



30 Years
Building Community
Bennioncenter
THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH



1987

\$0.89 /gallon of gasoline

Chase Peterson, president of the U, dedicates the Lowell Bennion Community Service Center

— Aretha Franklin was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame

— 96 degrees in SLC on 1 August 1987

— Irene Fisher appointed as first executive director of the Bennion Center

30 YEARS LATER

\$2.41/gallon of gasoline

Ruth Watkins, first female president of the U, states her commitment to community engagement and the University For Utah

— Joan Baez inducted into Rock & Roll Hall of Fame

— 101 degrees in SLC on 1 August 2017

— Bennion Center celebrates 30 years of community engaged learning, service, and community impact



Today, I believe we live in a better world than 30 years ago. In my lifetime I've seen societal improvements in health, education, housing, race and gender equality; it is inspiring.

I believe Lowell Bennion would be excited by today's societal improvements too. He would ask his quintessential question, "How can I help?" and then he'd roll up his sleeves, put on work boots, and go make the world a better place.

Happy 30th Bennion Center! I look forward to the impact our Bennion Center students of today will have upon our future.

Aimee McConkie
Bennion Center Advisory Board Chair

ADVISORY BOARD 2017-2018

The Bennion Center gratefully acknowledges the support and direction provided by our Advisory Board.

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30 YEAR STATS

165,874 PARTICIPANTS

3,571,582 HOURS

\$87,110,885 IMPACT





Abdul Osman



Nabilah Mohammad Yusof



Volunteer at Legacy of Lowell (below)

Volunteer at Best Friends Animal Society (above)

30 YEAR CELEBRATION

In 1991, Lowell Bennion told a group of Bennion Center student leaders, "Life is meaningful to the extent that it is purposeful." The Bennion Center marked its 30th anniversary with a year-long celebration that was both. Some highlights of the year included:

- Six Saturday Service Projects with 5,027 hours of service donated.
- Eight dialogues and forums with 400 participants on topics ranging from free speech on campus to how to get involved in politics to air quality.
- Marriott Library Exhibit in fall 2017 highlighted the 30 year history.
- Establishment of the Community Engaged Teaching Fellows program.
- Awarded the 2017 Daniels Fund Ethical Leadership Award.
- Continuum magazine feature article on the Bennion Center.
- Coverage in 47 different media stories for electronic and print media.
- Two proclamations recognizing the Bennion Center contribution of more than three million service hours over 30 years (one from the Utah State Legislature and another from the Salt Lake City Council).
- 7,795 students engaged in civic scholarship or service.



Service House residents volunteer (above)

Project Youth volunteers with fifth grade students (below)



STUDENT DIRECTED PROGRAMS

985 PARTICIPANTS • 35,261 HOURS • 48 COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Arts and Recreation

Arts for Youth | Promise South Salt Lake
Camp Kostopolos
Elevate Theatre Company | Tanner Dance
Running Forward

Sorenson Multi-Cultural Center
Special Olympics Utah U.L.E
Special Olympics Utah Team
Utah Symphony|Utah Opera

Education and Advocacy

Best Friends Animal Society
Bud Bailey Youth Tutoring
The Children's Center Mentoring
First Lego League Utah | The Leonardo

Literacy Action Center
Ronald McDonald House
Utah Development Academy
Wasatch Impact

Health and Ability

Friends for Sight
Hospice and U
Hospice Care
Primary Children's Hospital

Rides for Wellness
TBI Support Group
Utah AIDS Foundation
VA Nursing Home

International Service

Catholic Community Services
English Skills Learning Center
ESL Guadalupe
Health Access Project

Hser Ner Moo Refugee & Welcome Center
International Rescue Committee
Maliheh Free Clinic

Social Justice

Best Buddies
Big Brothers Big Sisters of UT
Girl Scouts Outreach
Palmer Court Kids' Book Club
Road Home Kids' Book Club

Road Home Playroom
Road Home Teens' Night Out
Take Care Utah
Youth Resource Center | Volunteers of America
YWCA

Sustainability & Food Justice

Edible Campus Gardens
Environmental Action Team
Feed U Food Pantry
Food Recovery Network
Green Urban Lunchbox
Meals on Wheels
Social Justice Gardens | Mountain
View Elementary

Student leader lunch with founders Dick and Sue Jacobsen, founding executive director Irene Fisher, and current executive director Dean McGovern



Volunteers at the aquarium (above)
Justin and Savannah (below)



TEENS' NIGHT OUT

"First and foremost, we wanted to have fun." Justin Swanger is adamant when he says this. The smile that lit his face just moments before has been replaced by a look of resolve.

