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## Scoring Where it Counts the Most at Whitman

When their classmates score a touchdown or kick a goal, recognition is immediate and gratifying. But students often don't receive the same acclaim for academic accomplishments. But four Whitman students are receiving the recognition that is so often absent, because they now know that they are among the top 3% of the 1.5 million students who entered the 2010 National Merit Competition.

"Being a National Merit Scholarship commended student means a lot for a couple of reasons," said Jonathan Balsano. "It recognizes my achievements, for one, and it also allows me to send my PSAT scores to colleges ahead of time, which helps me stand out among the many thousands of students applying to colleges this fall." Jonathan, who enjoys challenges and finding ways to solve problems, will be applying for early decision to Columbia's School of Engineering, where he wants to major in computer science.

Aseef Raihan also appreciated being recognized for his academic achievements. "This is a mark for all the hard work I've put into my studies," says Aseef, who will be studying aeronautical engineering while attending the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs next year.

Whitman senior Nikki Fabrizo was excited to learn of her award. "This is acknowledgment that all the hard work is paying off," she said. Nikki, who plans to major in computer sciences or business-related studies, is hoping to be accepted to NYU or Tulane University. "I've enjoyed a full range of academic and extracurricular activities while at Whitman," she said. "DECA was an especially great experience."

Jillian Melnick was delighted with the news that she had been commended. "This is such a surprise because I didn't know until just now that I won," she said. With her heart set on attending Barnard College, Jillian had this to say about this stage of her life: "Whitman has been and continues to be a great experience for me. There are so many kids here who strive to do really well academically. They are a great support system. But I'm ready to move on to college, where I can continue to shape my idea of what I want to do in the world."

"These young people have taken complete advantage of what Whitman has to offer on the curricular and extracurricular levels," said Whitman Principal James Polansky. "They are characterized by not only their intelligence, but also their integrity and ability to influence others in a positive manner. It has been a pleasure to work with and come to know them throughout their high school years."

For these four Whitman students, being recognized as high-achieving students is the next step in advancing their own educational excellence. They have demonstrated outstanding academic performance in a highly competitive program, and like their athletically gifted classmates, have achieved the recognition they deserve, having scored the ultimate goal.



*Whitman Principal James Polansky, center in photo, is flanked by his four seniors who were honored with National Merit Commended Student Awards. L-R: Aseef Raihan, Nikki Fabrizo, Mr. Polansky, Jillian Melnick and Jonathan Balsano.*

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