Dean's medalists honored in liberal arts and sciences

The 17 College of Liberal Arts and Sciences students selected as Dean’s medalists will walk across the commencement stage Dec. 19 with diplomas in their hands and opportunities ahead.

The top students from each school not only have high grade-point averages, but they also took full advantage of ASU’s offerings, such as the environment to cultivate their own ideas, the ability to work closely with professors, internships, study abroad programs and supplemental degrees and certificates.

Samson Szeto, a justice studies major, will be the first in his family to graduate from college, and he’ll do it with an additional degree in sustainability and minors in Asian Pacific American studies, geography and socio-legal studies.

“These areas of study provide me an opportunity to broaden my intellectual spectrum and study topics that I am generally interested in,” Szeto said. “I have accomplished all the achievements, experiences and awards by taking that initial step my freshman year and getting involved at ASU.”

Szeto has also worked as a recycling intern for the City of Chandler, interned at the United Food and Commercial Workers Union and worked on philanthropic projects. He has studied abroad in Australia, where he researched ethnohydrology; in Peru, where he taught English to disadvantaged children; and in Dubai, where he researched socio-economic factors of a green economy.

Joseph Juliano, a Dean’s medalist in biochemistry with a minor in mathematics, earned an internship at the Harvard Stem Cell Institute, where he applied his mathematical expertise to the analysis of genomic data of a newly discovered cancer-signaling pathway.

Film and media studies senior Ashleigh Armstrong, another a first-generation college graduate, will also complete her time as a Sun Devil with a minor in Italian.

“I never thought I would be able to say that I have written two feature-length scripts or read Machiavelli in the original Italian, but thanks to the amazing support and instruction of my professors across both disciplines, who encouraged me to continue to work hard, I surpassed my own expectations,” Armstrong said.
Interim dean Patrick Kenney said the Dean’s medalists, as well as all graduates from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, personify results of being a part of ASU’s intellectual heart.

“Our students are designing their futures by choosing and shaping their pathway to success by employing a range of studies to their advantage,” Kenney said. “We provide an environment here at ASU with access to professors and research so students really can dream it; do it.”

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is ASU’s core academic unit, offering degrees in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. It is ASU’s largest and most diverse college, with more than 100,000 alumni worldwide.

**Fall 2013 Dean’s Medalist Winners**

American Indian Studies: Rudy Anaya

Chemistry & Biochemistry: Joseph Juliano

Economics: Dominique Kang

English: Ashleigh Armstrong

Communication: Kimberly Linderman

Earth and Space Exploration: Crystal Mueller

Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning: Daniel Fielder

Human Evolution and Social Change: James McGrath

Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies: Justin Sanders

International Letters & Cultures: Christopher Robinson

Life Sciences: Andrew Koons

Politics and Global Studies: Emily Jeffries

Psychology: Carissa Pappas

Social and Family Dynamics: Amanda Moats
Social Transformation: Samson Szeto

Mathematical and Statistical Sciences: Zahra Hussaini

Physics: Zahra Hussaini

Transborder Studies: Jonathan Alanis

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