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**Triton College**

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## **Triton College Delegation Attends Model Illinois Government; Student Wins Top Lobbyist Award**



*Triton College sent its largest delegation in nearly 10 years to Springfield to participate in Model Illinois Government from March 5–8. While there, student Jaden Chandler of Oak Park (top row, to the right) won the Outstanding Lobbyist Award.*

**RIVER GROVE, III.** — Triton College student Jaden Chandler of Oak Park won the Model Illinois Government's (MIG) Outstanding Lobbyist Award earlier this month when Triton sent a delegation of students to the 48th annual simulation in Springfield.

"It was very rewarding to get that kind of recognition," Chandler said. "It was unexpected as well, because I didn't go into this thinking that I wanted to get an award. At the end of the experience, I just wanted to grow as a person and really improve my speaking skills."

With its largest delegation in more than 10 years, Triton's group of 11 students traveled to the state capital March 5-8 to join 18 schools and nearly 200 students participating in the annual event.

MIG is a statewide collegiate simulation of Illinois state government held each year in Springfield. Students take on roles as legislators, lobbyists, journalists or members of the executive branch and participate in a simulation of the legislative process. Participants debate bills, work in committees, negotiate policy and advocate for different interests, according to George Lam, an economics instructor who oversees Triton's MIG chapter.

"We are all so proud of Jaden for winning the Outstanding Lobbyist Award," Lam said. "The entire delegation did an amazing job working together and representing Triton with energy and professionalism. Jaden's hard work, along with the support of his teammates, really inspired everyone."

Chandler, 19, will graduate from Triton in May with an associate degree in environmental science before pursuing a bachelor's degree at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. While not primarily focused on political science, Chandler said the experience gave him a better understanding of the legislative process and its connection to environmental policy.

"I got a lot more into it as I understood how it intersects with what I'm studying," he said. "Especially in environmental science, we see that a lot of issues are caused by things like climate change and environmental degradation. Policy and the laws we have in our society are one of the strongest ways we can mitigate these issues."

Chandler said he viewed his role as a lobbyist as a preview of what it might be like to advocate professionally for environmental organizations.

Preparation for MIG begins months in advance, Lam said. Led this year by head delegates Annia Bustos and Dylan Ramirez, students research bills posted ahead of the event, discuss policy topics, practice debate and review parliamentary guidelines.

"It's really immersive, being in that environment," said Ramirez, who served as a Senate Democrat. "You're right there in the Capitol building, debating actual bills and witnessing firsthand how some of these bills become law."

Ramirez and Bustos, both psychology students, said the program's strength lies in bringing together students from a variety of academic backgrounds.

"It's a great program because you're stepping into the shoes of legislators and seeing government in action," said Bustos, who served as a Republican senator. "Even if political science isn't your thing, it's a great opportunity to step out of your comfort zone, find your voice and practice public speaking."

To learn more about Model Illinois Government at Triton College, [triton.edu/students/student-life](https://triton.edu/students/student-life).

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## ABOUT TRITON COLLEGE:

Triton College is a public institution of higher education dedicated to student success. Recently recognized by the Aspen Institute as one of the Top 200 community colleges in the nation, Triton offers more than 130 degree and certificate programs that prepare students to pursue meaningful careers, transfer to four-year universities, and thrive in a global economy. Guided by our mission—*Valuing the individual, educating and serving the community*—Triton serves nearly 17,000 students annually on its 110-acre campus in River Grove, Illinois. Our dedicated faculty and staff provide high-quality, accessible and affordable educational opportunities that empower students and strengthens the communities we serve. Triton College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and a member of The Illinois Community College Board. Illinois is home to 45 colleges in 39 community college districts. Learn more at [triton.edu](http://triton.edu).