Savannah Allen adds, "We wanted to create an environment of inclusivity where they feel they can be safe, be themselves and make friends."

The "they" Savannah refers to are teens whose families are staying in homeless shelters. Savannah and Justin were co-directors of Teens' Night Out, one of the nearly 50 student-directed programs facilitated by the Bennion Center. Their goal was to create a weekly activity young people

could participate in to get them out of the shelter and into a space where they could feel more like typical teens. Places where they could forget about family problems and just have fun. They also hoped to help the youths build a sense of community, a support system of peers and community members and volunteers.

The pair planned the first few activities on their own. After that, they listened to what their participants wanted to do and did their very best to make it happen. Paintball. Roller and ice skating. Pumpkin carving. Haunted house. Marshmallow roasting. Arcade. Capture the flag. Aquarium. Planetarium. You name it, Savannah and Justin made it happen.

Savannah says going with the teens to all those activities was the easy part. The hard part was all the time it took to coordinate with community businesses. With their small budget, the pair knew they would need in-kind donations to help the program flourish. Over the year they managed to secure more than \$2,000 in donations. "That was so impactful for me to see the support of the community," Savannah says. "The majority of places gave us discounts or let us come for free. They'd have free drinks for us or buy pizza. It's nice to see different organizations willing to be involved in the issue of homelessness."

"The reason we kept coming back week after week was working with the teens and seeing them grow and hearing their stories," Savannah says. "When I started the only narrative I knew around homelessness was drugs and violence. I was a little bit afraid going in. That has completely changed."

Justin adds, "Debunking these narratives that we're fed has been a huge thing for me. Folks who are homeless might have more needs than others but everyone has a need to interact with others."

"I think a lot of people get overwhelmed by an issue and how complex it is," Savannah says. "But change occurs starting with an individual. If you can start with one thing, smiling or saying hello, you'll find yourself changing and becoming better."

ALTERNATIVE BREAKS

20 TRIPS • 236 PARTICIPANTS • 13,126 HOURS

From Somalia, to Jordan, to the United States, to the University of Utah as a student leader today. That is the trajectory of Abdul Osman's life. A junior majoring in psychology with a goal of going to medical school, Abdul says the Alternative Breaks program was a turning point for him.

"I was really good at standing back and just letting things happen," he explains. "I didn't really take charge." That was before he signed up for an Alt Break trip a year ago. He was looking for a way to get service hours and noticed a sign advertising the program. He snapped a picture and thought he'd look into it later that night. It was almost midnight before he remembered. He had only minutes to apply before the deadline. He got his application in and crossed his fingers. He was selected for the AIDS/HIV trip. When he got back he began volunteering at the Utah AIDS Foundation. Abdul said, "I learned more on my Alt Break than I have in my classes." The difference, he says, is that the Alt Break trip offers learning that is more than just preparing for an exam. That feeling led him to apply to be a site leader for a trip on immigration and ultimately to be named chair of the Alt Breaks student board.

Alternative Breaks lasts a week (or weekend)...the experience lasts a lifetime. Anecdotally, this saying has been embedded into the culture of the Alternative Breaks Program which thousands of University of Utah students like Abdul, and hundreds of faculty and staff have participated in since 1995.

It's hard to fully understand the impact of that statement unless you've had an Alt Breaks experience yourself. But look through the lens of students reflecting on their trips and you get a better understanding of the power of this award-winning program.

As one student reflected, "I had the chance to push myself, and watch myself grow. I experienced the pain that is associated with growth, but also experienced the satisfaction that always outweighs it in comparison. It was cool to be part of a developing community. Starting as a group of strangers and leaving as a group of friends and peers."

"This gave me confidence and skills I feel I needed for my major and to move forward in my career" one student shared. Another wrote, "I felt a little nervous about the trip and didn't expect to learn as much as I did. Now that it's over, my whole view has changed. I used to be hesitant, even reluctant, to serve. Now I know that it's something I want to do. I'm excited for it!"

