

QCC Student Gets First Mechanics Hall Apprentice Award

Posted by [Charlie Arsenault](#) | Oct 9, 2019

WORCESTER – Quinsigamond Community College student Tabitha Leber found herself in an elite group of college students when she received a Mechanics Hall Collegiate Apprentice Award at the 2019 Celebration of Excellence event on Oct. 5 at Mechanics Hall in Worcester. This is the first time the Worcester County Mechanics Association has given this type of colligate award to exemplary student leaders within Worcester's higher education community. Students were chosen for their demonstrated leadership, creativity and innovation, excellence in academics and community involvement within Worcester or the student's hometown.

"Tabitha exemplifies all the great qualities of a QCC student and we are honored that she has received this prestigious award as a student leader at our college," said QCC President Dr. Luis G. Pedraja.

Leber, an Elementary Education major, personifies the definition of a Mechanics Hall Collegiate Apprentice award winner. She is president of QCC's Alpha Theta Zeta Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa's (PTK) Honor Society, overseeing the chapter's research projects; working on developing goals for the chapter, representing PTK at all its functions, as well as playing an integral role in the PTK Live and Learn Greenhouse on QCC's main campus.

"Tabitha is an exceptionally hardworking and committed student whose dedication, generosity and work ethic make her a shining example for all QCC and PTK students," said PTK Advisor Bonnie Coleman.

According to Leber, who is also mom to an eight-year-old daughter, she wasn't always as focused as she is today. Before coming to QCC, she said she felt her life lacked direction and while being mom to her daughter was fulfilling, she knew something was missing.

"When my child was in kindergarten, I was volunteering on a daily basis in her classroom. Her teacher saw how well I did with the students and told me she believed I would make a great teacher. It was her gentle nudge that inspired me to go back to school," she said. "Knowing that going back to school would set a better example for my child, I jumped in head first."

Leber said she chose QCC because it was close to her home and offered a flexible class schedule that worked with her and her family. She began taking classes at the college and in 2018, after attending a PTK Open House, decided to join the organization. It was a decision that not only solidified her desire to teach, but also gave her a community and connections that she would have for a lifetime.

"I learned about the PTK/ Burncoat Mentoring Program and that's when I knew I had to get involved in PTK," she said. "What drives my passion for community service is the good energy I'm putting out into the world. As a member of PTK, the work that we do here on campus and out in our local communities has inspired me to do more and be better."

Her drive, passion and academic excellence were not lost on those at QCC, which was why the college nominated her for the award.

“When I found out I had been selected to receive this award I was in disbelief. I emailed my advisor Bonnie Coleman to confirm that it was real. The things I do, I do because I am passionate about them, not for any recognition,” she said.

Leber, who aspires to be a first grade teacher, plans to graduate in spring 2020 then transfer to a four-year university to complete her bachelor’s degree, before moving on to attain her master’s degree.