

For Immediate Release

ACM PHI THETA KAPPA CHAPTER ACHIEVES FIVE-STAR STATUS

CUMBERLAND, Md. – Allegany College of Maryland’s Omicron Pi chapter of Phi Theta Kappa has advanced to the highest level of membership in the international honor society with designation as a five-star chapter.

The achievement is the culmination of a long series of projects and activities benefiting college and community in pursuit of a plan made early in this decade to guide the chapter to PTK’s top rung.

“They worked really hard,” said Melody Gaschler, the ACM faculty member who advises the student chapter and also the college’s Honors Program.

Omicron Pi’s climb within PTK, the honor society for two-year colleges, stems from successful completion of an Honors in Action project that contributes to the betterment of society.

Chapter members met that standard with a video they developed to help others address the problem of bullying. PTK’s objective for these HIA projects is for students to research a study topic and apply learning and problem-solving for positive impact.

Another recent chapter project was the “Commit to Complete” initiative, intended to make more students aware of the impact that graduation can have on their lives.

ACM students were enlisted in the “Community College Completion Corps” and pledged to take tangible steps toward fulfilling the requirements of their academic program.

This successful multi-year effort was conducted in coordination with the college’s Completion Agenda Task Force. It also aligned with the Maryland Association of Community Colleges’ goal of promoting student academic completion.

In addition to its group effort, the chapter has also seen a number of its individual members recognized by PTK over the years.

Many have been named to the All-Maryland Community College Academic Team. The program recognizes scholastic achievement, leadership and college and community service.

Several have been named Coca-Cola Community College Academic Team Gold Scholars.

That honor, based on academic rigor, grade point average, academic and leadership awards and college engagement and community service, is accorded to just 50 students nationwide each year.

One of these students was also named a Guistwhite Scholar, chosen for academic achievement, leadership accomplishment and engagement in PTK programs. Only 20 community college students nationwide are so designated.

At the organization's international convention two years ago, near Washington, D.C., three individuals representing ACM were honored. Chapter president Michael Kerns, one of six students who participated, was named a distinguished chapter officer.

ACM's president, Dr. Cynthia Bambara, was among about 20 community college presidents nationwide presented with a Susan B. Gordon Award of Distinction for support and dedication to PTK.

And Gaschler was recognized as an outstanding PTK chapter advisor by the honor society's Middle States Region and was presented its Horizon Award.

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Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society has awarded five-star status to the Omicron Pi chapter at Allegany College of Maryland. The honor recognizes the chapter's strength and activity at all levels in accordance with PTK ideals. Seated, from left to right, are Talita Mirfin, chapter president at ACM's Bedford County Campus, and Thomas (T.J.) Glenny, chapter president, Cumberland campus. Standing, also from left, are chapter member Syully Koroh, chapter advisor Melody Gaschler and chapter officer Cecelia Bonner. Not pictured are officers Kaitlyn Gornall, Michael Kerns and Danita Tyler-Smith.