Laura Schwartz, former Alt Breaks director said, "Alternative Breaks are transformative. Students developing as scholars and individuals get outside of their comfort zones, challenge their perspectives, and gain knowledge and skills needed to have a direct, positive impact in their community. Reciprocally, as students learn, host communities benefit from the influx of volunteers for the duration of the trip. The program provides an opportunity for students to engage with other service-oriented students, travel, and gain a greater perspective on important social themes such as urban environmentalism, community health, and homelessness."

Trip costs range from \$50 for a weekend to \$600 for a week long trip. Trip scholarships and sponsorships are incredibly valuable in making these experiences more accessible.

Participants on the fall 2017 trip to Lakeview, MT working on Wildlife Habitat Conservation



BAGS TO BEDS

SERVICE CORNER • 324 VOLUNTEERS • 1,926 HOURS

Kaitlin McLean was bugged. An honors student majoring in biomedical physics and psychology, she couldn't make the numbers add up. She heard reports that new shelters for people who were homeless would be built in the Salt Lake area. But the shelters wouldn't be in place before beds in other facilities were eliminated. What would happen to people who were caught in that gap? How would they manage in Salt Lake City's cold winters? She heard of people who were experiencing homelessness freezing to death. The more she thought about it the more she felt compelled to act. But what could one young woman possibly do?

Kaitlin had limited time, even less money, and a heavy academic course load. Her mother and a YouTube video provided an unlikely solution. Since childhood, Kaitlin's mom had been urging her to learn to crochet. On YouTube, Kaitlin saw how others were taking plastic grocery sacks and turning them into rugs and purses. Why not take that concept and keep the plastic bags out of the landfill and crochet sleeping mats for people experiencing homelessness, Kaitlin wondered. Kaitlin began collecting the plastic sacks. She used her residence hall and the Bennion Center as drop-off points. She partnered with the U's Athletics Department and taught basketball players, swimmers, and gymnasts how to tie spools of plastic yarn, or "plarn" as she calls it, in preparation for crocheting. She reached out to church groups and neighborhood councils, and the state prison, and showed them how to crochet the mats. She worked with agencies serving homeless populations to make sure her idea was actually needed. So far she's collected hundreds of bags, completed 20 mats and is creating a non-profit called Bags to Beds. "For me, this means finally finding a way to make a difference with the few minutes of downtime I have in my busy life," Kaitlin says, "and getting to see the amazing connections that happen in our community when we care about one another."

Each mat takes about 400 bags to create. Kaitlin is hoping to donate 100 mats to Project Homeless Connect by October 12, 2018. She is enlisting help from partners all across the campus and the community. You can visit bennioncenter.org and check out the Service Corner to find out how to help.



PUBLIC SERVICE PROFESSOR WINNER IS BUILDING COMMUNITY

It's a question Professor Erin Carraher has been asking since she was a child growing up in rural West Virginia: "How do you make better places for people to live?" As an Associate Professor in the School of Architecture, Carraher recently embarked on a new research trajectory focused on finding answers to that question. Her research proposal earned her the 2018-19 Public Service Professor award. Carraher has created a collaborative to enable better, more affordable housing to be built in Salt Lake City.

To be considered affordable, housing must cost no more than 30% of the household income. Currently, there is a 7,500 unit deficit in the Salt Lake City metro area of available units for extremely low income households (those making at or below the Poverty Guideline or less than 30% of Area Median Income (AMI), whichever is higher). "When people hear affordable housing they immediately stigmatize it and think, 'not in my backyard.' But affordable housing is just housing; it's housing people can afford." According to Carraher, the biggest barrier to overcome is the financial one. Currently, developers receive government subsidies called Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (or LIHTC) to make projects 'pencil out.' "The first milestone we are setting for ourselves is to eliminate the need for government subsidies for 60% AMI housing," Erin said. "We can do this by eliminating waste and inefficiency in the design and construction process and catalyzing innovation."



Erin explains project to Sarah Monroe from UNP

After partnering with Giv Group, a community-based development company committed to quality, affordability, and innovation, Erin assembled a team of colleagues to start a new nonprofit, The Equitable Housing & Livability Institute, or EHLI. "Our focus is not just building cheaper," she says, "it's building better quality, building better community." Erin says the emphasis is on a more holistic approach independent of government funding. "It's complicated, expensive and less profitable for the developer," she explains. But she's convinced it's doable.

