



STUDENT SUCCESS

Brett Becko – Class of 2022 Bachelor of Science, Sustainable Plant Systems



Brett Becko was awarded the Outstanding Senior in the Sustainable Plant Systems degree. He was recognized by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Spring 2022. Brett was selected by the faculty in the Department of Biosystems Engineering, Department of Environmental Science, and the School of Plant Sciences as an excellent student and outstanding citizen of the university and the community. Brett is a first-generation college student, who pursued his degree as a non-traditional student after 10 years of military service. After serving two tours of duty in Iraq and two more tours of duty in Afghanistan with additional service in the army reserves, Brett became aware of the problems veterans have transitioning back to civilian life including, but not limited to, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injuries, and chronic pain. This awareness spurred a desire to explore alternatives to the prescription drugs used to treat these illnesses – without the common, and equally debilitating side-effects. This brought Brett to Sustainable Plant Systems, with an emphasis in Controlled Environment Agriculture. Growing plants in controlled environments is a proven method for manipulating the production of secondary metabolites, like those used medicinally. He also obtained a Peer Support Specialist Certificate from the University of Arizona and worked for three years with homeless and at-risk veterans helping them obtain employment or training for employment. His transcript is replete with courses centered on this singular interest in human well-being ranging from medicinal plants, and effects of plant compounds on neurophysiology, to human consciousness, cognition, and even yoga! Brett was widely appreciated by faculty and his peers as an excellent student who was not only able to learn difficult concepts quickly, but who could also speak, write, think critically and make connections readily. Brett served as a preceptor for Dr. Dennis Ray in PLS312 Plant and Animal Genetics where he was valued as a mentor, and as a reliable and effective instructor. After graduation, Brett will work for the US Department of Veteran’s Affairs focusing on reintegration activities for veterans.



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