



Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

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April 9, 2009

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

146 Washington students receive up to two free years of college tuition *Scholarship winners highlight value of career and technical education*

OLYMPIA --- Three high performing career and technical education students from each of the state's legislative districts—[146 students in all](#)—have been awarded up to two years of free tuition at a Washington public or private college or vocational school of their choice.

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) announced today the winners of the 2009 [Washington Award for Vocational Excellence \(WAVE\) scholarship grants](#). Established by the Legislature in 1984, the WAVE awards pay undergraduate educational tuition for two years (six quarters or four semesters) at an accredited public or private college or university or licensed private vocational school. Students are reimbursed for their actual tuition costs—capped at \$6,720 per year.

Some 146 winners were selected from a highly competitive process. Each application was reviewed by a committee representing business, labor, education and government, along with interested citizens. Two high school students, and one from a community or technical college, were selected from each of the state's 49 legislative districts.

“WAVE scholarships honor students who have found their passion through an education that connects the working world with the experience of learning. As these students continue on their amazing academic and professional journeys, they demonstrate how effective career and technical education is in launching them into a lifetime of learning,” said Eleni Papadakis, executive director of the Workforce Board.

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To be eligible, students must have completed high school or college career and technical education courses. Scholarship winners immersed themselves in subject areas as varied as architecture, accounting, agriculture, business, marketing, culinary arts, criminal justice, digital media production, welding, teaching, network design, nanotechnology, nursing and natural resources, among others. Many emphasized a strong, hands-on connection to their courses and their pleasure at discovering a career that motivated them to take their next educational step.

Many scholarship winners mentioned the toll the crumbling economy has taken on their ability to invest in their education, a financial roadblock to an otherwise clear education and career path. The WAVE scholarship, many said, was vital to continuing in school.

One student, who plans to be the first in her family to go to college, wrote, “Over the years, my parents and I have saved for college, but due to the economic downturn, it is now not enough to pay for one full year of college. My little sister is autistic and even with government funding, my parents must pay for her future living costs. With a mother who has only graduated from high school and a father who is working two jobs to support the family, paying for my education will be my first priority. My parents have supported my education every step of the way and I want to fulfill their lifelong dream of seeing me graduate from college.”

For more information on the WAVE Scholarship Program, go to <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/WAVEWebpagenew.asp>

For a list of winners by legislative district, go to <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Documents/2009DirectoryofRecipients.pdf>

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