Giv's Project Open development in the Guadalupe neighborhood on Salt Lake City's west side is the site of EHLI's initial research focus. Carraher lives in an apartment in the first phase of the

development completed earlier this year. Two additional buildings break ground this summer and a third phase is scheduled to begin next year. Working closely with Giv as well as community and industry partners, she and her team will take the findings from each building and apply them to the next. "We're doing our best to make buildings better for people. We want to take the affordable out of affordable housing and just focus on making housing everyone wants to—and can—live in."

COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING AT HOME AND ABROAD

AT HOME

193 CLASSES • 3,535 STUDENTS • 70,000 HOURS

ABROAD

540 HOURS • 42 STUDENTS • 2 TRIPS

“Community engaged learning experiences are considered among the most impactful ways to enrich a student’s academic experience. They are the connection between academics and the community,” explains Andi Witzczak, Bennion Center Associate Director of Community Engaged Learning (CEL). “The content becomes much more meaningful when you tie it to the community. The student learns how their major relates to the common good and how that major can address the intractable challenges of our day.”

In 2017-18 the Bennion Center co-facilitated community engaged learning across campus and across the globe. The Center established the Community Engaged Teaching Fellows program with a three-fold goal of supporting the faculty fellow in their own scholarship, sharing the fellow’s CEL knowledge and expertise with other faculty and teaching staff, and broadening the understanding of community engaged pedagogy throughout the campus.

Partnering with Learning Abroad, the Center is also helping students experience international opportunities for community engaged learning. Dean McGovern, Bennion Center Executive Director says, “More and more we live in a global society and understand that we’re not just a citizen of our local community. Students come away with a sense of their place in a global system. They come away with a civic awareness of issues not only locally but more globally and internationally.”

As a student in the Bennion Center’s Costa Rica CEL course reflected, “When an individual becomes too focused on themselves and their success, the world outside them becomes lost. The values I observed this week allowed for success and improvement without taking away from others. It is trial and error, collaboration, reconstruction and support that drives this community.”



Bryan Luu

SUMMER FELLOWS

Bryan Luu, Ivy Christopherson and Austin Waters were selected as the 2018 Alumni Bennion Summer Fellows. The three students worked in Chicago and San Francisco, studying community programs that improve lives in each city. Thanks to the generosity of the University of Utah Alumni Association, all three students spent six weeks in their respective cities working with their community partners.

Bryan was in Chicago working with the Puerto Rican Agenda. Ivy partnered with the National Alliance on Mental Illness in San Francisco (NAMISF). Austin was also in San Francisco working with the San Francisco Aids Foundation.

Here is an excerpt from Bryan’s mid-term fellowship assessment:

“Through my fellowship in Chicago, I have been working with the Puerto Rican Agenda, a community collective that serves the Puerto Rican population with various resources, such as access to healthcare, education, and housing. As I interact with members of the Humboldt Park community and some of the community leaders, I have noticed that there is a strong sense of cultural community. The people are proud of their rich heritage established in the area for decades, and they are fighting for what is right in the sense of cultural preservation and combatting gentrification.”

“As I gain more depth in the concept of affordable housing, I have developed the belief that housing is a human right.”

“Before diving into this experience, I had a surface level of knowledge about gentrification. While I understood that it was frowned upon by my community partner, it is something that cannot necessarily be controlled. It is not something that can be wiped away, but with the correct precautions and resources, it can be mitigated to prevent having local tenants immediately evicted from their homes.”

STUDENTS SAY

I WAS FORCED TO GET OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE AND TRY TO SPEAK WITH PEOPLE, ACT AS A LEADER, AND IMPROVE MY VERBAL ABILITIES.

These opportunities through the last year have taught me skills and values that I will carry with me for my whole life. I have a passion for volunteer work and a passion for my community. I hope that in every aspect of my life, personally, professionally, academically, and socially I will be able to work on these values and apply them to teach others about the importance of civic awareness.

MY LAST YEAR OF BUILDING COMMUNITY AS A STUDENT IN THE BENNION CENTER HAS PROVIDED ME WITH SOME OF THE MOST IMPACTFUL AND DEFINITIVE EXPERIENCES OF MY LIFE.

