



Triton College

For Immediate Release: June 17, 2025

Triton College's Chi Zeta Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa Takes Home Awards in Regional Conference

RIVER GROVE, Ill. —Triton College's Chi Zeta Chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society was once again recognized as a five-star chapter and took home an award for Outstanding Chapter Advisor Team.

Phi Theta Kappa is an international organization that supports high-achieving students through scholarships, professional development, and opportunities to invest in their community. Triton College's Chi Zeta Chapter, established in 1970, has 6,871 members, including both current and former Triton students.

The 2025 Illinois Regional Conference and Honors Institute of Phi Theta Kappa was held in Champaign. For Chi Zeta Chapter advisors Antigone Sharris and Johnny Urbina, the event initially seemed to be the usual extravagant affair: chapters from all over the region elegantly dressed and gathered in a banquet hall, celebrating the work of their peers.

Excitement began to build in the Chi Zeta team after they were recognized as a five-star chapter for the 13th year in a row. But when the group was called up to accept the award for Outstanding Chapter Advisor Team, their elation erupted.

"Johnny and I looked at each other with a 'was that us they called?' look!" said Sharris, a Triton engineering technology faculty member. "We are both proud of what our teams over the years have accomplished. It's a joy helping them meet their goals. I'm humbled by their nomination."

"We were surprised," added Urbina, Triton's director of student services. "And we were honored by the fact that we were nominated by our students. That felt great."

To be recognized as a five-star chapter, Urbina explained that Phi Theta Kappa chapters must follow a Five Star Chapter Plan rubric that outlines essentials for creating an engaged chapter, organized into five "stars": Reach, Engage, Network, Lead, and Discover.

To become a member, students must be currently enrolled at Triton—part-time or full-time—and maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5. Degree-seeking students must have completed 12 college-level credit hours prior to the current semester, while certificate-seeking students need to have completed six.

By joining Chi Zeta, Urbina said students gain pivotal resources to support their academic journey and access to a prestigious society with influence stretching across the nation and beyond. Members also engage in charitable work and host events to support both local and international causes.

A major draw to the organization is the more than \$246 million that Phi Theta Kappa has awarded in transfer scholarships, allowing students to save on tuition at over 800 four-year colleges and universities, Urbina added.

In addition to offering federal and state financial aid programs, Triton College awarded more than \$1.85 million in scholarships last year. Students are recognized for academic excellence, leadership, athletics, community service, and enrollment in specific academic programs.

A Triton alumna and Chi Zeta member herself, Sharris knows firsthand the benefits of joining the program and urged students to do the same.

When Sharris set out to earn her bachelor's degree, she said it took her seven years to complete. She first attended a four-year university before coming to Triton and joining Chi Zeta. She later transferred to a baccalaureate school to finish her degree. Sharris completed her bachelor's with zero debt and five years of field-worthy experience.

"This is why I believe education is a journey, not a race," she said. "I discourage people from going into debt just to finish sooner. Focus on the plan, make it, and move forward. Why did my plan work? Triton College!"

###

Media Contacts:

Melissa Ramirez Cooper | melissacooper@triton.edu | 708-456-0300, Ext. 3692

Hunter Oberst | hunteroberst@triton.edu | 708-456-0300, Ext. 3836

ABOUT TRITON COLLEGE

Triton College is an institution of higher education dedicated to student success. Triton offers more than 120 degree and certificate programs designed for students to realize their career aspirations and effectively compete in a global economy. The college campus spans 110 acres in River Grove, Illinois, holds classes at satellite locations and offers online learning opportunities. Triton's exemplary faculty and staff work to provide high-quality, convenient and affordable educational opportunities to more than 10,000 students each year. Triton College is a member of The Community Colleges of Illinois and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Learn more at triton.edu.