Dean's medalists to graduate with opportunities ahead

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences students selected as Dean's medalists will graduate in May with diplomas in their hands and opportunities ahead.

These high-achieving students from diverse backgrounds not only have high grade-point averages, but they also took full advantage of ASU’s offerings, such as the environment to dream it, do it, the ability to work closely with professors, internships, study abroad programs and supplemental degrees and certificates.

Take a moment to get to know the college's top students:

Name: Jake Adler
Dean's Medal: Department of English
Major: creative writing
Accomplishments: Jake has had poetry, a self-illustrated graphic memoir and interviews with contemporary writers published in three literary reviews – Lux, Marooned and Hayden's Ferry Review. Adler worked with ASU’s official student-run newspaper, The State Press, as an opinion columnist for two years, where his columns were printed bi-weekly. He also became a writing fellow in ASU’s Writing Studio, where he provided critical feedback on major essays and projects in an innovative program where upper-division English students work closely with lower-division undergraduates.

Name: Lynette Balderrama
Dean's Medal: School of Transborder Studies
Major: transborder Chicano/a & Latino/a studies and political science with a concentration on U.S. and Mexican regional immigration policy and economy
Faculty comments: Lynette’s academic and leadership experience in the classroom is evident and she has also demonstrated her dedication to service by participating in the McCain Institute Internship Program in Washington, D.C. Among her research experience is the Wells Fargo Transborder Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies Research Scholarship, which she received in the spring of 2013. Under this scholarship, Lynette explored how immigration policy and ethnic identity impacted the educational outlook among Hispanic high school students in Arizona.

Name: Taylor A. Biddulph
Dean's Medal: School of Life Sciences
Major: biological sciences with a concentration in genetics, cell and developmental biology, minor in chemistry
Faculty comments: “Taylor has been one of the hardest working and most successful undergraduate researchers I have ever had, on track for authorship on two publications with completely different research foci, with one of these first-authored. She has also done very well in her classes with an exceptional GPA, made outstanding presentations at national meetings, served as an undergraduate teaching assistant in general biology, earned her honor’s degree in her junior year with her first project, contributed to ASU as a community assistant/resident adviser in Barrett Honor’s dorm, and conducted extensive community outreach with the Bug Theater project, which provides entomological and ecological education to hundreds of families at local parks.”  – Professor Jon Harrison

Name: Matthew D. Brown
Dean’s Medal: Department of Physics
Major: physics
Faculty comments: A Goldwater Scholar, Matthew “is brilliant in problem solving particularly using the most complex mathematical approaches, he constantly seeks deep understanding, he is creative in his approach, and he is confident, dedicated and articulate. His research is substantial, and it has already impacted our program’s directions. He is a co-author on conference presentations and manuscripts in preparation. He is one of the most outstanding undergraduate students I have had the privilege of working with during my 25 year-academic career.”  – Robert J. Nemanich, Department of Physics Chair

Name: Carmel Inez Dooling
Dean’s Medal: School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies
Majors: History and political science, with a certificate in religion and conflict
Faculty comments: Carmel is an exceptionally intelligent and gifted student, who demonstrates capabilities and compassion beyond her years, and whose work in the community demonstrates her to be the very model of a citizen-scholar.
Areas of interest: History of immigration restriction, civil war in Sudan, refugees, plans to go to law school

Name: Kelly Dunleavy
Dean’s Medal: T. Denny Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics
Major: sociology and psychology
Faculty comments: Kelly has a positive and outgoing personality and she is always ready and willing to get involved in extra projects that she believes will help her to achieve her academic goals. She is a fine example of one of our many outstanding students in the Sanford School. She is a very motivated and productive student and she would like to pursue a career as a Marriage and Family Therapist.

Name: Jason Edmunds
Dean’s Medal: School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning
Major: geography and geology with a certificate in geographical information science
Faculty comments: After high school, Jason worked for many years as a technical editor; he did not attend college. Then, upon the birth of his son, he realized that he needed to “walk the walk” and returned to school a dozen years older than the regular student body. Jason studied and tested the idea that as the eastern half of South Mountain erodes, disks that emerge and litter the slopes are
scale invariant, in that they maintain the same basic dimensions regardless of their size. This simple project has evolved into research on a type of granite landform that has not been discussed in the scholarly literature and includes electron microscope analyses of how the disks form. This research will be submitted to the prestigious Earth surface processes and landforms serial of the British Geomorphological Research Society.

Name: Lawrence M. Fatica
Dean's Medal: School of Human Evolution and Social Change
Major: anthropology
Faculty comments: Lawrence has taken a range of courses across evolutionary anthropology, including courses in human osteology, hominin evolution, bioarchaeology, anatomy/physiology evolutionary ecology, and has aced them all. In discussions with Lawrence, he clearly demonstrates the ability to draw upon multiple avenues of inquiry, as evidenced by his desire to research questions that merge functional anatomy, ontogeny, energetics, and life history. In other words, he already thinks, and approaches questions, from the same multidisciplinary perspective that defines some of the most compelling research in our discipline today.

