beginning of COVID) totaled \$15,900 with approximately 75% of the scholarship distribution supported by investment earnings from our \$390,000 endowment fund and the remainder depending on member contributions.

Scholarship awards in that first COVID year of 2019-20 totaled \$15,900 and consisted of three regular undergraduate scholarships, one Lupton undergraduate scholarship, and one graduate scholarship. In the years following, we were unable to maintain this number of scholarship awards and our scholarship allocation in 2023-24 had to be reduced to just under \$10,000.

The inability to maintain our full scholarship allocation during this immediate post-COVOD time is best seen in the following chart which shows our level of assets required to maintain a full set of scholarship awards and the actual asset balance experienced over these past four years.

	Required Asset Level	Actual Asset Balance	Difference	Actual as Multiple of Required
2021-22	343,000	315,376	-27,624	0.919
2022-23	350,200	335,218	-14,982	0.957
2023-24	357,500	377,276	19,776	1.055
2024-25	365,000	400,538	35,538	1.097

Notice that in the two immediate fiscal years following COVID, we fell short of the asset level required to maintain our full annual scholarship allocation.* In 2021-22, you can see that we ended the year \$27,624 below the required asset level and it is only in these last two years that our capacity to deliver a full set of scholarships has been restored. The asset balance of \$400,538 in this most recent 2024-25 fiscal year puts us 9.7% over the required asset level and should provide ample cushion for the immediate future of our scholarship program even if the overall economy suffers a bit in the year ahead.

The exact allocation of scholarship awards in the current 2025-26 budget is as follows:

3 Regular Undergraduate (at \$3,200 each)	\$9,600
1 Lupton Undergraduate	\$4,000
1 Stiefel Graduate	\$5,000
Total	\$18,600

*Current planning calls for this annual scholarship allocation to increase in accordance with the overall inflation in education cost. The \$18,600 budgeted for the current 2025-26 fiscal year represents an increase of \$2,700 over the \$15,900 total in 2019-20 and this represents an annual inflationary increase in scholarship awards of just over 2.5% per year over the 6-year period.

Member Scholarship Contributions Still Critical to PSA-PBK

The annual financial review by a board-appointed committee is scheduled to be completed within the coming month and their report on the status of our financial assets at the conclusion of the 2024-25 fiscal year will be useful in confirming our ability to deliver a full slate of scholarship awards in the current 2025-26 year. It will also be helpful in determining the timing of our next development campaign where-in members will be given a special opportunity to contribute to the scholarship program. As mentioned earlier in this newsletter, about 75% of our scholarship monies have traditionally come from investment gains with the remaining 25% being dependent on member contributions. The need for these member contributions will be communicated as we move forward, and any special development program will likely involve a generous matching grant to encourage contributions. Contributions to our scholarship fund can of course be made on the website (or by simply mailing a check) at any time; however, we do anticipate that a more focused development effort will be needed later in this 2025-26 fiscal year. Stay tuned and be ready next spring to help us with a scholarship program designed to further both undergraduate and graduate studies here in the Puget Sound area.

Ways to Make Contribution Now:

Website: <https://www.psa-pbk.org/payments-and-donations>

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 84223 Seattle, WA 98124

Young Phi Bete (YPB) Program

The Young Phi Bete group continues to thrive as the young members of Phi Beta Kappa gather together to connect in various events. In just these past 8 months, this group has met up at least 14 times! Events this year included food bank volunteering, hiking, kayaking, ice skating, trivia night, potluck, picnic, and casual lunch and dinners. The latest group outing was painting pottery at a cafe. The Young Phi Betes surely know how to have fun together attending events specific to the younger members! While there are many regulars that show up, new faces join in every so often, eventually becoming regulars with all these events!



This group is led by Chhy Chhy Yeak, Conor O'Bryon, and Clare McCarthy, Young Phi Betes who are passionate about encouraging and leading group events to connect those who seek friendships and want to try new things together. From acting out fun phrases in a card game to watching the sunset on a member's downtown high-rise rooftop and learning how to fall in bouldering, this group has formed many cherished memories over the past year. Chhy Chhy Yeak, who first joined the Young Phi Betes at the annual Key Connections event in 2023, was recruited as a leader by President Dennis Yamashita, who saw her drive in bringing this community together. Since then, she has worked hard in planning, organizing, and attending all these events. While she has had a great time with the Young Phi Betes group, she will be stepping down from the leadership position as she leaves for dental school in San Francisco. She is extremely proud of how much the group has grown and knows that it will thrive in the hands of Conor and Clare, who will continue the enriching events in the future. Chhy Chhy is forever grateful for this experience and the friendships she has built over the years. While she is excited for her next journey, she knows that she will always have a group to go back to when she returns home.

