

## **Ella Wood, Outstanding Senior**

Ella Wood came to the College of Education in 2017 from Gilbert, Arizona. She's graduating this month with a bachelor's degree in special education and rehabilitation with a minor in anthropology. With a goal of becoming a public-school special education teacher in Arizona, she plans on continuing with the College of Education in the spring to pursue a Master of Arts in Special Education with emphasis on severe and profound disabilities.

As a peer mentor, and current *lead* peer mentor, within the college's Project FOCUS program, Wood has demonstrated her strength at solving problems with strategy, confidence, and poise. She has remarkable behavior management strategies that allow her to create a safe and caring environment and form connections with each of her students.

Being a Project FOCUS peer mentor is a big commitment that includes supporting students with disabilities in their community-based internships and attending their college courses with them. This year, the list of responsibilities has only grown as courses and events moved to virtual formats. In addition to her coursework, she was tasked with planning, organizing, and creating a weekly schedule of virtual social events for students in the program. Wood handled the transition with ease, leaning on her time management and collaboration skills to keep the team engaged and connected.

Her supervisor describes Wood as "a true team player" who brings the best out of other students and peer mentors. Her flexibility, willingness to learn and support others, and character as a dedicated and knowledgeable leader are what deem her the College of Education's Fall 2020 Outstanding Senior.