Name: Caitlyn Francis
Dean's Medal: Department of Psychology
Major: psychology
Faculty comments: Caitlyn is extremely bright and highly motivated, works incredibly hard toward her goals, has amassed an impeccable academic record in psychology and at ASU overall, and has engaged the academic and broader local community as an agent for positive change. And all of that while performing as an ASU varsity athlete on the women's volleyball team ... wow.
Thesis focus: Linkage between maternal expectations, mother-infant relationship quality and later parenting stress

Name: Darice Harris
Dean's Medal: School of International Letters and Cultures
Major: Italian
Faculty comments: Darice will be the first member of her family to graduate from college and is a returning student who, after 20 years of working as a hairdresser in Yuma, Ariz., had the courage to sell her small business and return to finish her university degree. She also raised her two daughters as a single parent while their father did three tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. She worked hard to obtain several scholarships, including the prestigious Gilman Award, so that she could study last summer on our Castelraimondo program in Italy. This semester she's doing an internship at Broadmor Elementary School where she's teaching Italian every Friday afternoon to a group of 23 young students.

Name: Zachary Heth
Dean's Medal: School of Politics and Global Studies
Major: political science, molecular biosciences and biotechnology with a minor in biochemistry
Faculty comments: We consider Zac among the 2%-3% of the undergraduate students in the past twenty years. Not a sledgehammer does Zac employ in his analysis, but a fine surgical tool to suit his precise and perceptive investigation. Above all, the faculty in SPGS are struck by Zac's insightful observations, comments, as well as the questions he asks. Particularly impressive as well as
enjoyable is his entire lack of pride that invariably accompanies intellectual brilliance. Zac is authentically modest, friendly, and beautifully passionate about knowledge and its application in the real world. He has good social skills that he developed in his wide-ranging activities at ASU.

Name: Michael Horst  
**Dean's Medal:** School of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences  
**Major:** mathematics, composition  
**Faculty comments:** Michael is an outstanding example of what it means to live the art and science of mathematics. Before starting his undergraduate career at ASU, Michael dove into the field of mathematics through completion of university-level coursework. Michael’s involvement in research and advanced coursework had proven fruitful with a number of presentation and publications to his credit. In addition to his accolades in mathematics Michael has remained diligent in his studies in music composition and has been able to excel in both fields of study. This spring he will graduate with two degrees, a BS mathematics and BM in composition.

Name: Shannon Jenkins  
**Dean's Medal:** School of Social Transformation  
**Major:** women and gender studies, social transformation with minors in political science and sustainability and certificates in environmental humanities, social transformation and LGBT  
**Personal experience:** "I think that pursuing these areas of interest has allowed me to meet and work with faculty I might not have met otherwise – including Dr. Kathy Nakagawa and Dr. Wendy Cheng, who taught the Intro to Social Transformation class, and Dr. Aren Aizura, for whom I work as a research assistant for my LGBT Certificate. In addition, my political science classes gave me the space to think further about structural and institutional change."

Name: David Kanno  
**Dean's Medal:** Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry  
**Major:** chemistry with a minor in mathematics  
**Faculty comments:** "It is clear that David is an unusually gifted student. He is one of the best and brightest students that will have graduated from the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. David truly epitomizes what the undergraduate experience can be for a student in the 'New American University.' David’s research involves using physical approaches to characterize the dynamic behavior of biomolecules. His contribution to this research project has resulted in a co-authored publication in the journal Nucleic Acid Research. One of the more revealing aspects of David’s character is his willingness to help his classmates. Throughout the semester David would hold “shadow classes” where he would go over all of the lecture material. I learned later that these “shadow classes” were even better attended than my own reviews!" – Professor George Wolf

Name: Alasdair Martin  
**Dean's Medals:** Department of Economics  
**Major:** economics and mathematics  
**Faculty comments:** Alasdair is a straight-A student. This is even more impressive when one considers that he is working toward a dual major in math and econ, and has self-selected into the most challenging courses offered under each major. He was instrumental in organizing “Active Economics,” an organization of economics majors who make presentations about economic issues in local high school classrooms.
Name: Amanda Orozco
Dean's Medal: School of Earth and Space Exploration
Major: earth and environmental studies
Accomplishments: Top GPA of all 2014 Spring graduating students in the school, top student in Earth and Environmental studies, served as a legislative research intern at the Arizona House of Representatives, worked in the ASU Herbarium, served as a docent at the Gallery of Scientific Exploration, interned at the UMB-WEST summer program in Sonora, Mexico to collaborate on resource management and perform hydrological field experiments.

Name: Carley Tafoya
Dean's Medal: American Indian Studies
Major: American Indian studies, justice studies, minor in political science
Accomplishments: 3.91 GPA, Dean's list Spring 2012, Fall 2012, Spring 2013, Norman Tecube Sr. Tribal Scholarship - Jicarilla Apache Nation
Coursework: Tribal governance, contemporary issues of American Indians, Pacific Islander studies, women and international health, indigenous language policy and justice, youth and justice

Name: Bailey Wigness
Dean's Medal: Hugh Downs School of Human Communication
Major: communication, political science
Faculty comments: Bailey is an outstanding student; there is no doubt about that. She is a scholar and an athlete (ASU softball) and her resume says it all. She was selected to receive last year's Student Athlete Award for excellence while maintaining a 4.0 and she has been involved in her community throughout her entire time at ASU.

Sarah Muench, sarah.muench@asu.edu
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences