



## Surprising Way To Pay For College

(NAPSA)—Last fall, Nikki Boon knew she wasn't able to afford the college of her dreams. Despite achieving grades that would have gotten her into a top-tier school, Boon put her dreams of music education at an elite school on hold and enrolled locally.

These days, students like Boon aren't alone. While college is the key to opportunity and higher salaries for many, the cost of higher education can get in the way. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, tuition is increasing at an average rate of 5 percent annually.

Fortunately, families can find some new and interesting ways to pay for college. Some basics include applying for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) or a Pell Grant at [www2.ed.gov](http://www2.ed.gov). However, some students are turning to scholarship contests to help ease the burden of student debt and make their hopes of higher education a reality.

"Last year, I was a hostess in my hometown struggling to pay for college," said Boon, who entered the Dr Pepper Million Dollar Tuition Giveaway by submitting a one-minute video explaining why she needed a scholarship. Selected as a finalist, Boon competed during halftime of the SEC championship game in Atlanta and won a \$123,000 scholarship from the iconic soda brand.



**Scholarship recipient Nikki Boon, following her big win.**

"Dr Pepper made my dreams come true," said Boon. "After winning, I was able to attend a top-tier school and follow my dreams of singing. Since then, I signed a record deal and just released my first single—'Ain't No Barbie Doll'—on iTunes."

Today, students across the country have more scholarship options, thanks to many major companies like Dr Pepper, which are continuing to invest in helping students achieve their goals. With its growing success, Dr Pepper decided to expand this year's Million Dollar Tuition Giveaway with additional grand-prize winners, and will be giving away more than 100 scholarships.

To enter, students should submit a one-minute video explaining why they need tuition help at [www.DrPepper.com](http://www.DrPepper.com) by December 31.