PSA-PBK Events and Programs

On May 15th we had our **Spring luncheon** at the Seattle Yacht Club. Our speaker was Margaret O'Mara, American History Professor at the University of Washington.

This summer we enjoyed visiting beautiful parks in the Puget Sound region. On May 24th we had a guided tour of the Bellevue Botanical Gardens. The azaleas and rhododendrons were in full bloom, especially in the Japanese garden section.

On June 21st we toured the Streissguth Gardens on Capitol Hill in Seattle. The current caretakers were our tour guides and they shared information about the history of the gardens. The gardens were founded by Dan and Ann Streissguth, former UW Professors. Dan was a lifelong member and donor of PSA-PBK.

On August 10th we had a bring your own picnic at Salmon Bay Park in Seattle. We enjoyed the park and enjoyed visiting with other Phi Beta Kappa members for a mid-summer gathering.

On September 20th we will have a walking tour of downtown Issaquah, learn about their history as a coal mining and logging area, and visit the famous giant Troll. Included is the opportunity to visit the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery and have a no-host lunch at a local restaurant.



Streissguth Gardens in bloom



Theatre in the round at The Union Arts Center

Our Fall luncheon will be held at 11:45 a.m. on Wednesday, October 22, 2025, at the Seattle Yacht Club. Our featured speaker will be Elisabeth Farwell-Moreland, Interim Artistic Director at the Unions Arts Center in Seattle. Earlier this year A Contemporary Theatre (ACT) and Seattle Shakespeare Company merged. All of their productions will now be held in The Union Arts Center building in downtown Seattle (formerly known as ACT). The title of her talk will be: A New Beginning: The future of ACT Contemporary Theatre and Seattle Shakespeare Company. This presentation will focus on the merger of these two beloved Seattle theatres - why they chose to merge, and the artistic vision for the future as well as a general overview of the financial challenges faced by arts theatre organizations since COVID. For full information and registration visit www.psa-pbk.org/events. **All luncheon registrations and payments must be received by October 14, 2025.**

If you have any suggestions for events, please contact Linda Willenberg at willenberglinda@gmail.com.

2024-2025 Scholarships

PSA-PBK's scholarship programs are the single largest expenditure the organization makes each year. In 2025, we awarded near \$18,000, thanks in large part to our generous member donations as well as our strict financial management and prudent investments. Our scholarship program is one the largest among 50 PBK associations in the United States.

Through the able leadership of committee retiring chair Norm Arkans, the marketing and application process was thoroughly reviewed and overhauled to get the scholarship availability more widely distributed as well as the desire to accept a larger number of applications from candidates. Changes included meeting with the UW Financial Grant Department's agreement to include our scholarships receive more visibility, significantly increased application efficiency by converting from paper to 100% online process. The results have yielded the largest number of applications in the history of our program with 74 total applications received.

Academic Year 2024-25 Selected Scholarship Recipients

The Scholarship Committee reviewed this year's applications for the five scholarships awarded by the Association: the Ernest R. Stiefel Graduate Award, the Myra Lupton Scholarship for First-generations students, and the three Undergraduate scholarships. The Committee received four (4) applications for the Stiefel award, thirty (30) for the Lupton, and forty (40) for the Undergraduate scholarships. Each committee member rated the applications, which produced a preliminary ranked-order group of finalists. The finalists were discussed by the committee and the following awardees were selected:

Stiefel Graduate Award

The \$4,500 award is given to a graduate or professional student who is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and who will attend or is attending graduate or professional school at either the University of Puget Sound or the University of Washington. Applicants were evaluated on the basis of financial need; social utility of post-university plans and academic success in the face of significant personal adversity, economic disadvantage or disability.

Grace Swanson is working toward her Master's degree in Social Work at the University of Washington. Her graduate work in Social Work will enhance her skills, abilities and make her an even more valuable resource for families and children in crisis.

