

Dean's Medalist attributes success to pursuing every opportunity that comes her way

By Shelby Roberts, ASU News
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Editor's note: This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [spring 2025 graduates](#).

Mia Bazbaz, a spring 2025 Dean's Medalist in the [School of Social Transformation](#), has accomplished her dreams at Arizona State University by taking this particular piece of advice to heart: try everything.

One of eight siblings, Bazbaz grew up in Dallas, Texas, and has since amassed a staggering list of achievements, such as internships, clubs, community service, scholarships (including the [Russel L. Duncan Memorial Scholarship](#)) and even a study abroad in Germany.

"Mia Bazbaz has distinguished herself as an exceptional scholar and leader in Justice Studies at Arizona State University," said Jennifer Bondy, associate professor of justice studies. "With her passion for justice, intellectual curiosity and dedication to societal transformation, Mia embodies the values of the Dean's Medalist award."

Note: Answers have been edited for length and/or clarity.

Question: What was your "aha" moment when you realized you wanted to study the field you majored in?

Answer: From the start, I knew justice studies was right for me. In high school, I was lucky to take courses that analyzed media, literature and history through a critical lens, which helped me recognize how deeply systemic oppression shapes society. I wanted my college experience to focus on understanding and addressing those systems — which happened right away in the [Early Start program](#), before I even started my official coursework!

Q: What's something you learned while at ASU — in the classroom or otherwise — that surprised you or changed your perspective?

A: I've been pleasantly surprised by how many people around me have a long-term growth mindset. I think it's easy for people my age to feel pressured to have everything figured out right now, but so many of my classmates, and especially my professors, embrace lifelong learning. Being surrounded by people who are open to change and exploration has been incredibly inspiring.

Q: Why did you choose ASU?

A: I was drawn to ASU for two main reasons. First, I knew I'd find a community of curious and creative individuals, and ASU's vast resources allow every student to pursue their hobbies and passion projects. Second, I wanted to be part of a diverse campus, and I was especially excited about the Latinx student organizations under El Concilio, which gave me a way to stay connected to my heritage while studying out of state.

Q: Which professor taught you the most important lesson while at ASU?

A: I wish I could list all of my professors because I'm so grateful to be a student here. Definitely the most influential advice I received was from Dr. Gregory Broberg, who told me not to rush through my college experience. At the time, I thought that I wanted to graduate early, but now I am grateful for how my four years have played out — it gave me time to fully engage with my studies and experiences.

Q: What's the best piece of advice you would give to students?

A: There's no right way to navigate college, so I would say to follow your intuition. Some people will be like me and take every opportunity they are offered, and other people will dedicate themselves to one project or organization — both are great! No matter what, I recommend stepping outside your academic focus when possible — especially to take a class from any professor at the School of Social Transformation.

Q: What was your favorite spot on campus, whether for studying, meeting friends or just thinking about life?

A: I've started studying at the Farmer Education building, which has a peaceful fountain and semi-open walls that let in a breeze when the weather is under 100. The Social Sciences building is similar for students on the north side of campus.

Q: What are your plans after graduation?

A: I plan to continue my education at ASU with the accelerated master's program in justice studies— I feel like I still have so much to learn! I will be applying to national fellowships and law schools soon to see where the wind takes me after next spring.

Q: If someone gave you \$40 million to solve one problem on our planet, what would you tackle?

A: While \$40 million wouldn't be enough to completely solve homelessness in the U.S. — HUD estimates it would take \$20 billion — I would start in Tempe, my home base. It's the issue I feel most connected to, since my undergraduate research has focused on homelessness in this community.

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Main image



Mia Bazbaz. Photo by Meghan Finnerty/ASU