USU Uintah Basin Welcomes 12 Sterling Scholars to Campus | Statewide

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Utah State University’s Uintah Basin Campus is playing host to a campus-record 12 Sterling Scholars this academic year.

"So many of our Sterling Scholars start their Aggie careers as concurrent enrollment students on one of our two Uintah Basin campuses. We get to know them and appreciate their academic achievements and their potential," said James Y. Taylor, Uintah Basin associate vice president. "When they choose to stay, and take advantage of the incredible local academic offerings, they also enrich and expand our campus culture. Local Aggies are always the best and we are proud to have them on our campus."

Northeast Region Sterling Scholars that are attending or have attended the Uintah Basin campus this year include:

- Anekah Bulloch – Uintah High School – Visual Arts
- Bethany Christensen – Uintah High School – Computer Technology
- Devony Cook – Uintah High School – Agricultural Sciences
- Taylee Elison – Uintah High School – Business & Marketing
- Gracey Gardner – Altamont High School – Agricultural Sciences
- Amanda LeVitre – Uintah High School – English
- Kylon Mortenson – Uintah High School – Instrumental Music
- Halle Olsen – Uintah High School – Dance
- Vincent Reiley – Union High School – General
- Gus Scott – Uintah High School – Vocal Performance
- Jordan Tan – Union High School – Computer Technology
- Tate Watt – Uintah High School – Science

Cook and Elison were both the region winners in their respective categories, while Bulloch, Christensen and LeVitre were the runners-up in theirs. The seven other honorees were the nominees from each of their high schools in each subject.

A Vernal native and Uintah High School graduate, Cook was grateful for the opportunity to stay close to home while pursuing her education.

"I have always dreamed of being an Aggie! Every time I was on (the Logan) campus, I felt the fellowship and excitement of the students and staff and was awed by the many opportunities there. Even though the Uintah Basin Campus is smaller, I have felt the exact same way," Cook said. "I love going to school, connecting with those around me, and spending time with other students that love the basin as much as I do. It’s my home and I love the town, the mountains, the lakes, and the small-town feel."

The Sterling Scholar program provides financial assistance to the top nominees each year. At Utah State, award recipients receive a cash scholarship that is stackable with any other financial aid the student has gotten from USU. Sterling Scholar awards can be used at any of the USU campuses. At the Uintah Basin campus specifically, additional tuition waivers are awarded to all winners from the two local school districts.

"I decided to stay in Vernal because of the scholarship I received from doing Sterling Scholar," Cook said. "I was the person that had no feasible way to pay for my education, but there were so many scholarships available here that I didn’t have to pay a penny toward school."

The Sterling Scholar program, created by the Deseret News and sponsored by the Larry H. & Gail Miller Family Foundation, recognizes high school seniors for the pursuit of excellence in scholarship, leadership and citizenship. Nominees are judged on their portfolios, exhibits and personal interviews, with awards given at the high school, semifinal and finals levels.
“Sterling Scholar was absolutely amazing and I’m so grateful for that experience,” Cook said. “I got to connect with students that were able to teach me about their passions such as dance, computer technology, and math while sharing my passion and experience in agriculture.

“I was able to learn communication and interview skills that have helped me when asking questions in class or talking to my professors,” she continued. “Sterling Scholar helped me see all the things I was able to accomplish in high school and made me want to keep going and reach even higher achievements in college. I hold my experiences in high school and Sterling Scholar close to my heart and couldn’t be more grateful that I was able to be a part of it.”

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