

Students Win National SkillsUSA Awards

Eight students from the University of Arkansas - Fort Smith and the Western Arkansas Technical Center at UA Fort Smith won awards at the national SkillsUSA Championships, with the awards including one gold award for a high school student and a bronze for a UA Fort Smith student.

Lidiana Quezada of Fort Smith, a student at Northside High School who attends WATC classes on the UA Fort Smith campus, earned a gold medal in the secondary Medical Math competition. UA Fort Smith student Sebastian Bossarte of Van Buren earned a bronze medal in the post-secondary category Computer Programming.

This year's competition included a "first" for WATC, according to Dave Stevens of Fort Smith, SkillsUSA adviser.

"Lidiana Quezada's national gold medal is the first national medal of any kind for the WATC SkillsUSA chapter," said Stevens. "Sebastian Bossarte's bronze medal is the eighth national medal for UA Fort Smith since 2002."

WATC director D. Chris Rink of Mansfield spoke highly of the competition and the showing by WATC students and UA Fort Smith students.

"The SkillsUSA National Championships event draws the best students from around the country, and to medal at this level is truly an outstanding achievement," said Rink. "Lidiana and Sebastian have proven their skills among the nation's elite."

Rink said the instruction that the students have received plays a part in their success.



“The students’ accomplishments are a real testimony to the quality instruction and mentoring each of our students receives from the faculty and staff of the University of Arkansas - Fort Smith and the Western Arkansas Technical Center. I am very proud of all they have achieved.”

UA Fort Smith and Western Arkansas Technical Center’s chapters of SkillsUSA have been attending the national competitions since 2002.

Students receiving awards, by town of residence, were:

Alma: Jacob Waldrop, Alma High School, 20th place in Welding Fabrication (team of three).

Fort Smith: Lidiana Quezada, Northside High School, Gold Medalist (first place) in Medical Math, and Brendon Glidden, UA Fort Smith, fourth place in 3D Visualization and Animation (team of two).

Greenwood: Andrew Jackson, Greenwood High School, 20th place in Welding Fabrication.

Ozark: Serena Vanderford, UA Fort Smith, fourth place in 3D Visualization and Animation.

Ratcliff: Megan Stephenson, County Line High School, 16th place in Pre-School Teaching Assistant.

Van Buren: Dakota Bandy, Van Buren High School, 20th place in Welding Fabrication, and Sebastian Bossarte, UA Fort Smith, Bronze Medalist (third place) in Computer Programming.

SkillsUSA is a national organization for both high school and college students and is a partnership of students, teachers and industry. The organization is designed to provide quality educational experiences for students enrolled in technical, skilled and service programs.

SkillsUSA has more than 300,000 students and instructors as members. Almost 6,000 students attended the national championship competitions.

WATC provides area high school juniors and seniors in 19 school districts of Western Arkansas an opportunity to earn college credit in automotive technology, computer- aided drafting and design, criminal justice, early childhood education, information technology, electronics technology, health sciences, engineering, graphic design and welding technology.

Article by: Sondra LaMar, Director of Public Relations