



A Scholarly Duo



A political science major with her sights set on Harvard Law School and a chemistry tutor and future doctor of pharmacy represent Clark College on the 2006 All-Washington Academic Team. Mariah Acton of Vancouver and Sarah Craciun of Brush Prairie will be honored for their academic achievement and community involvement at a ceremony on March 2 in Olympia.

Above from left to right: Mariah Acton and Sarah Craciun find time to study between classes and volunteer activities.

The All-Washington Academic Team is the qualifying step in the competition for nomination to the All-USA Academic Team sponsored by Phi Theta Kappa honor society, USA Today newspaper, and the American Association of Community Colleges. It recognizes 60 outstanding two-year college students annually from around the country. The All-Washington team is made up of 68 students representing all 34 technical and community colleges in the state.

2005 was a memorable year for future attorney Mariah Acton. She celebrated her 18th birthday, which happened to fall on Election Day, by exercising her civic duty. Elections officials weren't sure it was legal. "It turned out, to be eligible you had to be 18 on the day of election to vote, and I was," she says with a smile. She maintains a high level of academic accomplishment while staying connected with the community. As a Clark County Youth Commissioner, she makes policy recommendations to Clark County Commissioners, Vancouver City Council, and Mayor Pollard.

Acton, a Running Start student, made the choice to spend much of her last two years of high school at Clark College. It's a decision she is proud of saying, "The courses and the college environment have molded my world perspective and developed my awareness of the human condition and will

be an everlasting source of strength in the future." She stays active at Prairie High School as a singles tennis player.

Sarah Craciun, also a Running Start student, has found success in science and math while volunteering for veterans. Every Friday afternoon she can be found at the VA Medical Center's In-State Pharmacy, where she packages medications for use by patients. Her desire to become a pharmacist sprouted at an early age. "My goal is to provide excellent health care to future generations," she says. Her next step towards that dream has been to apply to the University of Washington School of Pharmacy.

Craciun feels her studies have prepared her for the road ahead. She elaborates saying, "Clark College is the doorway to my future. From the first day of college until now, I can say that I have been challenged in all sorts of areas and enjoyed every moment." Beyond the classroom, she challenges her artistic side by playing the flute in the Philadelphia Church Orchestra.

All-Washington Academic Team members receive a medallion and \$750 in scholarships sponsored by KeyBank of Washington and the Northwest Education Loan Association (NELA). In addition, Clark College's honorees will be awarded a \$500 scholarship from the Clark College Foundation. ■