

# **New Scholarship Established - Wale and Audrey Elegbede Community Engagement and Social Justice Scholarship at University of Wisconsin La Crosse**

Rochester, Minnesota, January 16, 2021

Industry experts indicate some of the factors of lower enrollment rates for minorities are due to differences in access to financial resources and generational wealth. For example, students of color are less likely to receive merit based institutional grants than white students and according to financial guru, [Mark Kantrowitz](#), publisher of Fastweb.com and FinAid.org, white students receive more than 72 percent of all institutional merit-based scholarship and funding, even though they represent less than 62 percent of the student population ([Colorlines, 2011](#)). The report noted that private scholarship programs tend to perpetuate historical inequities in the distribution of scholarships by race, however as the report noted, it was not due to deliberate discrimination, but rather natural result of the personal interests of the scholarship sponsors. The situation is more dire for international students and almost nonexistence for international students from Africa as noted by [Anayat Durrani](#), US News Education Contributor who mentioned, “finding scholarships for international students may seem next to impossible, but they do exist”.

[UWL Distinguished Alumni, Sulaimon Adewale \(“Wale”\) Elegbede](#), attended the University of Wisconsin La Crosse (UWL) but was not eligible for student loans or financial aid as an undergraduate international student from Nigeria which created enormous hardship. “I struggled financially with the high international tuition fees, which was also much higher than other students. One of my low points was starving, searching for food in the kitchen and couldn’t even find a single grain of rice! My uncle in Texas had to UPS food.” Wale noted.

The Wale and Audrey Community Engagement and Social Justice Scholarship is established by UWL Distinguished Alumni, [TED Talk Speaker](#), Healthcare Administrative Leader and President of Rochester Branch NAACP, Sulaimon Adewale Elegbede, (“Wale”) and his wife, Dr. Audrey Elegbede, former UWL professor of Ethnic and Racial Studies.

Fueled by the belief in the power of human connections and ideas, and that connections must be made to improve our world by empowering people, communities, organizations, and governments to take strong active steps towards positive community engagement and eliminating discrimination, islamophobia, and racism, this scholarship is meant to support an international student from Africa, someone of African descent or an individual of an ethnic minority, individuals who traditionally have limited access to scholarships at UWL. Application deadline for Spring 2021 semester is February 15<sup>th</sup> 2021.

## **Eligibility Criteria**

1. Priority for the recipient to be an international student from Africa; otherwise, an individual of ethnic minority ( African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Pacific Islander American, and Hispanic American students) or persons of African descent.
2. Recipient must have demonstrated commitment to community engagement and social justice issues. They should be involved and have a positive impact on building community on campus, or in their home or La Crosse community.
3. Recipient must be in good academic standing with above-average grade point average; [2.75)
4. Recipient may be a freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, or graduate student
5. Financial need must be considered.
6. Statement of Financial Need must be submitted with the application.

7. \$1000 award to deserving student enrolled at UWL.

### **Elegbede Scholarship Supplemental Questions**

1. Applicants will be required to submit an essay describing what they are doing to address racism, Islamophobia and discrimination in their community, including how they are working towards bringing different groups together for the common good.
2. Showing up, having positive energy, and putting in needed effort is critical in anything you do in life. Applicants should watch Wale Elegbede's TED Talk "[It takes a community to eradicate hate](#)", share their reflection in the essay and new ways they plan to show up in the fight against discrimination while bringing different groups of people together.

### **How to Apply for Scholarship**

1. Visit <https://uwlax.academicworks.com/donors/wale-and-audrey-elegbede>
2. Application deadline is 2/15/2021.

### **About Wale Elegbede**

Wale Elegbede is a transformative strategist who believes good, ethical leaders have a responsibility to bring positive change to their communities, organizations and families. He serves as director of strategy management services in healthcare and develops and executes strategy, project and program management, and business analysis. Elegbede is a Rada Distinguished Alumni of the University of Wisconsin La-Crosse, Human Rights Commissioner of Olmsted County, President of Rochester Branch NAACP and Adjunct Instructor of Graduate Project Management at Viterbo University. He regularly speaks on leadership, community and social justice issues.

### **Media Contacts:**

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