



Press Release

FOR INFORMATION:

Diane Oaks, Executive Director of Marketing and Creative Services
doaks@ivc.edu

Jennie McCue, Director of Marketing and Communications
jmccue@saddleback.edu

IVC and Saddleback Students Named to All-USA Academic Team

***Yasaman Nassab and Preston Hong
Recognized for Intellectual Achievement, Leadership, and Community and
Campus Engagement***

Irvine, CA—Wednesday, March 10, 2021—Irvine Valley College (IVC) and Saddleback College students Yasaman Nassab and Preston Hong are two of only 20 college students nationwide to be named to the prestigious All-USA Academic Team and will receive a \$5,000 scholarship. More than 2,000 students were nominated for this award. The scholarship is sponsored by Cengage, an education technology company, with additional support provided by Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC).

Yasaman and Hong will be recognized during the AACC's virtual convention in May. In addition to the scholarship funds, they will be presented with a commemorative medallion. IVC and Saddleback Presidents Dr. John Hernandez and Dr. Elliot Stern will both receive a commemorative obelisk.

"Yasaman is a well-rounded and accomplished student who is very deserving of this prestigious recognition," says Dr. Hernandez. "She exemplifies all of the characteristics of an All-USA-Academic Team awardee in her academic achievement, leadership, and civic growth."

"We are all so proud of Preston, who has shown remarkable academic achievement as well as leadership as an Associated Student Government officer," said Dr. Stern. "I know he will do great things and wish him all the best as he continues his higher education and pursues his career aspirations."

Since coming to IVC, Yasaman has been actively involved in a number of student life and leadership opportunities on campus. She has served the Associated Students of

Irvine Valley College (ASIVC) as Senator of Humanities and later as Director of Student Advocates and Activism. She worked as a Promise Program Peer Mentor and a note-taker for Disabled Students Programs and Services. She founded and became president of the IVC Mental Wellness Club and is the Inter-Club Council (ICC) representative for the Persian Club. She is also involved with the Speech and Debate team, Psi Beta, and the Honors Program.

Yasaman plans to pursue a master's degree and PhD in psychology with the hopes of becoming a marriage and family therapist, clinical psychologist, and life coach.

"I also want to be a strong voice and advocate for mental health," says Yasaman. "I want to be able to raise mental health awareness through multiple platforms."

She says, "Growing up, I saw how popular psychologists within my Persian culture were able to help destigmatize and break down the barriers of cultural, societal, and generational trauma that contributed to bad mental health, which years of backwards conditioning, false beliefs, and other factors had caused."

No stranger to taking on a challenge, Yasaman is currently working on developing an app that will help provide mental health awareness globally and in multiple languages. She says it will offer a space where users can connect and receive mutual peer support.

Preston Hong is a member of the Saddleback Associated Student Government as the Director of the Honors Student Council, in addition to being team captain of the Saddleback Track and Field team and Vice President for the college's Phi Theta Kappa chapter. He also is the student government and athletic representative for the college's mascot workgroup, treasurer of the campus chapter of the Society of American Military Engineers, and a member of the Association of Computing Machinery.

"In addition to working part-time and my rigorous academic schedule, I enjoy serving as the Head Coach of Athletics for the Special Olympics of Southern California, and co-leading the American Cancer Society Relay for Life of South Orange County."

Preston plans to transfer to Stanford University and pursue a degree in mechanical engineering, before attaining a master's degree in mechanical engineering and business administration.

[Learn more about the All-USA Academic Team Scholarship Program.](#)

About Irvine Valley College and Saddleback College:

Irvine Valley College (IVC), located 3 miles northwest of Orange County Great Park, draws more than 14,000 students a year. The college ranks No. 1 in Orange County and the state of California for its four-year institution transfer rate. In addition to transfer coursework, IVC offers over 80 associate degrees and over 60 career and technical certificate programs. The college's co-curricular opportunities include an

Honors Program, 13 athletic teams and over 30 student clubs.

Serving more than 23,000 students, Saddleback College is one of two colleges in the South Orange County Community College District and is highly regarded for its quality higher education, extensive online education program, and superior career training for the south Orange County community. Each year, Saddleback College adds more than 6,000 degree and certificate holders to the workforce, and transfers more than 3,500 students to four-year colleges and universities throughout the nation. For more information, visit www.saddleback.edu.

About Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Phi Theta Kappa is the premier honor society recognizing the academic achievement of students at associate-degree-granting colleges and helping them to grow as scholars and leaders. The Society is made up of more than 3.5 million members and nearly 1,300 chapters in 11 nations, with approximately 240,000 active members in the nation's colleges. Learn more at ptk.org.