



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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University of Nebraska-Lincoln Student Wins Prestigious American Scholarly Genius Award

LINCOLN, Neb. (Feb. 27, 2025) – Katie Freeman, a sophomore majoring in advertising and public relations at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), has been named a winner for the nationwide competition Scholarly Genius Award, conducted by USA Today. Freeman was selected from 75,000 applicants who wrote a 10,000 word essay on the civility of democracy in the United States.

“This is a huge opportunity for my career,” Freeman said. “I plan to develop my ideas further to other college campuses.”

Freeman’s essay revolved around the topic of college students playing a big part in the future of American democracy, socially and politically. Her thoughtful perspective and research set her essay apart from the thousands of applicants. The writing process appeared to be challenging, but as time went on she learned a lot. Freeman found it difficult to reach 10,000 words, and looked for feedback and input from others to refine her ideas. Initially, she struggled to get started but learned to use all her resources to their full extent, which helped her progress much easier.

Dr. Shari Veil, dean of College of Journalism and Mass Communications, praised Freeman’s achievement, “Katie’s dedication and insightful approach to such a critical issue in society reflects the type of students we have at UNL. This award highlights her ability to contribute to such complex topics and contribute to important conversations.”

Winning this award was a complete surprise to Freeman. As soon as she received the call at her apartment, she immediately shared the good news with her parents. She sees this recognition as an opportunity to grow in the future. She plans to use this achievement to help others and guide younger students.

To celebrate this amazing accomplishment, she plans on having dinner with her family and looks forward to special recognition with the Veil.

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