

2021 Awards Celebration



Introductory Statement

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The Biomedical Sciences (BMS) Department plays a significant role in the educational experience of many of GVSU's students. BMS typically have one of the, if not the largest populations of undergraduate students enrolled in our program, with over 1000 students seeking Bachelor of Science degrees. We also have students pursuing Masters of Health Sciences degrees in our program.

The national and international recognition of our research programs and scholarly activities is one of the key elements of our continued student success. Over the years, our research programs have become essential sources for high-impact experiential learning and research experiences for our undergraduates, and the foundation of our graduate program. Furthermore, our research foci on anatomy (e.g. comparative, evolutionary, functional and plastination) physiology (e.g. cardiovascular, endocrinology, molecular, neuroscience, reproductive and thermoregulatory) microbiology (e.g. bacteriology, fungal, infectious disease, immunology and parasitology), and nutrition (e.g. aging, food design, and public health food access), support a new generation of GVSU graduates committed to the public good. Our research programs have direct implications on societal issues associated with global problems, health issues, agricultural impacts, and the future of college education, further demonstrating our commitment to the public good. The BMS major deals with the very processes of life, which in turn informs and guides our students in their future practices and professions.

This year's BMS Graduates of Distinction were nominated by faculty members because they set themselves apart from their peers, either in the classroom, in the research lab, in service to the university, or in all likelihood a combination of the three.

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In the faculty's opinion, these students in Biomedical Sciences major set the academic standard for the rest of the university to follow. In fact, recognition as one of our Graduates of Distinction in the Biomedical Sciences is an exceptional achievement as they represent the top 2% of the BMS major, and 0.1% of the university. Being recognized as a Graduate of Distinction in the Biomedical Sciences is truly an outstanding achievement.

Graduates of Distinction, we hope that you take your education you received at GVSU, and use it to further develop and integrate that education throughout your careers and lives. You have all worked very hard to get to graduation and will continue to work hard well after you leave Grand Valley. As hard as you've worked, recognize that you have also lucked into plenty, which includes circumstances like your educational opportunities, your supportive parents (be sure to thank them), your hometown, and your country. To get here today, there was indeed lots of hard work involved, but also some luck was involved too, and with recognition of this luck should come an obligation to those not as lucky as us. We owe a debt to the unlucky, the less fortunate to use our GVSU education to be great and help others moving forward in our lives.

I can confidently speak for all Biomedical Sciences faculty that we feel privileged and lucky to have had the opportunity to educate, guide, and work with you over these past years.

Congratulations to our 2021 Graduates of Distinction!

Daniel A. Bergman, Ph.D.
Chair and Associate Professor, Biomedical Sciences

Awards

Duke Tanaka Jr. Anatomy Scholarship

Capriana Calwachi

Ilene I. Schooley Biomedical Sciences Scholarship

Rebecca Muir and Olivia Ozark

Biomedical Sciences Excellence in a Discipline - Undergraduate

Natalie Rizza

Microbiology Excellence in a Discipline - Undergraduate

Blake Newton

Biomedical Sciences Excellence in a Discipline - Graduate

Hilary Skalski

Biomedical Sciences Graduates of Distinction

Hannah Alveshere	Madison Myers
Nicole Andriot	Tanner Napierala
Awatef Ayesh	Anthony Neubacher
Grace Balog	Blake Newton
Chloe Binando Scott	Tina Nguyen
Yazan Chabti	Kalyn Peterson
Megan Coble	Gabriella Pitingaro
Korbin Colthorp	Sydney Rechner
Kiley Dickman	Natalie Rizza
Jacob Gunn	Shailaja Sharma
Kylie Hassevoort	Dalton Sovine
Kayla Keckler	Kathryn Wagner
Olivia Kukla	Jonathan Wassink
Trey Lewandowski	Paige Wilson
Emerson Linsley	Olivia Zander
Nathaniel Maniaci	

**Duke Tanaka Jr. Anatomy Scholarship
2021 Awardee:**

Capriana Calvachi



Majors: Biology, Anthropology,
& Pre-Professional Preparation

Awards/Scholarships: “I am
Grand Valley” Award 2019, Anthro-
pology Excellence-in-Discipline
2021, GVSU Dean’s List (since 2017), High School
Valedictorian, Duke Tanaka Jr Anatomy Award, GV
Award for Excellence, Tom and Marcia Haas Power of
10 Scholarship, Richard E. Flanders University Club
Scholarship, Walton Boston Koch Scholarship, Ruth
Chamberlain Global Issues Scholarship

Research: My research projects and literature re-
views include: Protecting the Traditional Medicinal
Knowledge of the Kenyan Maasai, Metric Analysis of
the Talus for Sex Estimation, Improving Health Care
Accessibility among Geriatric Patients in Rural Com-
munities, and Virus of Disinformation.

