Student Scholars honored Friday in Capitol

Thirty-seven outstanding student scholars from Oregon’s community colleges received awards and scholarships April 29 in at the state Capital.

Representing Rogue Community College were Katie Strong, of Grants Pass and Mike Costello, Gold Hill. The community colleges’ faculty and administration selected the recipients from the 378,000 students who attended Oregon community colleges this year, based on their academic standing and college experience. The outstanding scholars also received $1,000 scholarships to attend an Oregon four-year institution.

Katie Strong graduated in 2003 from Grants Pass High School in the top 5 percent of her class, captained the varsity basketball team, and volunteered in many service projects. She has a 3.91 GPA, tutors in the TRIO program, and will transfer next fall to Southern Oregon University.

“I was also the first in four generations in my family to not drop out of school, and that was huge,” she said. “Rogue has a lot to offer. RCC is an affordable way to take pre-requisites and has many top quality instructors.”

Mike Costello has earned a 3.94 GPA and is majoring in digital graphic design and computer science multimedia, studies he plans to continue at SOU.

“Once I complete both degrees, I would like to incorporate them into my passion for photography and computers by starting my own photography and graphics business with my family. I would also like to pursue a master’s in education so that I can share the importance of education with others,” Costello said.

The award ceremony began in the chambers of the Oregon House of Representatives. The scholars received their awards from House Speaker Karen Minnis and Senate President Peter Courtney and had the opportunity to have their photographs taken with the officials.

Following the Capitol ceremony, the students and their guests were treated to a luncheon at the Salem Convention Center and recognized by the presidents of the community
colleges from which they are graduating. Three of the 37 made brief presentations about their experiences and goals.

Most of Oregon’s four-year colleges and universities, both public and private, offer $1,000 scholarships to student scholars. Community college students who transfer to a four-year institution academically outperform the students who began their college experience at the four-year institution.

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For more information on the Student Scholar awards, contact Andrea Henderson, executive director, Oregon Community College Association, (503) 399-9912.