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It's Academic! Two LDS All-Arizona Academic Team Students Rewarded For Academic Effort And Community Outreach

🕒 August 1, 2018 👤 Emily Jex Boyle

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Recently, two Mesa Community College Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society students, Jacob Riddle and Johnathan Speakman, filled out scholarship applications. As a result, Riddle and Speakman were awarded spots on the All-Arizona Academic team and the prestigious All-USA Academic Team. These weren't just any scholarships. By demonstrating academic excellence and community outreach, both received substantial scholarship combinations to assist them in achieving their collegiate goals.

As All-Arizona Academic Team designees, both students received a \$1,000 scholarship as well as a tuition waiver to any Arizona state university of their choice. With their designation as top students in the nation, All-USA, they were awarded an additional \$5,000 in scholarships.



Jacob Riddle (Ahwatukee Groves, Tempe Arizona West Stake) didn't plan to attend a community college but has found amazing ways to get paid for going to school.

Photo Courtesy of Mesa Community College

Speakman also received \$2,500 New Century Transfer Pathway Scholarship from the Coca-Cola Foundation, the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation, PTK and the AACC, and was named a 2018 Guistwhite Scholar, receiving an additional \$5,000 for baccalaureate studies.

Riddle collaborated with ItsUpToUs.org and NetImpact.org, gathering 1,800 signatures and raising fiscal awareness among students. As a recently married college student, these scholarships take a large burden off his shoulders.



Johnathan Speakman (Porter Park Ward, Mesa North Stake) considered himself a “parking lot” college student until a mentor helped him see the benefits of getting involved on campus.
Photo Courtesy of Mesa Community College

“It has opened up so many doors,” he says, “and while others are paying to go to school, I’m getting paid to go.” Riddle will transfer to Arizona State University en route to medical school.

Duane Oakes, Mesa Community College faculty director for the Center of Community and Civic

Engagement, encouraged Speakman to get involved. As a result, Speakman says, “I just jumped in.” He served as a Community Allocation Program Panel Member for Mesa United Way, promoting a “college completion” culture on campus. He also developed free citizenship classes to help individuals prepare for The Naturalization Test.

Speakman plans to attend Arizona State University, ultimately helping others build businesses to achieve their dreams. As a young father, Speakman believes balance is achieved by setting priorities around his goals and by living by them.

Mesa Community College is nationally recognized for its career and technical programs, service-learning, innovative approaches to higher education and civic engagement. Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) helps students reach goals through tuition waivers and scholarships. PTK’s President Dr. Tincher-Ladner explains, “[These programs] not only recognize student achievement, but also create meaningful pathways for college students to succeed by putting completion within financial reach.”

Both students were inspired by a sign that hangs on campus in Duane Oakes’ office: *Never let your school work get in the way of your college education.*

Applications for the All-Arizona Academic team will be open in August. Learn more about these and other scholarships by contacting Duane Oakes at duane.oakes@mesacc.edu.

- All-Arizona Academic team
- All-USA Academic Team
- Arizona State University
- Duane Oakes
- Jacob Riddle