Skagit STEM Network

Helping our Skagit Valley students DREAM BIG!

Forty-two Skagit students will each receive $22,500 towards their in-state bachelor's degrees, thanks to Washington State Opportunity Scholarship Program

Sedro-Woolley, WA -- The Washington State Opportunity Scholarship (WSOS), a workforce development program unique to Washington that helps put high-demand college degrees within reach of students across the state, announced today that 42 students from Skagit County will receive $945,000 in STEM-Focused Scholarship Funding.

This is a record number of scholarships for Skagit students from WSOS, which was created in 2011. Overall, WSOS announced a total of 1,850 students across the state will receive a maximum of $22,500 towards their in-state bachelor's degree.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for our Skagit students," said Michelle Judson, Skagit STEM Network Director. "The scholarships will enable our students to earn high-demand degrees, providing them with the technical and critical skills needed to thrive in today's jobs and excel in the unknown jobs of tomorrow."

Judson said students from Anacortes, Burlington-Edison, La Conner, Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley, and Skagit Adventist high schools were selected to join the program. Judson said the Skagit STEM Network received a grant last Fall to actively promote WSOS to school counselors to encourage students to apply. "Awesome results followed," said Judson.

"These students represent the future of our state," said Naria Santa Lucia, executive director for WSOS. "We are delighted to welcome them to the program and help support their success over the coming years."

This year, WSOS received more than 4,000 applications-with more diversity than last year's submitted applications. Washington STEM, which is the administrator and community partner to WSOS, supported the statewide effort to reach all eligible students.

Newly selected scholars come from every legislative district in the state. Fifty seven percent are female, 64 percent identify as students of color, and 69 percent are the first in their family to attend

college. All are pursuing bachelor's degrees in approved majors in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) and health care fields - areas where Washington companies remain critically short on talent.

WSOS was created in 2011 to address both rising tuition costs and a lack of local STEM talent prepared for industry demands. Per the legislation that governs the program, the State matches private dollars raised by WSOS, including founding partners Microsoft and Boeing. To date, the program has raised nearly $98 million from the private sector.

More than 8,600 students have received support from WSOS and more than 2,400 have graduated since the program began. Eighty-three percent of graduates are employed or seeking an advanced degree in their field. More than 90 percent took jobs here in Washington.

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About the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship
The Washington State Opportunity Scholarship was created by the Washington State Legislature in 2011 to help local students from low- and middle-income families earn high-demand degrees and launch their careers in Washington. For more information, go to
www.waopportunityscholarship.org<http://www.waopportunityscholarship.org/>.

About Washington STEM
Washington STEM is a statewide nonprofit advancing excellence, equity, and innovation in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education. For more information, go to
www.washingtonstem.org<http://www.washingtonstem.org/>.

About Skagit STEM Network
The Skagit STEM Network serves as a clearing house for STEM supportive activities to plug into and more effectively leverage efforts across Skagit County. The Network focuses on preparing future generations for economic success and creating a greater connection between Skagit Valley Students and local industry. For more information, go to
www.skagitstem.com<http://www.skagitstem.com/>.