

2019 LAWRENCE A. GOLDING STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP WINNER NAMED

The 14th annual Lawrence A. Golding Student Health/Fitness Scholarship winner was honored just prior to the Larry Golding Keynote Lecture on March 23 during ACSM's International Health & Fitness Summit in Chicago, Illinois. The recipient, Jacob Becker, a senior at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship and complimentary registration to attend ACSM's International Health & Fitness Summit.

The scholarship, awarded in honor of Lawrence A. Golding, Ph.D., FACSM, was created to publicly recognize undergraduate students in either their sophomore, junior, or senior year who have made significant contributions to their community in health, fitness, and/or education.

Jacob, a senior majoring in Exercise Science and minoring in Health Services Leadership, also has been employed as a health coach at Anytime Fitness where he teaches a variety of fitness classes and finds satisfaction in affecting other people's quality of life in positive ways. "I enjoy giving guidance on exercise technique," he said. "But my favorite part is discussing the mental and nutritional side of health so clients better understand how each aspect influences one another and can make their time in the gym more effective."

When asked what ultimately inspired him to pursue an education in exercise science, Jacob recalled experiencing the negative physical, mental, and social effects of childhood obesity

firsthand. As a 245-pound high school sophomore, he had been teased for years as a "big kid" and knew something had to change. That was when he decided to participate in a weight loss program his mother was trying and also began exercising regularly, losing 70 pounds in 18 months. Even with that success, Jacob admitted that before beginning college, he was nervous about the degree curriculum and whether higher education was even the right choice for him. "I tested the waters with a general nutrition course freshman year and was blown away by how much I loved the content," he said. "That was when I decided that exercise science was for me, and I can confidently say it's one of the greatest decisions I've made." Jacob believes that his personal experience of weight loss is his greatest asset while working with clients. "I understand how others feel and how frustrating a major lifestyle change can be," he said. "I better relate to individuals and can motivate around roadblocks they might be struggling with whether it's physically, mentally, or emotionally, since I have been through many of the same."

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Photo courtesy of Jacob Becker.

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“He understands and regularly practices all facets of health including regular meditation and sleep, which is unique to find such dedicated commitment among college students.” Smith also said, “It was incredibly rewarding to witness Jacob embrace every bit of his first ACSM Summit experience in Washington, D.C., in 2018 and return to campus and create his own walking club as a result of the HIIT walking workouts at the Summit.” Smith noted that Jacob was instrumental in recruiting more students to attend the Summit in Chicago this year, and says she has no doubt that he will continue to leave a lasting impression on the field of health and exercise science in his future career.

After graduation, Jacob’s main goal is to become an ACSM Certified Clinical Exercise Physiologist®. His plans include a move from Iowa to Denver where he hopes to coach fitness classes and participate in and promote year-round outdoor recreation while working toward personal and group training certifications. His long-term goal is to own his own fitness facility that would have a dual focus of promoting physical health and emphasizing all the factors that together build a healthy lifestyle. In addition, he said, “Something specific I want to implement wherever I end up coaching are fitness classes for the mentally disabled population. My overall professional aspiration is to help others with their physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health through fitness and nutritional guidance.”

Prior to attending this year’s Summit, Jacob was especially excited to take part in the sessions on nutrition — specifically that presented by Nancy Rodriguez, Ph.D., R.D., CSSD, FACSM, with whom he previously had communicated for a class project and whom he looked forward to meeting in person. He had originally intended to fund his trip to ACSM’s International Health & Fitness Summit with money he’d saved during Christmas break and says, “Winning this scholarship means I can expand my growth even more and invest that money into other routes of professional development.” Jacob, his family, his professors, and the entire Exercise Science Department at Simpson College were thrilled about his scholarship, but more than that, he says, “This award affirms I am in the right professional field and helps legitimize how dedicated I am to the health of others.”

To students and readers of *ACSM’s Health & Fitness Journal*®, Jacob offered some encouragement. “I want to emphasize how important it is to enjoy the journey. Viewing setbacks as building blocks to success will strengthen knowledge, experience, and an overall positive attitude of how much work it takes to be great at something,” he said. “Turning struggles or negative emotions into motivation to succeed will help you achieve things you never thought possible. I’m extremely proud of the work I’ve put in, but I’m even more excited for the work that’s yet to come.” (If you want to learn more about Jacob, click here for a video interview: <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A114>.)



Lawrence A. Golding, Ph.D., FACSME, was a member of ACSM from 1961 until his passing in May of 2018. He was a professional in the field of kinesiology and physical education for more than 60 years. Dr. Golding was the founding editor-in-chief of *ACSM’s Health & Fitness Journal*® and was the chair of ACSM’s Health & Fitness Summit Program Planning Committee for 12 years. To

learn more about the Lawrence A. Golding Student Health/Fitness Scholarship & ACSM’s International Health & Fitness Summit, visit www.acsmsummit.org. For more student resources, visit <https://www.acsm.org/persona-pages/students>.