Ogden Foundation Scholar – Austin Hatfield

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Western Kentucky University will host its 180th commencement this weekend where close to 14-hundred degrees will be conferred.

Amy Bingham talks to the top graduate in this week’s View from the Hill.

Austin Hatfield has his sights set on law school after being recognized this weekend as the Ogden Foundation Scholar, WKU’s top academic honor. It’s the culmination of an undergraduate career that has exceeded his expectations.

Austin Hatfield started college at SKYCTC as a history major but a required political science class changed everything.

 “I can immediately remember going in there and saying wow, this is what I want.”

That class led to an internship with U. S. Senator Rand Paul which he calls another pivotal moment.

 “It opened a lot of doors and that prepared me, gave me hands on experience how to work with people in that field and understand what’s going on in that area.”

By the time he transferred to WKU, Hatfield was a political science major and religious studies minor.

His involvement in a club called Youth in Government took him and his peers all the way to Washington D.C. with a piece of legislation they authored.

 “I met with Guthrie’s office, Paul’s office and McConnell’s office. You can’t have that kind of experience in everyday life.”

Hatfield says support from WKU’s faculty especially in some of his research projects has played a huge role in his success.

 “Some of these people are the top scholars in their field, on the cutting edge of their work.”

Austin says another big source of support is his wife Lara whom he married in May of 2015.

 “I’ve never thought it was hard. It only makes things a lot easier. I don’t know how students do this alone to be honest.”

When it came time to apply for the school’s top honor, Austin wasn’t sure he fit the bill.

 “I’ve led a pretty low profile in college. I don’t do greek life or clubs, on the application it said what are your extra curriculars and I said how do you think I got a 4.0? I don’t do anything else.”

Austin Hatfield will speak at the 9:30 Commencement ceremony Saturday at EA Diddle Arena. Another ceremony will be held at 2 pm.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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