Clinical Experience: I currently work at Waterford
Place Assisted Living as a Resident Aide. I have also
served as a medical scribe in an ER Department and a
Contact Tracer and Case Investigator for COVID-19.

Service: Frederik Meijer Honors College Freshman
Mentor, Honors Student Council President, Americorps
VISTA program, Cadaver Lab Dissection volunteer,
Anthropology Club President

Future Plans: I am applying to PA School this up-
coming cycle in hopes of working with rural patients.

PRESENTING THE

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT’S

2021 AWARDEES:

Ilene I. Schooley Biomedical Sciences Scholarship 2021 Awardee:

Rebecca Muir



Major: Biomedical Sciences

Minor: Spanish

Awards/Scholarships:

Grand Valley State Award of Excellence, Grand Valley State Award of Distinction Faculty Scholarship, Grand Valley State Community Involvement Award, Phi Kappa Phi Freshman Honoree, Grand Finish Grant, Ilene I. Schooley Biomedical Sciences Scholarship

Research: Clinical exercise science study implementing an unstable device to examine the effects of instability training on rapid, compensatory muscle activation during a perturbation challenge.

Service: Honors Freshman Mentor, Resident Assistant at Grand Valley, Volunteer at the Community Food Club, Habitat for Humanity, Cook Leadership Academy

Future Plans: I am applying for medical school this summer in order to attend in the fall of 2022. I plan on attending a medical school and following it with a sports medicine fellowship. My future aspirations are to work as a sports medicine physician with underserved populations utilizing my Spanish skills.

Ilene I. Schooley Biomedical Sciences Scholarship 2021 Awardee:

Olivia Ozark



Major: Biomedical Sciences

Awards/Scholarships: Phi Kappa Phi Freshman Honoree, Thompson Working Family Scholarship, Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship, Ilene I. Schooley Biomedical Sciences Scholarship

Research: I participated in research with Dr. David Linn in the BMS Department at GVSU. We examined the neuroprotective effect of drugs that selectively activate a specific type of nicotinic acetylcholine receptor on retinal ganglion cells from the pig eye.

Clinical Experience: I worked as a resident aide at Fountainview Assisted Living in Coopersville, MI for about a year. Since December, I have been working as a Patient Care Tech at Metro Health in Wyoming.

Service: I currently volunteer at both LOVE I.N.C., a nonprofit Christian organization, and as a patient companion at Kindred Hospice.

Future Plans: As a pre-med student, I plan to apply to medical school through Central Michigan's Early Assurance Program in February of 2022 and begin in the Fall of 2023. My goal is to become a primary care physician and practice in an underserved area of Michigan where medical care is not readily available.

***Biomedical Sciences
Excellence in a Discipline -
Undergraduate 2021 Awardee:
Natalie Rizza***

In the fall of 2018, I first met Natalie Rizza when she took Human Physiology with me. Early in the class, it was obvious to see that she was an outstanding student. I was impressed with her level of understanding and intuitiveness with very complex topics in physiology. When she expressed an interest in my research lab, I was more than happy to have her join as a member. Natalie has been among the better undergraduate students that have been a part of my research teams. She worked on our research involving nonylphenol, a widely used chemical that behaves as an estrogenic mimic in biological systems. Natalie performed detailed exposure protocols using the chemical and performed hours of data analysis. As a result of her efforts, she has been an author on multiple poster presentations. She is also working with me to submit a manuscript by semester's ends. Natalie also worked as a Nurse Technician at Spectrum Butterworth Hospital in the Neurosciences division, and as an EKG technician at Spectrum Health Meijer Heart Center. At GVSU, she was the treasurer for Habitat for Humanity and Partnership Representative for the Pre-med Club, and a member of Chemocare. She volunteered at Allendale Middle School tutoring 8th graders and at American Heart Association Heart Walk and Walk for Wishes West Michigan. She also worked at the GVSU Family Health Center. Natalie is pursuing medical school after graduation.

-Daniel Bergman

***Biomedical Sciences
Excellence in a Discipline -
Undergraduate 2021 Awardee:***

Natalie Rizza



Major: Biomedical Sciences

Minor: Chemistry

Awards/Scholarships: BMS Excellence in a Discipline, BMS Graduate of Distinction, Perry BS Core Scholarship, Grand Finish Grant

Research: I did research with Dr. Bergman in the crayfish lab conducting trials testing the effects of Nonylphenol toxicity on juvenile crayfish.