Lupton Scholarship for First-generation Students

The \$3,500 scholarship is given to a current first-generation student at the University of Puget Sound or University of Washington. First-generation is defined as having parents or guardians who have not received an associate or bachelor degree. Recipients must be enrolled as an undergraduate during the 2025-2026 academic year, have a minimum 3.4 GPA, and be eligible for financial aid based on FAFSA.

Katelyn Hoang is a senior at the University of Washington majoring in Human Centered Design and Engineering (HCDE). HCDE is an interdisciplinary program that blends design, psychology and data science to improve systems and technologies for diverse communities. Ms. Hoang is from an immigrant family with no role models for navigating the higher education environment. Her goal is to become a user experience designer to create inclusive, user-centric technology solutions that lead to meaningful change across a variety of settings.

Undergraduate Scholarships

Three (3) undergraduate scholarships of \$3,000 each are awarded to current students at the University of Washington and the University of Puget Sound who will be enrolled as undergraduates during the 2025-2026 academic year, have at least a minimum 3.80 GPA, and are eligible for financial aid based on FAFSA.

Alyssa Chung is a freshman at the University of Puget Sound with a 4.0 GPA who overcame years of indoctrination-like schooling to emerge as a thoroughly inquisitive student interested in cognitive science, philosophy and neuroscience. She plans to double-major in Science, Technology, Health and Society and Neurophilosophy, along with a minor in Consciousness, Creativity and Meaning.

Kailey Marie Lawless is a junior at the University of Washington, Tacoma majoring in Social Welfare and Criminal Justice, with a 3.98 GPA. She is a single mother with two children. She plans to attend law school to deepen her impact as an advocate in her community.

Abigail Longbottom is a senior at the University of Puget Sound majoring in Law & Society in Politics and Government, with a minor in Crime, Law, and Justice Studies. She has a 4.0 GPA. She was raised in a small, rural town in Washington and grew up a member of the LGBTQ+ community. Her goal is eventually to become a human rights attorney.

Pathfinders Award: Linda Willenberg

Each year the Puget Sound Association of Phi Beta Kappa honors individuals, organizations, or institutions with our Pathfinder Award. It honors individuals or organizations in the Puget Sound region who encourage others to seek new worlds to discover, pathways to explore, and untouched destinations to reach. Nominations now open: If you would like to nominate an individual, organization or institution for our Pathfinder Award please submit a nomination form. [Pathfinder Award Nomination Form | Puget Sound Association of Phi Beta Kappa](#)

The Puget Sound Association of Phi Beta Kappa gratefully acknowledges the following individuals for their generosity during the period October 1, 2024 — September 15, 2025*

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Mike Lonergan
Craig Miller

Non-member donors

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*This list was accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of publication. Please contact us with your questions: pugetsoundpbk@gmail.com

Your PSA-PBK Board and Committee Members

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Conor O'Bryon, Joan Peterson, Marcie Stone, Chhy Chhy Yeak, Barbee Tucker-Pigott



PAYMENT COUPON

DUES

_____ \$40 Regular
_____ \$75 Sustaining
_____ \$125 Patron
_____ \$250 Key

DONATIONS

\$_____ Scholarship fund
\$_____ Stiefel Graduate Award
\$_____ Lupton Scholarship

FALL LUNCHEON REGISTRATION:

Oct 22, Seattle Yacht Club - \$60 per person

Number of persons: _____ Total Cost: _____

Menu choices: Lemon-Herb Chicken, Butternut
Squash Ravioli (vegetarian), Polenta cakes with
vegetables (vegan)

Names of attendees and their menu choices:

All luncheon registrations and payments must be received by October 14, 2025.

TOTAL PAYMENT ENCLOSED: \$ _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO

**PSA-PBK
PO BOX 84223
SEATTLE, WA 98124**

Or pay via credit card: <https://www.psa-pbk.org/payments-and-donations>

Name _____

Address _____

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Please keep in touch!

Please let us know if you have recently moved or changed your email address or telephone number. You can send your updated information to pugetsoundpbk@gmail.com.

We would like to hear from you! Share with us any topic or event suggestions and ideas to make PSA-PBK more relevant to you. Please email Dennis Yamashita at president@psa-pbk.org.

*****0923DYFINAL

Drumheller fountain is the
glory of the UW campus
on a sunny spring day.



Join us at our next event! Visit [https://www.psa-pbk.org /events](https://www.psa-pbk.org/events)

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