I HAVE DISCOVERED A PASSION FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THAT I NEVER KNEW I HAD. MY EXPERIENCE AT THE BENNION CENTER HAS MADE A LASTING IMPACT ON MY LIFE.

Thank you, Alternative Breaks, for helping me to become the best version of myself that I can be.

The Bennion Center is committed to helping students develop civic competencies that lead to life-long civic engagement. Those civic competencies include the skills, awareness, values and habits that help students prepare to serve and lead. In the 2017-18 assessment, this is how some student leaders described their experiences:

Through the monthly meetings and leadership workshops, my eyes have been opened to the experiences of others and how important it is to meet people where they are to engage with them in a meaningful manner.

As a female in computer science, I've read about and experienced how few women and people of color are in tech, and I'd like to be part of the change that will result in more diverse, progressive tech.

I think the most amazing part of this experience has been watching kids who had a very difficult time reading the simplest of books learn to read complicated ones confidently.

I will take all I've done, learned, accomplished, suffered, dreamed during the past four years and allow it to guide me as a community builder for the rest of my life.

MY EXPERIENCE HAS NOT CHANGED WHAT I WANT TO DO LATER ON IN LIFE, BUT IT HAS OPENED DOORS FOR ME TO BETTER UNDERSTAND MY COMMUNITY AS WELL AS BRING THE SKILLS I HAVE LEARNED TO MY FUTURE CAREER ENVIRONMENT.

UTAH ATHLETES IN SERVICE

Soccer players and swimmers. Football players, basketball players, gymnasts, and track and field athletes. For the past four years the Utah Athletes in Service Award has recognized student athletes who excel in their sport and in community service. This year's winners were soccer players Hailey Skolmoski and Julianne Mathias. They were honored in an on-field ceremony during the Utah vs. Arizona football game on October 21, 2017.

Hailey is an elementary education major who tutors at local elementary schools and also serves as a volunteer coach for the Utah Development Academy. She says volunteering gives her a chance to help children gain confidence. "It makes me a better person too," she says.

Julianne, or July as her friends call her, just graduated in health promotion and education. She tutored middle school students, volunteered at the VA hospital and is also a Bennion Center Scholar. July says, "I choose to serve because I want to assist just as those that helped me. I've had a lot of people step up and serve me in my youth. From their influence and example I have witnessed the tiny miracles that result from giving to others."



Hailey Skolmoski



Julianne "July" Mathias

BENNION CENTER SCHOLARS

44 SCHOLARS • 8,824 HOURS

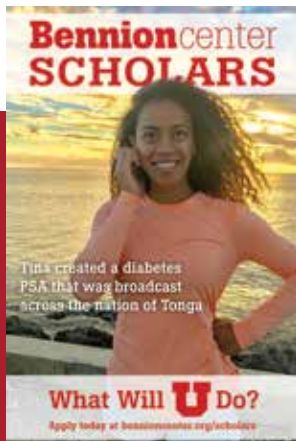
As new scholars programs have cropped up across in various colleges across campus, Bennion Center Scholars wanted to differentiate themselves and their program. "What is unique about the Bennion Center Scholars program is actually enacting the project, not just proposing it," says Megan Richards, community engaged learning coordinator. She says the difference is doing. "You learn a lot from that process."

The Scholars student leadership team found themselves not only working on their own projects but also looking for ways to introduce other students to the program. Tina Hosea, Taylor Checketts and Trevor Peterson spearheaded the effort.

"A lot of students want to do something big in college but just don't know how to go about it," Tina says. "We knew Bennion Center Scholars gave all of us the opportunity to explore that route. We wanted other students with the same desire to know about that opportunity." The group brainstormed ideas for months finally coming up with the "What will U do?" campaign. The program purchased five A-frame sandwich boards for placement at high traffic campus areas. Each board profiled a different scholar and briefly explained what he/she did to impact the community. Almost immediately Megan Richards began receiving calls. She says finding the right student fit is what makes the scholars program both challenging and rewarding.

Tina Hosea, who created a diabetes awareness public service campaign for her native Tonga, says the program has changed her life as well as the people she helped educate. "I'm much more aware of issues around me and I'm more inclined to engage in opportunities to help find solutions. Academically, I feel like I've increased my knowledge on a variety of things. I also feel better prepared for what I'd like to do in the future."