Clinical Experience: I currently work at Spectrum Health Butterworth Hospital, previously as a Nurse Technician on the Neurosciences Unit, and now as an EKG Technician at Meijer Heart Center.

Service: I volunteered at American Heart Association Heart Walk, Walk-for-Wishes West Michigan, and tutored students in grades K-12.

Future Plans: I plan on taking a gap year and working full time at the hospital, as well as continuing to volunteer and shadow, while applying to medical school.

Microbiology Excellence in a Discipline - Undergraduate 2021 Awardee: Blake Newton

Blake is the sort of person you would back to be successful in anything he tries. He has worn many hats in his life. He served in the Army Reserve for 6 years travelling with them to Honduras and Panama. He worked in home maintenance and remodeling and even flipped a house on his own. He later worked in manufacturing and was a production leader. Now, he is also a student of microbiology!

Blake initially went back to school part time before deciding to devote himself full time to his studies. Microbiology appealed to him because it plays a significant part in multiple aspects of the world around us and is widely applicable to many career fields.

I first met Blake when he took Bacterial Genetics in the Fall of 2020 and what was obvious from the start was that Blake was a driven and capable student. He can seem quiet but when called on always seems to understand the material and know the answer. When he asked questions, they were always on point. When I asked our other faculty what their experiences of Blake were, they responded “can seem quiet but asks good questions and gets the job done” “his conceptual grasp of the material is outstanding” “easily one of the brightest and hardworking students I have ever taught”. Each comment seem to match my experiences with Blake.

His research project in the Bacterial Genetics lab was one of the harder projects using real-time PCR to analyze the effects of salt and carbohydrate source on the expression of *glmU* in *Escherichia coli*. This involved dealing with some technical challenges that Blake approached in a very matter of fact and efficient manner.

A worthy winner and the first awardee of our excellence in a discipline award for microbiology.

Congratulations Blake.

-Derek Thomas

Microbiology Excellence in a Discipline - Undergraduate 2021 Awardee:



Blake Newton

Major: Microbiology

Awards/Scholarships: GV Award for Excellence Scholarship, BMS Graduate of Distinction, GV Grant, Grand Finish Grant, State Competitive Scholarship, 2021 Microbiology Undergraduate Excellence in a Discipline Award

Future Plans: My future plans entail starting a career in either the academic research environment or in industry in order to gain experience in the field. During this time, I intend to apply to graduate programs in human genetics. My academic interests range from cancer genetics to epigenetics and the role it plays in the aging process.

***Biomedical Sciences
Excellence in a Discipline -
Graduate 2021 Awardee:
Hilary Skalski***

Hilary joined the MHS program in Fall 2018 and first reached out about opportunities in my lab shortly thereafter. I'll always remember her initial email to discuss working together because it was the first time anyone had described ultrasound work on male patients that was related to my work in male reproduction. In fact, she was one of the few that has even known what the epididymis was as an organ prior to joining my lab so, of course, my interest was piqued. Our personalities aligned well and we began to design a project for her thesis work. Now, nearly three years later, she is finishing her thesis and preparing to begin a doctoral program at MSU. Along the way she has performed extremely well in her own coursework, taught multiple courses at GV for the BMS and Sonography programs, and expanded my research into the realm of reproductive immunology. It is a pleasure to have been able to both teach and learn from Hilary over these past couple years. I look forward to following her career as it progresses. Congratulations!

-Chris Pearl

***Biomedical Sciences
Excellence in a Discipline -
Graduate 2021 Awardee:***

Hilary Skalski



Majors/Degrees:

Biomedical Sciences (M.H.S.)

Diagnostic Medical Sonography (B.S.)

Minor: Psychology

Awards/Scholarships: Graduate Excellence in a Discipline Awardee from the BMS department, GVSU's Presidential Research Grant, and the Pew FTLC Sponsored Teaching and Learning Event Grant

Research: My thesis is entitled: "Contributions of the epididymis to reduced fertility in leptin and leptin-receptor knockout mice". This work was done in Dr. Christopher Pearl's lab whose research focuses on male reproduction.

Future Plans: I will be starting Michigan State University's PhD program in Molecular, Cellular and Integrative Physiology in the Fall of 2021. For my dissertation, I would like to join a research lab in the topic of female reproductive health, specifically in the topics of endometriosis and endometrial cancer. After completing my PhD, my goal is to continue in academia by becoming a full-time professor.



Hannah Alveshere

Majors: Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences

Minor: Psychology

Awards/Scholarships: GV Award for Excellence, Grand Finish Grant, State Competitive Scholarship

Clinical Experience: I have worked in assisted living since the fall of 2018, spending the majority of my time with patients, both in care and activities. Additionally, I worked within each department, gaining an understanding of how each one helps the entire business thrive. In the summer of 2020, I was head editor of a dementia care manual for the facility.

