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NEIGHBORS

Mesa Community College students named to All-Arizona Academic Team

3 from Mesa, 1 from Tempe



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MESA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The 2024 MCC All-Arizona honorees from left are Matthew Skabelund, Charlotte Fornasiero, Isabel Rei Zann Wee and Jakobe Stevens.

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Four academically exceptional Mesa Community College students — Mesa residents Charlotte Fornasiero, Matthew Skabelund, and Jakobe Stevens and Tempe resident Isabel Rei Zann Wee — were recognized for their outstanding accomplishments and brilliant leadership at the 2024 All-Arizona Academic Team Recognition Ceremony Feb. 28 at the Doubletree Hilton in Tempe.

“MCC is extremely proud to honor these four remarkably talented students,” MCC Interim President Dr. Kimberly Britt said in a release. “They are each distinguished in their fields of study and poised to attain great success in their chosen careers and also impact their communities in powerful ways.”

All-Arizona honorees demonstrate academic excellence and intellectual tenacity combined with leadership and service that expand their

education beyond the classroom to benefit their communities and society. Each is working toward an associate's degree, maintains a GPA of 3.5 or higher (4.0 scale) and is involved in campus and community volunteer activities.

Organizations such as Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society of two-year colleges and academic programs, the American Association of Community Colleges, Arizona Community Colleges, the Arizona Board of Regents and Follett Higher Education Group help these students reach their educational goals by awarding scholarships and issuing tuition waivers for Arizona's three state universities: ASU, Northern Arizona University and University of Arizona.

Fornasiero, who is majoring in liberal arts and studies/general studies at the Southern and Dobson Campus, plans to transfer to ASU for a bachelor's degree in a biology-related field such as natural resource management/wildlife conservation followed by a master's degree. Her career goal is to work in interpretive naturalism preferably for organizations like the National Forest Service.

Majoring in health-related professions at the Red Mountain Campus, Skabelund is to transfer to ASU where he plans to major in kinesiology — in anticipation of entering a physical therapy program — for a bachelor's degree and ultimately a clinical doctorate in physical therapy.



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Stevens is majoring in biological and biomedical sciences, also at the Red Mountain Campus, and is to transfer to ASU for a bachelor's degree in neurobiology, physiology and behavior and a master's degree in biological sciences. His career goal is to enter the workforce in the field of genetic counseling and later to become a naturopathic doctor in his own health and wellness center that focuses on medicine holistically and naturally.

Majoring in engineering at the Southern and Dobson Campus, Wee, an international student from Singapore, is to transfer to UArizona for a bachelor's degree in engineering. She plans a career in industrial engineering.

All-Arizona Academic Teams are judged in three rounds. First-round judges consist of local businesses and civic, education and government leaders. The second- and third-round judging occurs in Washington, D.C. by representatives from federal agencies and national education associations. Scores from the national competition determine each state team's rankings. First-team members each receive a \$1,000 scholarship, second-team members are each awarded a \$750 scholarship and third-team members each get a \$500 scholarship from their respective community college. Team rankings are anticipated later this spring.

All-Arizona Academic Team members are also eligible to be selected as one of 20 named to the All-USA Community College Academic Team, receiving an additional \$5,000 scholarship, medallion, obelisk and certificate during the American Association of Community Colleges annual convention scheduled April 5-9 in Louisville, Kentucky.

The event Feb. 28 honoring 77 students from 19 community colleges across Arizona was also livestreamed on mesacc.edu/live. Event emcee was Ian Schwartz, morning meteorologist and reporter for KPHO-TV CBS 5 and KTVK-TV 3/AZFamily.com. Keynote speaker was Cordero Holmes, who spent more than 10 years in prison prior to becoming a 2022 All-Arizona Academic Team honoree and a recipient of a Coca-Cola Academic Team scholarship as a student at Rio Salado College. He is a 2023 recipient of the Martin Luther King Jr. Living the Dream award presented by the City of Phoenix and is currently enrolled at Barrett, The Honors College at Arizona State University where he will graduate this year.

To learn more about the All-Arizona program, go to azregents.edu/programs/all-arizona-academic-team (https://azregents.edu/programs/all-arizona-academic-team).

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