

# BMCC student named extraordinary community college student

HERMISTON HERALD



Garcia Avila

A Blue Mountain Community College sophomore has been named one of Oregon's four most extraordinary community college Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) students for 2020.

Esgar Garcia Avila, a business student from Hermiston, was selected for the honor out of more than 50 nominations of PTK students from all 17 of Oregon's community colleges. PTK is an international honor society for two-year colleges.

The Oregon Commu-

nity College Association bestows the honor among just four students from across the state each year. The criteria used for selecting the top four students is based on academic excellence, leadership and community service while pursuing an associate's degree. A committee of local college board members, college presidents and associations reviews nominations

and makes the selections. "It was a difficult selection as all of the students nominated for this recognition had impressive academic credentials, leadership qualities and community service," said OCCA Executive Director Dr. Cam Preus in a congratulatory letter to the four students. "However, you all stood out as the most accomplished."

Besides being an honor student with a cumulative 3.8 GPA, Avila played the past two seasons as a defender on the men's soccer team. Avila has served the

past two years as a BMCC student ambassador, leading tours of prospective students and other visitors around campus, promoting the college in the community, and visiting local high schools to talk about the benefits of being a student at BMCC. He also served as BMCC's student representative on the OCCA Board. In addition, Avila has held a work study job in the BMCC College Relations & Advancement Office, assisting with marketing and social media.

"I am honored to receive such a high, prestigious

award and to be representing BMCC," he said. "I would like to thank my parents, family, and friends for believing in me so I can always keep pushing forward."

The OCCA has traditionally held a luncheon each spring in Salem to honor its outstanding students and allow students to speak about their educational journeys. However, with COVID-19 and social distancing measures in place, the OCCA canceled the event, but still plans to celebrate later.

Avila will graduate from BMCC in June with an asso-

ciates degree in business, and plans to transfer to a four-year university in the fall.

"The faculty and staff of Blue Mountain are very proud of Esgar and his extraordinary achievements," said BMCC President Dennis Bailey-Fougner. "He is not only smart, talented, and well-accomplished, but he is also one of the kindest individuals I have met at BMCC. He is always the first in line to help with an activity or event, and he always has a smile on his face. This is a well-deserved honor."

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