

Ventura took full advantage of FHSU opportunities

Fort Hays State University exists to improve lives. I see this statement in action. Every. Single. Day. I love learning about each individual life in our mosaic of impact – individuals such as new alumnus Anthony Ventura.

Anthony, a May graduate, is a truly incredible person who will indeed make a difference in our world. He graduated in three years with a Bachelor of Science in Biology (health profession) and a minor in chemistry. He speaks two languages proficiently, a third with working proficiency, and a fourth with elementary proficiency.

Anthony is clearly ambitious. His life philosophy of “work smart and harder” has successfully guided him. His favorite quote: “Let him who would move the world first move himself.” (Socrates)

Anthony was born in the Philippines, grew up in Los Angeles, California, then moved to Plainville, Kansas, when he was 13. After graduating from Plainville High School in 2018, he came to FHSU to participate in collegiate athletics on the Tiger track and field team.

Many of our student-athletes take athletics seriously at a young age, and many are inspired by their fathers. Anthony was no different. His dad was a collegiate athlete and later became a doctor.

“I am very thankful to God and my family,” Anthony said. “My mom, stepdad, late father, and sisters are a big part of my life that I truly value. My role models are my mom, stepdad, and late father, who gave me a lot of wisdom and discipline. Most importantly, they showed me love.”

While Anthony came to FHSU to compete in track, he soon found so many other opportunities to pursue. And pursue them he did.

Participation in the Kansas Startup competition – an event designed for entrepreneurs to meet, share ideas, and launch new businesses – exposed Anthony to the fundamentals of entrepreneurship. His team won the 2020 Kansas Startup with the creation of a mental health app and was a finalist for this spring’s Faulkner Challenge, a business plan competition. The Faulkner Challenge also enabled Anthony to establish professional connections that will help in his graduate study and the professional life that awaits him.

“My passion for entrepreneurship is rooted in the idea of innovating and helping others,” he said. “Entrepreneurship shows a metaphorical brick wall of challenges. That brick wall has pushed me to be creative and learn to move forward.”

One of the many things Anthony values about FHSU is the opportunity for meaningful undergraduate research. Anthony credits Dr. Nicholas Stewart as a scholar-mentor who helped him conduct genetic research that is being reviewed by the Genome Education Project for publication.

During the pandemic, Anthony wanted to find a way to improve mental and physical health on campus. So, he founded the American Healthy Heart student organization at FHSU to advance

mental and physical health among students with underlying health challenges. The group considers the definition of “heart” to include a holistic and integrative approach.

Club members enjoyed hearing from a wide variety of speakers, including Charles Camarda, an American engineer and a NASA astronaut. Anthony has a growing interest in space and the sustainability of the earth, and he thoroughly enjoyed hearing Camarda speak about the Columbia disaster, life in space, and what awaits in our exploration of Mars.

While completing a bachelor’s degree in three years, serving on the Student Government Association, and participating in numerous campus organizations, Anthony also served as the music coordinator for Harvest Christian Church. Additionally, he worked at Hays Medical Center as a telemetry technician and coded app games for the digital Apple App Store.

It’s no wonder this very talented, hard-working, ambitious, young man was trying to decide which graduate program to enter – Boston University, MIT, Columbia, or the University of Oklahoma – and which program to study (business, biology, or engineering). Ultimately, he chose Oklahoma, where he can combine a dual program of Master of Business Administration and Master of Science in Industrial and System Engineering.

Anthony fully embraces his mantra, “Be fearless,” while chasing his goals. But I have no doubt this Tiger will succeed and make a lasting impact on his community – and our world.

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