Service: I sewed fabric face masks for Covid-19 prevention for local assisted living facilities. I also volunteer at the facility where I work, especially on holidays, in order to help with activities, meals, and other areas of need.

Future Plans: I plan to attend medical school after graduation.



Nicole Andriot

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Minors: Mathematics and Business

Awards/Scholarships: GV Presidential Scholarship, GV Award for Excellence, BMS Graduate of Distinction

Research: I have done research with Dr. Paul Mark at Spectrum Health, which focused on patients with rare chromosomal deletions.

Clinical Experience: I worked as a medical assistant for two years at Dr. Campbell's office, rooming patients, performing ECG's, gathering vital signs, and administering shots.

Service: Chemocare, Boys and Girls Club, Ghana: Honors Cultural Exchange and Service Learning Study Abroad

Future Plans: I will be attending medical school at Kansas City University starting July 2021.



Awatef Ayesh

Major: Biomedical Sciences -
Frederick Meijer Honors College

Minor: Chemistry

Certifications: Certificate in Medical and Health
Humanities

Awards/Scholarships: GV Award for Excellence

Research: For my Honors Senior Project, I re-
searched health disparities and conditions in the Oc-
cupied Palestinian Territories.

Clinical Experience: I have been working as a
medical scribe at Spectrum Health and at COVID-19
vaccine clinics.

Service: I have volunteered at Spectrum Health
during summers. I have also volunteered as a Sun-
day school teacher at my mosque and am currently
volunteering as a K-12 tutor through GVSU.

Future Plans: I will be taking a gap year after grad-
uation to travel to Palestine for mission and volunteer
work. I will also be applying to medical school in
hopes of pursuing a career as an OB/GYN physician.



Grace Balog

Majors: Biomedical Sciences
& Allied Health Sciences

Awards/Scholarships: Distinguished Community
College Graduate Scholarship, GV Award for Excel-
lence, Phi Theta Kappa Scholarship, Thompson
Working Family Scholarship, GV Grant, State Com-
petitive Scholarship, BMS Graduate of Distinction

Clinical Experience: I worked as a patient care
assistant at an assisted living facility for a year and a
half, and I currently work as a residential technician at
a substance abuse rehab center.

Service: Beta Beta Beta Biology Honor Society,
Pre-Physician Assistant Club. I volunteer yearly as a
Science Olympiad competitions event supervisor at
my local community college and I have volunteered
for a local Science Olympiad team, teaching anatomy
and physiology to junior high students. I have helped
with blood drives for Versiti and the American Red
Cross at GVSU.

Future Plans: I plan to earn my master's degree in
physician assistant studies. As a physician assistant,
I hope to provide primary care to a rural, medically
underserved community.

Chloe Binando Scott

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Minor: Biology

Awards/Scholarships:

Private Scholarship, GV Grant, GV Freshman Grant, GV Award for Excellence, GV Faculty Scholarship, State Competitive Scholarship, Grand Finish Grant, General Chemistry Award, Phi Kappa Phi Freshman Honoree, "I am GV" Student Leadership Award, Dean's List, Phi Kappa Phi Honors Society, Beta Beta Beta Honors Society

Research: I worked directly with a group of biomedical professors to finish the dissections of cadavers which were interrupted by COVID-19. I researched the Black Maternal Health Omnibus Act of 2021 and evaluated its effectiveness.

Clinical Experience: I worked with intellectually and developmentally disabled adults during the COVID-19 pandemic at West Michigan Community Mental Health.

Service: I was a mentor to incoming freshmen for the Frederik Meijer Honors College and a member of the Honors Student Council, where I helped organize Honors college programming and led the summer Honors Orientation nights. I was a TA and tutor for the anatomy cadaver lab and TA for genetics.

Future Plans: I plan on going to medical school and have an interest in obstetrics and gynecology. I hope to practice in rural Michigan.



Megan Coble

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Minor: Spanish

Research: For two years I worked as a research student under the direction of Dr. Ruijie Liu conducting research pertaining to the development of diabetic cardiomyopathy.

Clinical Experience: I have worked as a nursing technician in an assisted living facility as well as an EKG technician in local hospitals.

Service: I have volunteered as a food pantry assistant at Streams of Hope and I am a member of Hunger and Homelessness, a volunteer club which centers around providing food to the local homeless population. I also have served as a mentor and tutor to a young Guatemalan refugee.

Future Plans: Beginning in the fall of 2021 I will be entering the MD program at Michigan State University CHM.





