

ASU senior from Peoria attends White House summit

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Senior at White House summit

An ASU senior from Peoria scored a coveted request: an invitation to the White House. Albert Ojeda, political science major and aspiring law student, was in Washington, D. C., on Oct. 5 to participate in the first-ever White House Summit on **Community Colleges**.

Ojeda was one of about 100 participants invited to the summit, which brought together community-college administrators and faculty, business and **philanthropic** leaders, federal and state policy leaders and a handful of students.

Ojeda made opening remarks at the summit and introduced Jill Biden, community-college professor and wife of Vice President Joe Biden.

He met President Barack Obama, who mentioned Ojeda in his speech as "representative of so many students across the country."

Biden called Ojeda "amazing."

As a transfer student to ASU from Estrella Mountain Community College, Ojeda made an impression on Biden last May at a round-table session she attended. Biden had been in Tempe to learn about the Maricopa-ASU Pathways Program, which helps students transition from the Maricopa Community College system to ASU. As she planned the

summit, Biden remembered Ojeda's story.

Ojeda's aunt and uncle had adopted him when he was 6 years old, after his father died and his mother became addicted to drugs and went to prison. After graduating from Peoria High School, he was encouraged by his aunt and uncle to find direction for his life.

After a year and a half, he enrolled at the community college, where he said he realized the programs and opportunities available to him.

"When Dr. Biden was here, I talked about why I went to community college, how it prepared me for the university, and the different programs they offer that helped me out."

The Peoria college student called his White House experience "surreal." His aunt and uncle accompanied him on the trip.

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