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STETSON UNIVERSITY

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Two Stetson University Students Receive Free Tuition through Vaccination Incentive

Safer Stetson Awards help boost COVID-19 vaccination rates on campus

DELAND, Florida, Aug. 4, 2021 – Vaccinated [Stetson University](#) students Marcus Boyd and Joshua Sanchez will be receiving free tuition for a year, thanks to the [Safer Stetson Awards](#).

Boyd and Sanchez provided Stetson with their COVID-19 vaccination information through an anonymous voluntary system and were given a shot at winning a complimentary college education during the Safer Stetson Awards over the summer. They won the grand prize during a [Facebook Live](#) drawing on Friday, July 30.

Boyd is an incoming first-year [political-science](#) student who was speechless when his name was selected to receive free tuition for the 2021-2022 academic year.

“I was in disbelief and needed to make sure that I wasn’t dreaming,” said Boyd on a video conference call. “Doing my part in the fight against COVID-19 was reason enough to get the vaccine.”

“I was surprised and grateful when I found out that I won free tuition for a year,” said Sanchez, who is a music education senior at the [Stetson University School of Music](#). “I spent three years struggling to pay my college tuition. The news of me receiving free tuition during my last year of college provided me with relief and took a lot of weight off my shoulders.”

The university created the Safer Stetson Awards program as a step toward ensuring a healthy and safe campus environment for the fall semester by encouraging COVID-19 vaccination.

“Nearly 1,500 vaccinated students participated in the Safer Stetson Awards,” said Ray Nault, EdD, vice president of [Enrollment Management](#). “We saw a tremendous interest and community coalescing around this important cause since the program launched.”

The university has set a goal for at least 70% of faculty, staff and students to be vaccinated by the fall semester when it begins on Thursday, Aug. 19. Currently, 53% of Stetson’s overall population, employees and students are vaccinated at both the DeLand and Gulfport campuses. The vaccination progress can be tracked on the [Safer Stetson website](#).

“I recommend others to get the COVID-19 vaccine,” said Sanchez. “I got the vaccine so I could protect my mom and grandmother.”

“I play the French horn and miss performing in front of an audience during Stetson University School of Music concerts,” added Sanchez. “The university may allow more campus activities to occur after students get vaccinated.”

New and returning Stetson students had an opportunity to participate in the weekly Safer Stetson Award drawings from June 11 to July 30 after they provided their COVID-19 vaccination information. Names were randomly selected from a pool of vaccinated students. Winners received \$1,000 or a free annual campus parking pass.

In the final drawing that was announced on Friday, July 30, two students were selected as runners-up for the tuition awards. Stetson University students Hollie Bitor, an education junior, and Sarah Gaudreault, an aquatic and marine biology senior, each received a \$1,000 scholarship and two tickets to a theme park of their choice in Orlando.

About Stetson University

Founded in 1883, [Stetson University](#) is the oldest private university in Central Florida. Stetson focuses on intense learning experiences in a supportive community that allows students to develop their voice in a connected, inclusive environment. Stetson University ranks No. 4 on U.S. News & World Report's 2021 list of Best Regional Universities (South), and has been recognized as one of The Princeton Review's 386 Best Colleges, 2021 edition. [Stay connected](#) with Stetson on social media.

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