Korbin Colthorp

Major: Biomedical Sciences -
Frederik Meijer Honors College

Awards/Scholarships: GV Award for Excellence, GV Presidential Scholarship, State Competitive Scholarship, Thompson Working Family Scholarship, BMS Graduate of Distinction

Research: I have completed an honors senior project titled Ghanaian Healthcare: Analysis of Advancement.

Clinical Experience: I have volunteered in the ER department at Metro Health Hospitals. I have also shadowed many Ghanaian medical professionals throughout my study abroad trip to Ghana.

Service: Site Leader for Kids in Motion, BuddyUp Tennis - DSAWM, Pi Kappa Phi Philanthropy Chairman

Future Plans: This summer I will be applying to medical school. Prior to enrollment, I plan to obtain clinical experience by working in a Grand Rapids hospital.



Kylie Dickman

Major: Biomedical Sciences -
Frederick Meijer
Honors College

Minor: Spanish

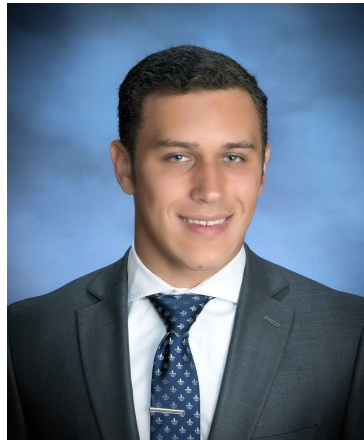
Awards/Scholarships: Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi member, GVSU's National Society of Leadership and Success member, GVSU Dean's List: May 2019, December 2019, May 2020, December 2020, General Motors Endowed Scholarship, Minnie Newman Scholarship, Haslett Foundation Scholarship, Haslett High School National Honor Society Scholarship, Haslett Memorial Scholarship, Recipient of the Greater Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission Scholarship

Research: I conducted research under the direction of Professor Ruijie Liu.

Clinical Experience: I job shadowed several medical professionals in various specialties including a nurse, chiropractor, dentist, periodontist, physician's assistant, pediatrician, emergency department doctor, and cardiothoracic surgeon.

Service: Geriatric Unit, Patient Acute Care of the Elderly – Blodgett Hospital Volunteer and Surgical and Neuroscience Critical Unit – Meijer Heart Center Volunteer

Future Plans: I would like to take a gap year or two and work as a phlebotomist to gain more clinical experience before attending medical school.



Jacob Gunn

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Minor: Psychology

Awards/Scholarships: Student Summer Scholars Grant, Kindschi Fellowship, William C. Ford Jr. Scholarship

Research: My research investigated coupling in adult stem cells in order to contribute to better treatments for myocardial infarction.

Clinical Experience: I work as a Certified Nursing Assistant and I have also sat in on several open heart surgeries.

Service: I volunteered with Habitat for Humanity and the GVSU Lions Club throughout my undergraduate years.

Future Plans: I will be attending medical school next fall. I would like to work as a surgeon someday while maintaining a significant focus on research and community service.



Kiley Hassevoort

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Awards/Scholarships: Kaplan Scholarship

Research: I have worked with Dr. Capodilupo on his research with the protein GAP-43. I co-presented his research at West Michigan Regional Undergraduate Science Research Conference and at the Art and Science of Aging Conference.

Clinical Experience: I worked as a resource medical assistant at Lakeshore Health Partners which has allowed me to work in a variety of specialties and with many doctors. I have also worked as a patient care technician at Metro Health.

Service: I have volunteered for a year at the Children's Healing Center and I currently volunteer as a medical assistant for the City on a Hill Clinic, which is a free clinic for the under/uninsured population.

Future Plans: I plan on going to medical school but I will be taking a gap year. During part of my gap year I will be attending a research internship at the University of Michigan

Kayla Keckler



Major: Biomedical Sciences
Microbiology Emphasis

Minor: Spanish

Awards/Scholarships: Presidential Scholarship, Award for Excellence, Ruth Chamberlain Global Issue Scholarship, Fredrick Meijer Opportunity Scholarship, "I Am Grand Valley" Award Nominee

Research: During the summer of 2019, I worked as a research and development intern at The Andersons Inc, where I helped develop, test, and pitch an organic, microbial pesticide for home and garden use. While at GVSU, I completed my honors thesis with Dr. Ian Cleary, where I investigated the role of bicarbonate on hyphae development in the medically relevant fungus *C. albicans*.

Clinical Experience: I worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant in both a nursing home and home healthcare setting.

