

Active-duty service member earns Dean's Medal for Department of Economics

By Megan Neely, ASU News
December 4, 2025

Editor's note: This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [fall 2025 graduates](#).

Tyler Murray has been an active-duty service member in the United States Coast Guard since 2017, and when looking for a school that provided exceptional support to both those currently serving and veterans as well as offering an online economics major, Arizona State University stood out as the right choice for him.

He originally fell in love with the field of economics through investing and the stock market.

"I later realized what really hooked me was understanding why people and markets behave the way they do. I was able to learn tools to analyze real-life, day-to-day exchanges and how they shape the world around us," Murray said.

This December, Murray will graduate as the [Department of Economics'](#) fall 2025 Dean's Medalist in the W. P. Carey School of Business.

Murray serves as a flight mechanic examiner in Savannah, Georgia, to lead rotary-wing aviators, and he also helps organize training events and creates instructional materials for over 70 members to improve unit maintenance procedures as a maintenance resource management facilitator.

"His coursework in economics reflects both rigor and breadth, and his professors consistently commend his intellectual curiosity and active engagement in class," said [Cara McDaniel](#), assistant chair in the Department of Economics. "He is known for posing insightful questions that demonstrate not only a deep understanding of the material but also a genuine interest in exploring the broader implications of economic theory and policy."

After graduation, Murray plans to apply for Officer Candidate School in the U.S. Coast Guard and pursue a master's degree.

Learn more about Murray and his time at ASU.

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

Answer: One thing I learned at ASU that genuinely changed my perspective was how much economics shows up in everyday life. I used to think of it as charts, models and markets, but I quickly realized it's really about understanding human behavior.

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

A: Although there are many core economic lessons, if I had to pick one, it would be [Kelvin Wong](#) in [ECN 441: Public Economics](#) — a core principle of how incentives change human behavior, specifically government policies.

Q: What's the best piece of advice you'd give to those still in school?

A: Don't shy away from difficult tasks or classes. Enjoy the process as much as the result.

Q: What was your favorite spot for power studying?

A: I know it lacks excitement, but in my room, where it's quiet, allows me to be most productive.

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

A: I would invest it in providing educational access and financial literacy to underserved communities. If we strengthen individuals with the knowledge and tools to make informed decisions, we can create opportunities that last for generations. Empowering individuals ultimately fosters stronger families, societies and nations.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Text image(s)



Tyler Murray in uniform. Courtesy photo.