



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR RELEASE: Immediately
DATE: April 17, 2023
CONTACT: Raechel Dawson: (206) 591-3393, rdawson@highline.edu

Highline Student Joins 2023 All-Washington Academic Team Engineering Student to Receive \$500 in Scholarships

DES MOINES, Wash. — A Highline College student has earned statewide recognition and scholarships for his educational achievements this past year.

Dustin Cole will be honored as a member of the 2023 [All-Washington Academic Team](#) for his academic achievement, community service and involvement in college. Cole and other top scholars from the state's 34 community and technical colleges will be recognized during the April 27 [awards ceremony](#) at South Puget Sound Community College.

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

"I applied for the All-Washington Academic Team Scholarship because I worked incredibly hard as a student to meet the qualifications to even apply for a chance of winning the scholarship," Cole said.

By being named to the All-Washington team, Cole earned \$500: \$250 given by KeyBank and \$250 by the [Highline College Foundation](#).

Cole, an 18-year-old living in Federal Way, holds a 3.97 GPA while studying at Highline College as a Running Start student pursuing an Associate of Science degree in general engineering. Dually enrolled at Thomas Jefferson High School, Cole is actively involved in his high school's FIRST robotics team and plans to earn his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering at Eastern Washington University so that he can help other people through his interest in problem-solving.

Cole was inspired to study mechanical engineering because of its broad field of study.

"I chose to study engineering because of my natural intuition of all mechanical objects," Cole said.

"Mainly through the high school FIRST robotics program, I learned my true passion was in engineering and the design process."

After college, Cole hopes to help people through a career in engineering, which has been helping people for centuries in ways that are not often considered daily.

"I want to be a part of the engineering that revolutionizes the world and technology around us," the Eagle

Scout said, adding that being a well-rounded engineer is his goal as he feels that is the best way he will be able to help people.

But Cole's path to engineering hasn't been without challenges.

"The struggles I've had to overcome to get where I am now include finding a genuine passion for the coursework I accomplish at Highline," Cole said. "As classes became more difficult, I found that if I lacked the drive to enjoy the work I was doing, the coursework became immensely more difficult. I have also found that overcoming the fear of being wrong in class was a struggle I think all of us deal with at Highline and overcoming that fear, or at least sharing your thoughts, makes a severe difference in an individual's learning outcomes."

Cole said he wished he knew the importance of participating in class and asking questions earlier on in his academic career. Although he learned fairly quickly, he said it can take a lot of courage for students to publicly speak their minds in class — especially if they're unsure if they're right or wrong.

"Talking to instructors and making a personable connection in the classroom during office hours makes the education process easier for a student," he said, noting math instructor Terry Meerdink has been especially influential during his time at Highline.

"Highline College has made a significant impact on my future, especially in the long run of things," Cole reflected. "Highline showed me what it takes to excel in college coursework and I will be far more prepared to go into a four-year university compared to the majority of high school students."

Cole plans to graduate from both high school and Highline College in June 2023.

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.

#

Attachment: Photo of Highline College student Dustin Cole.

Links within this release:

- <https://spscc.edu/allwa>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xUwX13SMYI>
- <https://www.ptk.org/>
- <https://ptk.highline.edu/>
- <https://foundation.highline.edu/>
- <https://www.sbctc.edu/>
- <https://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/commissions-councils/wactc/>
- <https://www.sbctc.edu/about/college-trustees/>

Founded in 1961 as the first community college in King County, Highline College annually serves more than 13,000 students. With over 75 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, entrepreneur Junki Yoshida, Dr. Tom Jackson, president of Cal-Poly Humboldt and former Washington state poet laureate Sam Green.