Service: Visiting Nurses Association - Friendly Visitor Volunteer, Fredrick Meijer Honors College - Honors Ambassador and Honors Mentor, Findlay City Mission-Kitchen Volunteer, GVSU Ethics Bowl Team - Financial Officer, President, National Qualifier 2020, 2021

Future Plans: I will be attending medical school at Western Michigan University Homer Stryker School of Medicine.

Olivia Kukla



Major: Biomedical Sciences

Minor: Psychology

Awards/Scholarships: Thompson Working Family Achiever Scholarship, GV Award for Excellence, Grand Finish Grant

Research: I have done research in developmental psychology with Professor Jing Chen, which involved analyzing samples from the community to study the relationship between maternal mind-mindedness and child and maternal attributes.

Clinical Experience: I have worked as a caregiver, medication passer, and floor supervisor for a senior assisted living facility where I also gained experience in memory care. I also volunteered for my local hospital for the duration of a summer, which involved working in both occupational therapy and nursing specialties.

Service: Best Buddies, Kids' Food Basket, Revive & Thrive Project, Alliance for the Great Lakes

Future Plans: I plan on attending Grand Valley State University's Occupational Science and Therapy program, which begins in August of 2021.



Trey Lewandowski

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Awards/Scholarships: Grand Valley Laker Scholarship, Grand Finish Grant, BMS Graduate of Distinction, Grand Valley State University General Chemistry Award, Grand Valley State University Organic Chemistry Award

Clinical Experience: Prior to the COVID-19 epidemic, I had the opportunity to job shadow at Meade Zolman Family Dentistry in Allendale, MI. Furthermore, I was able to work at Lewandowski Family Dentistry in West Branch, MI. Through both of these experiences, I gained valuable knowledge about the field of dentistry. I've learned about common procedures, specialties, and the requirements to run an efficient practice while maintaining the highest quality of patient care.

Future Plans: I plan to take a gap year before attending dental school during which I will work, apply to dental school, and gain more clinical experience. I plan to seek job shadowing opportunities in specialties of oral surgery, endodontics, and prosthodontics.



Emerson Linsley

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Minor: Psychology

Awards/Scholarships: GV Award for Excellence, State Competitive Scholarship, Thompson Working Family Scholarship, Private Scholarship, Kulesza Family Pathway Scholarship, Dean's List, BMS Graduate of Distinction

Research: I assisted with a variety of fruit fly research projects under the direction of Dr. Martin Burg.

Clinical Experience: I work as a phlebotomist at a plasma donation center. I am also in GVSU's Pre-Med Club and have shadowed multiple physicians.

Service: I volunteer at Metro Health Hospital in a variety of departments. I also am a College Prep Mentor through GVSU's K-12 Connect, have gone on multiple alternative break trips, and I volunteer regularly through my sorority, Phi Sigma Sigma.

Future Plans: I plan to attend medical school.



Nathaniel Maniaci

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Awards/Scholarships: Award for Excellence Scholarship, Award of Distinction Faculty Scholarship

Research: I conducted research with Dr. Renkema observing the immune response of laboratory mice, pet store mice, and co-housed laboratory and pet store mice.

Clinical Experience: I have worked as an aide in a nursing home and rehabilitation center. I have also spent time shadowing with a gastroenterologist, and I am currently a Physical Therapy Technician.

Service: I volunteered in the Emergency Room at St. John Ascension. I also volunteered for Fleece and Thank You making blankets for hospitalized children.

Future Plans: My future plan is to be accepted into medical school and to graduate as an MD. I would like to specialize in Immunology.



Madison Myers

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Awards: GVSU Laker Scholarship, Aramark Pathway Scholarship, Frank and Elaine Lesnet Miseta Scholastic Scholarship, GVSU Dean's List

Research: I've been working with Dr. Chris Pearl to observe the affects of different levels of phytoestrogens on male fertility in mice.

Clinical Experience: During the summer of 2019, I volunteered at a free medical clinic and during the summer of 2020, I worked as an inpatient phlebotomist at Spectrum Health's Butterworth Hospital and HDVCH.

Service: Pre-Med Club Secretary, Chemistry Club Vice President, Student Ambassadors, 2020 Transitions Leader, BMS 291 TA

Future Plans: I'll be attending medical school starting in the fall 2022 in hopes of becoming an OB/GYN.



Tanner Napierala

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Awards/Scholarships: Modified Student Summer Scholarship (MS3), BMS Graduate of Distinction

Research: I have done research with Dr. Ruijie Liu and was a co-author of a research article titled "Mice Lacking DUSP6/8 Have Enhanced ERK 1/2 Activity and Resistance to Diet-Induced Obesity".

Clinical Experience: I am a patient care assistant at the Mercy Health Hospital in Muskegon, MI.