Tina Hosea (left)
and
Amanda Groneman
(right)



Jessica Ku with student



Tim Mason



Shannon McCosh Brown with student

UTAH READS

8 SITES • 39 TUTORS • 11,032 HOURS
188 CHILDREN TUTORED

Tim Mason wants to be a doctor someday. He's majoring in biology and minoring in chemistry and working in a research lab. And when he's not in class or at work, he's at Liberty Elementary School helping a first grader who just can't seem to focus on his reading.

"I have always looked for opportunities to teach," Tim explains. "I just love seeing when people learn something they didn't know before." That's why Tim made time to volunteer as a tutor. Tutors receive training from the University's Reading Clinic before they begin their service. The idea is that tutors will provide struggling children the extra help they need while their teachers work with the rest of the class.

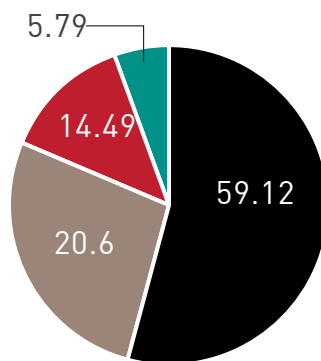
Tim admits he was worried about his teaching abilities. "Can I even teach them?" he asked himself. But those worries disappeared when he learned he would be thoroughly trained before he started. Also, mentors from the Reading Clinic and Utah Reads observed Tim and offered suggestions. "That gave me the confidence I was doing something right," he says.

Tim has worked with children in first through fourth grades. "As you work with them you get to know them and their learning style," he explains. Tim says seeing improvement in his students is the most rewarding part of the job. "You don't really see it day to day because it's slow and gradual." But then you look back and say, 'Oh, wow! You made it!'"

FINANCIALS 2017-2018

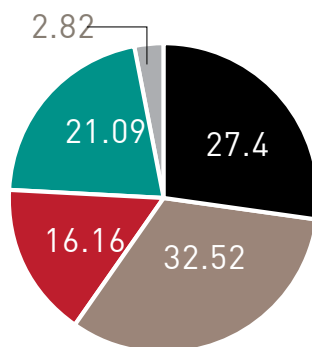
INCOME

State Funding	\$ 778,669.41	59.12%
Gifts and Grants	271,250.61	20.60%
Endowment Interest	190,835.76	14.49%
Student Payments	76,255.83	5.79%
Total	\$ 1,317,011.66	100.00%



EXPENSE

Student Leadership Development	\$ 346,900.65	27.40%
Community Engaged Learning	411,730.76	32.52%
Community Outreach	204,639.60	16.16%
Center Operations	266,977.84	21.09%
Scholarships/Fellowships	35,700.00	2.82%
Total	\$1,265,948.85	100.00%



PARTICIPANT NUMBERS AND HOURS

PROGRAM	# OF PARTICIPANTS	# OF HOURS
Alternative Breaks	236	13,126
Bennion Center Scholars	44	8,524
Communications/Marketing	8	261
Community Engaged Learning Courses	3,535	70,700
Development, Advisory Board & Committees	72	645
Fellowships, Scholarships, & Awards	255	733
First Year Service Corps	26	840
International Service Programs - Cuba & Costa Rica	45	540
Issue Education, Dialogues and Forums	441	687
Office Support Volunteers & Administration	29	706
Project Youth	169	2,272
Saturday Service Projects	1,568	4,666
Service Corner	324	1,926
Service House	12	1,681
Student Board	7	255
Student-Directed Programs	985	35,261
Utah Reads	39	11,032
Total	7,795	153,855

DISTINGUISHED FACULTY SERVICE AWARD



Professor Julie M. Metos was awarded the 2017-2018 Distinguished Faculty Service Award. Dr. Metos is the associate chair in the department of Nutrition and Integrative Physiology. Her research specialty is obesity prevention. She says she's especially interested in policy and how altering the built environment can improve health. Dr. Metos has worked for more than a decade with the Salt Lake City School District's Wellness Committee. For her service Dr. Metos was recognized at the Presidential Scholars Reception. She also received a cash award of \$1,000 from David and Susan Jabusch to be donated to the community service group of her choice.



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