

2017 Ava Doner Undergraduate \$10,000 Scholarship Winner: Vanessa Faul



Vanessa Faul (2017 WTS-LA Ava Doner Undergraduate Scholarship Recipient), 2017

Being born in Germany and moving to Los Angeles when she was 16 years old helped shape Cal State Northridge urban studies major Vanessa Faul. On the Dean's List since 2013 (when she entered the school), she maintains a 3.8 GPA (a 3.97 in her major) with an extremely rigorous course load. She has also won several scholarships and academic honors. And the professor that she worked for as a research assistant described her as "an extremely focused student with great potential." The professor also noted that, "she goes beyond what the course requires in order to complete the projects up to her own standards. In addition to her outstanding academic qualities, she is a very agreeable and modest person." This description could equally apply to a young Ava Doner. But Vanessa Faul honors her even further.

Faul felt very isolated when she arrived in Los Angeles. In her native Germany, she went everywhere by public transportation or bicycle. When she arrived here, she saw a car-based culture that presented a very real, visceral challenge. "Distance became my worst enemy and made me feel as though the city I lived in was somehow disconnected. And this disconnect made me realize how much transportation had influenced my freedom without me ever being aware of it." She learned quickly, and set her sights on making permanent change. She looks to WTS-LA to help facilitate that change through her studies and the award of the 2017 Ava Doner Undergraduate Scholarship for \$10,000. "I believe I am worthy of receiving this scholarship because of my hard work. I am from another country, picked up the language, and I excel among my peers who have been living here all their lives...This scholarship would bring me one step closer to my dream of creating something beneficial for not only our society, but the Earth as well."