Service: I went on a medical mission trip to Jamaica the summer after my freshman year to help provide medications and assistance to underserved communities. I was a volunteer at Spectrum Butterworth Hospital in the emergency department. I was also a member of Kids in Motion where we volunteered at the Boys and Girls Club of Holland.

Future Plans: I plan to take a gap year while I work and apply to Medical Schools for Fall of 2022.



Anthony Neubacher

Major: Biomedical Sciences -
Frederick Meijer Honors College

Awards/Scholarships: Grand Finish Grant, Peterson's Medical Terminology HOSA Scholarship

Research: An electrical engineering colleague from the University of Michigan and I created the RT Diagnostics Symptom Calculator, which is aimed to help the homeless in Grand Rapids after our clinical trial is completed.

Service: Physics tutor, Anatomy Cadaver Lab tutor, Cardiothoracic Surgery Society President, Child-Life and Endoscopy volunteer at Metro Health Hospital, Kids in Motion Site Leader

Future Plans: I am taking a gap year and will work as an EMT and I will be applying to medical schools.



Tina Nguyen

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Minor: Human Rights

Awards: GVSU Award for Excellence

Clinical Experience: My past clinical experiences include working as a lead certified nurse assistant, an inpatient phlebotomist, and an neuro ICU nurse technician.

Service: I am involved with Alternative Breaks, Asian Student Union, Pre-PA Club, and Vietnamese Cultural Association. I am a regular volunteer as a certified HIV test counselor for The Grand Rapids Red Project.

Future Plans: After finishing my undergraduate studies, I hope to further my education by completing a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies.



Kalyn Peterson

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Minor: Mathematics

Awards/Scholarships: GVSU Award for Excellence Scholarship

Research: I investigated the behavioral genetics of methamphetamine addiction in mice with varying dopamine D2 receptor expression with Dr. Zeni Shabani.

Clinical Experience: I shadowed several physicians and worked as a pharmacy technician.

Service: Club Tennis, Pre-Medical Club, Human Anatomy Lab Teaching Assistant and Tutor

Future Plans: I will be attending medical school.

Gabriella Pitingaro



Major: Biomedical Sciences -
Frederik Meijer Honors College

Minor: Psychology

Certifications: Certificate in Medical & Health Humanities

Awards/Scholarships: "I am Grand Valley" Award, General Chemistry Award, Dean's List, Grand Finish Grant, GV Award of Excellence, GV Faculty Scholarship

Research: I did plastination research, having dissected a female perineum, human kidney, and great vessels of the heart, as well as completed a virtual Honors College senior project exploring Partial Anomalous Pulmonary Venous Return (PAPVR) alongside my faculty mentor Professor Emeritus Dr. Tim Strickler.

Clinical Experience: I have worked as a nursing home Patient Care Assistant and I volunteer at Spectrum Health in the Emergency Department .

Service: President of Pre-Med Club, President of Chemistry Club, peer tutor through our Tutoring Center, Volunteer with K-12 students virtually in ELA and Math through the GVSU K-12 program, Resident Assistant (RA) for Women in Science and Engineering Community (WISE), GVSU Visitor-In-Personnel

Future Plans: I plan to attend medical school with aspirations to become a pediatrician and work with underserved, urban communities abroad to address medical disparities.

Sydney Rechner



Major: Biomedical Sciences

Awards/Scholarships:

GV Award for Excellence,
GV Early Awareness Scholarship, Gear Up! Michigan Scholarship, BMS Graduate of Distinction

Research: Before the pandemic, I was doing research with Dr. Strickler in the plastination lab where I practiced dissections and I was also involved in genetics research using drosophila with Dr. Burg.

Clinical Experience: I have job shadowed extensively with Dr. Amo, an OB/GYN from the Upper Peninsula, where I was able to grow a passion for women's health, and I worked in a primary care office as a medical and administrative assistant.

Service: Since my freshman year at Grand Valley I have volunteered at Dégagé ministries, a local homeless shelter. In addition, I volunteer at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital every week as a Child Life Assistant.

Future Plans: In the fall I will be attending medical school at Michigan State University's Grand Rapids campus and am very honored to be a student of the Leadership in Rural Medicine Certificate Program as well.

Shailaja Sharma



Major: Biomedical Sciences -

Frederick Meijer Honors College

Awards/Scholarships: Grand Finish Grant, Helen Clayton Scholarship, Dean's List, BMS Graduate of Distinction

Research: I studied the adaptation and growth of biofilms in *Staphylococcus Lugdunensis* in varying nutrient and antibiotic environments. I also performed anatomy dissections and studied the character of diseases including lung and pancreatic cancers and COPD, and identified any anomalies or procedures found, including hyperthyroidism, scleral buckles, and glaucoma drainage implants.

