



Awarded students at the 2024 All-Arizona Academic Team Recognition Ceremony, featuring Mesa Community College students faculty and staff. Front row (Left to Right): Jakobe Stevens, Isabel Rei Zann Wee, Charlotte Fornasiero, Puvana Ganesan. Back row (Left to Right): Dennis Mitchell, Kimberly Britt, Matthew Skabelund, Jeannetta L. Hollins, and Nadine Arroyo Rodriguez. (Photo courtesy of MCC)

### NEWS

## **All-Arizona Academic Team Recognition Ceremony awards four Mesa Community College students**

Diego Esquivel 03/07/2024

Four Mesa Community College students were awarded at the All-Arizona Academic Team Recognition Ceremony on Feb. 28 for individual academic accomplishments.

77 students from 19 different community colleges were acknowledged at this year's event. Institutes such as Phi Theta Kappa, the American Association of Community Colleges, Arizona Community Colleges, the Arizona Board of Regents and the Follett Higher Education Group helped

these students reach educational goals.

These institutes awarded students with scholarships and issued tuition waivers for Arizona State University, University of Arizona and Northern Arizona University.

The All-Arizona Academic Team described the ceremony as a celebration of the outstanding academic achievements and distinguished leadership of students enrolled in Arizona's community colleges.

The team also describe the students being honored as being able to demonstrate academic excellence and intellectual rigor combined with leadership and service that extend education beyond the classroom to benefit society

Each student is currently working toward an associate's degree, maintains a GPA of 3.5 or higher and is involved in campus and community volunteer activities.

The event's master of ceremony was Ian Schwartz, a graduate of Arizona State University after attending Mesa Community College. Schwartz was a former writer for the Mesa Legend and is now a morning meteorologist and reporter for KPHO-TV, CBS 5, and AZ Family.

"I cannot wait to see what all of you guys do in the future, we're in good hands, us old folks, very exciting things are coming from all of you and we are so proud," Schwartz said to the crowd.

This year's honored MCC students are Charlotte Fornasiero, Matthew Skabelund, Isabel Rei Zann Wee, and Jakobe Stevens.

Fornasiero is currently a liberal arts major at the MCC Southern and Dobson campus who plans to transfer to ASU to earn a bachelor's degree in a biology-related field such as natural resource management or wildlife conservation followed by a master's degree.

Skabelund currently attends the MCC Red Mountain campus and is studying health related professions. He plans to major in kinesiology where he will enter a physical therapy program for his bachelor's degree and receive a

clinical doctorate in physical therapy.

“I enjoy working with others one on one helping them to meet their needs and I look forward to doing so throughout my life as a physical therapist,” stated Skabelund.

Wee is an international student from Singapore and an engineering major at the MCC Southern and Dobson campus. She will transfer to the University of Arizona to pursue a bachelors degree in engineering and plans on a career in industrial engineering.

“As an industrial engineering sophomore at MCC, I’ve enjoyed streamlining operations, creating efficient procedures, and improving production schedules. On my off days, I dance for a local dance crew and it lets me express who I am. My goals this year is to maintain my GPA, do well in upcoming competitions, and spend more time with both my family and friends,” said Wee.

Stevens currently majors in biological and biomedical sciences at MCC’s Red Mountain campus. He will transfer to ASU to earn a bachelor’s degree in neurobiology, physiology, and behavior, as well as a master’s degree in biological science in ASU’s 4 + 1 Program of securing a bachelor’s and a master’s in five years. Stevens said his career goal is to enter the workforce in the field of genetic counseling and later to become a naturopathic doctor with his own health and wellness center that focuses on medicine holistically and naturally.

“My end goal is to open my own wellness center that utilizes my scientific background, love for the outdoors, and desire to help others live a healthy and balanced lifestyle,” said Stevens.

This honored student team is also eligible to be selected as one of 20 in the All-USA Community College Academic Team. If eligible, they will receive an additional \$5,000 scholarship, medallion, obelisk and certificate during the American Association of Community Colleges annual convention scheduled April 5 to 9 in Louisville, Kentucky.