

From inquiry to impact: How the School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership inspired Jack Silver

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

Dean's Medalist Jack Silver graduates with dual degrees in business (law) and civic and economic thought and leadership. He discovered a genuine passion for the questions, texts and conversations at the heart of ASU's School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership. Drawn to SCETL's emphasis on inquiry, leadership and understanding diverse perspectives, he found mentors and classmates who shaped his time at ASU. This community challenged him to think more deeply about the world and his place in it.

Below, Silver reflects on the moments that defined his ASU experience, what inspired his academic path and what comes next.

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

Answer: My “aha” moment that I wanted to pursue a second major in SCETL was after I completed the degree requirements for the minor. I was really enjoying my coursework and I didn't want it to stop.

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

A: Something I learned that really surprised me was that negotiating is a trainable skill and not an innate talent. I took a course in negotiations, and it helped me so much both personally and professionally.

Q: Why did you choose ASU?

A: I chose ASU because it had a wide variety of excellent programs. Another aspect of this decision was the legacy of the late Pat Tillman. He was one of America's greatest men this century, and the fact that part of his development was here matters a lot to me.

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

A: Of all the wonderful professors I've had, I think the one who taught me the most important lesson was Dr. Susan Carrese. She taught me to foster an attitude of inquisitiveness about cultures and customs both here in our great nation and abroad.

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

A: My best piece of advice would be to be very cautious with how students use AI. It is important to be familiar with it for workplace productivity, but the way we think is part of what makes us human. We should not hand over our critical thinking to an algorithm so quickly.

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

A: My favorite spot on campus was the SCETL library. It's fairly secluded and a great space for collaboration and discourse with my dear friends I've made along the way.

Q: What are your plans after graduation?

A: Right now, my plan is to continue a career in public service with Teach For America in Phoenix. I am also considering a master's degree in classical liberal education and civic leadership.

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

A: A problem that I would like to solve with \$40 million is related to food insecurity and inaccessibility to clean water in developing countries. I would dedicate half of the money to each issue and focus as much as I can on solutions that will outlast the money. For example, I would place a greater priority on building wells and water treatment plants over buying water bottles.

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Main image



Jack Silver is the Dean's Medalist from the School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership.
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