



# Workforce

## Training and Education Coordinating

# Board

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **49 Washington students receive up to two free years of college tuition**

Scholarship winners highlight value of career and technical education

OLYMPIA --- High performing career and technical education students from each of the state's legislative districts--49 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 2010 Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE) scholarship grants. Established by the Legislature in 1984, the WAVE awards pay undergraduate tuition for two years (six quarters or four semesters) at a Washington accredited public or private college or university or licensed private career school. Students are reimbursed for their actual tuition costs--currently capped at \$7,600 per year.

A \$2.8 billion budget shortfall threatened the state's ability to fund the WAVE program this year. To bring the state's budget in line with declining revenues, the supplemental budget that went into effect this week limited the scholarship to the top applicant from each legislative district--49 scholarship recipients in all. However, the budget also directs that a total of three WAVE scholars be recognized per district as is the tradition. These additional recognized students will not be eligible for a tuition waiver this year.

Some 146 students 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.

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"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.

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 mechanical engineering, accounting, agriculture, business, marketing, culinary arts, welding, sports medicine, information technology, construction management, interpreting, network design, nursing and environmental sciences, among others. Many students in their applications 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. At the same time, they stressed that career and technical education had motivated them to continue with their education, despite the hurdles.

One student, a hard working father of four, wrote, "Career training has been one of the most positive and right choices that I could have made. I know that I have made the right choice when I find myself waking up at 5:30 in the morning for class, happy that I am going to class. I have spent enough of my lifetime in an unhealthy dead end career . . . I have watched others move forward while I stayed in a stagnant career. Now that I am changing careers, my vocational training in Diesel Technology will give me the necessary skills to achieve my dream of working in the trucking industry."

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/WAVEScholars2010.pdf>

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*The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is a partnership of labor, business and government, dedicated to helping Washington residents obtain and succeed in family-wage jobs, while meeting employers' needs for skilled workers.*