



## MEDIA RELEASE

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**FOR RELEASE:** Immediately  
**DATE:** April 14, 2025  
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### Two Highline Students Earn a Place on the All-Washington Team

A passion for helping others has earned two Highline College students a place on the [All-Washington Academic Team](#).

Grace Gachie and Peter Bui will both receive \$450 for their efforts, with \$225 given by KeyBank and \$225 by the Highline College Foundation.

The two students and other top scholars from the state's 34 community and technical colleges will be recognized during the April 24 [awards ceremony](#) at South Puget Sound Community College. Gachie will also be recognized as one of the top 16 students.

Each college can nominate up to four students. To qualify, students must apply for recognition and be members of [Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society](#), the international honor society of two-year colleges. [Pi Sigma](#) is Phi Theta Kappa's Highline chapter.

#### Grace Gachie

Helping others during their most vulnerable moments is what drives 20-year-old Grace Gachie. The Federal Way resident is studying pre-nursing at Highline College.

"I've seen firsthand how a nurse's kindness and dedication can make a difference, and I want to be that person for someone else. Nursing isn't just a career for me—it's a calling, a chance to be a source of strength and healing. I know it will be challenging, nevertheless, I also understand that every life I touch will make it worthwhile," Gachie said.

Gachie balances studies with her work as a Community Resource Consultant at Highline's Center for Cultural & Inclusive Excellence. She said that being part of the organizing committee for a student-led panel during International Education Week was a "deeply personal and transformative experience for me." As part of the event, she was able to share her vibrant and rich Kenyan heritage with the academic community.

While still weighing up her options as to which four-year university she wants to transfer to, Gachie says she chose Highline for pre-nursing because of the “great reputation of a wholesome community, strong academic foundation, and supportive faculty.”

She cites the welcoming and diverse community as one of her favorite things about Highline. She noted, “I also appreciate the opportunity and space that Highline has provided for me to grow and be my authentic self.”

Being a first-generation college student, Gachie said she’s aware of setting a good example to the younger generation, and that being a role model is important in African culture.

Gachie said her journey hasn’t been easy but, “every challenge has only strengthened my determination to pursue nursing.” She said being at Highline is a testament to her resilience and commitment to achieving her dreams.

## **Peter Bui**

In 2023, Peter Bui’s life took a dramatic turn after a major car accident, which shifted his focus in life.

During his extensive recovery, the Highline College student from Seattle, decided not to “succumb to despair” but rather, rekindle his passion for learning.

The 29-year-old would “wake up at 3 a.m. to create flashcards or use every spare moment—whether at his father’s pho shop, or during longer hospital stays,” to upskill through online courses.

Now attending Highline College, where he’s pursuing an AAS in Cybersecurity, Bui often stays after class to assist other students with their assignments. Through this, he has become a tutor at the Academic Success Center, Peer Tutor and Student Ambassador at TRiO, as well as an Embedded tutor for computer systems courses.

Bui said as someone who loves learning, he wants to show people the joy of knowledge. Beyond tutoring, he currently conducts research as an intern at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, focusing on Machine Learning based anomaly detection.

He also participates in the Highline Cybersecurity Club as a club leader and the Highline Computer Science Club as their Programming Director. As part of the Cybersecurity Club he has entered competitions and earned high placements in regional events such as Pacific Rim Collegiate Cyber Defence Competition (PRCCDC) and HackTheBox.

Bui says what he loves most about Highline College is that it feels like a second home. He chose to go to school here because of how “involved the cybersecurity community is.”

His ultimate goal is to pursue a doctorate in cybersecurity or computer science, to make meaningful contributions to the research of the field, and to inspire the next generation of learners and innovators.

The All-Washington Academic Team program is sponsored by the [State Board for Community and Technical Colleges](#), [Washington Association of Community and Technical Colleges](#); [Washington State Association of College Trustees](#) and [Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society](#).

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**Links within this release:**

- <https://spscc.edu/allwa>
- <https://www.ptk.org/>
- <https://ptk.highline.edu/>
- <https://www.sbctc.edu/>
- <https://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/commissions-councils/wactc/>
- <https://www.sbctc.edu/about/college-trustees/>

**About Highline College**

*Founded in 1961 as the first community college in King County, Highline College annually serves 14,100 students. With more than 80 percent students of color, Highline is the most diverse higher education institution in the state. The college offers a wide range of academic transfer, professional-technical education, basic skills and applied bachelor's degree programs. Alumni include former Seattle Mayor Norm Rice, internationally acclaimed author Ann Rule, entrepreneur Junki Yoshida, Dr. Tom Jackson, former president of Cal-Poly Humboldt and retired Army Lieutenant Colonel and nurse Sandra Cravens Robinson.*