Mike Fazzino 4/26/20

Before answering the question regarding my leadership and service, I would first like to express my sincerest gratitude for being considered for this award. I’ve held various leadership positions across campus, whether it be in Student Government, in New Student Orientation, Res Life, or senior class. My success in any of those fields wouldn’t be what it was if it wasn’t for those around me. I look back on each of these roles I’ve held, and the one thing that always crosses my mind is the team and family dynamic that’s developed from each of those. While it’s an honor to be named a finalist for the Outstanding Student Award, this nomination cannot come without equal credit and appreciation for the countless students I’ve worked with over the years. Although I thought many of the people I’ve crossed paths with would just be people I work with, they became family, and without their support and hard work I would never be in this position.

My hope in everything that I do on campus is that I can impact or inspire someone to be the best versions of themselves. I’ve also strived to create a sense of community and family on this campus that I’m hopeful will last generations to come. I felt that sense of family the moment I first stepped on campus for my orientation, and in each of the three summers I worked orientation, I strove to give new students that same feeling. I also worked tirelessly for two years in Beechwood Hall as an RA to continue to create that sense of community. Since I began getting more involved, I’ve felt such a passion and sense of dedication to this university to ensure that my peers and classmates were writing their own paths and creating their own families. My love for this institution and its members is something I truly pride myself in. As Student Government President, I was able to take my passion and apply it at a level far greater than I could have ever expected. This past year, Monmouth was just one of countless communities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The people and the home that I worked so hard to protect and help grow over the past 3 years was in a place we’d never experienced before. I commend not only my Senate, but also many other members of the Monmouth community for their continued perseverance through this. As the elected leader and representative of the student body, I initially felt a heavy weight on my shoulders, unsure how to comfort my classmates and community members. As our hawk family members remained separated physically, I realized the importance of the fact that we would never be separated emotionally, that we are forever tied together as members of the Monmouth community. A phrase I used often, whether to faculty members I was working with, or classmates and peers who needed a boost was “the Hawks will keep on flying”. This situation has made me all the more grateful that I decided to return to Monmouth to get my master’s degree. In returning to Monmouth, I hope that I can continue to inspire fellow Hawks and do everything I can to keep our family together as together we work to navigate into the rebuilding stages of this crisis.

The question posed of "how has your creative leadership and dedicated service made a contribution of lasting value to Monmouth University and its students?” is a difficult question. To be honest, with everything going on in the world I feel like my work isn’t done. In the time that I’ve been here, I’ve worked extremely hard to work with others to create a greater sense of community and family at Monmouth. As a returning graduate student with the world in the midst of crisis, I can’t completely answer that question yet, simply because the work isn’t done. We as an institution will have a lot of work to do to rebuild our family after this crisis, and I will do everything I can to aid in that. In the time that I have been here, I truly hope that myself and my peers have created a greater sense of community and continued to create and everlasting Hawk family. I would again like to express how truly humbled I am to be in consideration for this award, and I would like to thank my Hawk family for helping me get to where I am today.