Service: Anatomy Club, Pre-MD/PhD Club, Pre-med Club, West Michigan Vaccine Clinic volunteer, and tutor for High School students from my community.

Future Plans: I hope to work abroad as an English Teaching Assistant during my gap year then pursue medical studies, focusing on specializing in cardiothoracic surgery and prosthetic research. In the future I plan on working with programs which help provide translation and emergency medical services in areas affected by armed conflict, natural disasters, epidemics or exclusion from healthcare.

Dalton Sovine



Major: Biomedical Sciences

Awards/Scholarships: GV Award for Excellence, GV Faculty Scholarship

Clinical Experience: I have worked nearly two years at an adult foster care home through Pine Rest. I've learned so much from this experience and love hanging out with and taking care of my residents! I recently started working as a Certified Nursing Assistant on the Telemetry unit of Metro Health Hospital and I am excited to continue to learn and work as a health care provider in a hospital setting.

Service: During my sophomore year at GVSU I went on a mission trip to Bithlo, Florida through Campus Ministry. We served at "Transformation Village" – an impoverished and neglected community, centered around a school for kids aged from elementary to high school. At this village we worked with students to encourage them, develop their learning skills, and help to improve the facilities.

Future Plans: I hope to work for a few years in the Grand Rapids area to gain some experience and save some money before applying to PA school and pursuing my goal of becoming a Physician's Assistant.



Kathryn Wagner

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Minor: German

Awards/Scholarships: GV Award for Excellence, Grand Finish Grant, "I am GV" Award, BMS Graduate of Distinction

Clinical Experience: I worked as a home health aide and as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) in a nursing home.

Service: I volunteer as a medical assistant at Oasis of Hope, a free medical clinic for those without health insurance. I served 40 hours running free medical clinics in Belize with the Pre-PA Club. I am also a University Innovation Fellow through Stanford University's school, and I am a member of the University Innovation Fellow Club at Grand Valley.

Future Plans: I will be attending Munich Business School in Germany, pursuing my Master of Arts in Innovation and Entrepreneurship. My end goal is to work on medical innovation, improving the health care field to provide better and more effective care.



Jonathan Wassink

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Awards/Scholarships:

Grand Valley Award for Excellence, Grand Valley Presidential Scholarship, Grand Valley National Merit Finalist Scholarship, Chick-fil-A Leadership Scholarships (2x)

Research: I have worked with Dr. Geenen investigating how to maximize the therapeutic effects of mesenchymal stem cell therapy following a myocardial infarction. Most recently, I have worked with Dr. Burg analyzing the effects of histamine deficiency on the accessory gland of fruit flies.

Clinical Experience: I have worked for over three years at Metro Health Hospital - University of Michigan Health as a patient companion and Patient Care Technician. I was trained in and worked across multiple departments in the hospital.

Service: I volunteered at Mercy Health Saint Mary's Hospital in a variety of roles for over two years. I have been a part of a Grand Rapids Public School System tutoring program for underprivileged students for two years as well. Finally, I have travelled to Guatemala twice, for over a week each trip, to aid struggling children.

Future Plans: I am applying to medical school this spring, with hopes of becoming a trauma surgeon or other physician specialty.

Paige Wilson



Majors: Biomedical Sciences & Microbiology

Awards/Scholarships: Thompson Working Family Scholar and BMS Graduate of Distinction

Research: I have done research with Dr. Kristin Renkema regarding how the microbial experience impacts the immune system. Our research group was the first group at GVSU to use a mice model to specifically study the hygiene hypothesis.

Clinical Experience: I have worked in healthcare for a total of four years as a Certified Nursing Assistant, Nurse Technician, Medical Scribe, and Laboratory Assistant.

Service: I volunteered with Ada Bible Church for three years as small group leader for 6th-8th grade girls and was a middle school leader on the Grand Rapids Mission Trip. I have also volunteered as a health mentor with One Heart Source in Cape Town, South Africa.

Future Plans: I am seeking to obtain my MD in Infectious Disease and MPH in Epidemiology/Global Health.

Olivia Zander



Major: Biomedical Sciences

Awards/Scholarships: Award of Distinction Faculty Scholarship, Award of Excellence Scholarship, Organic Chemistry Award, BMS Graduate of Distinction Award

Clinical Experience: I have worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant at Edison Christian Health Center and I currently work as a Patient Care Technician at Ascension Providence Park Hospital on a Medical Surgical unit.

Service: I volunteered at the Laker Fuel Hub and spent time playing gym games with elementary students once a week through the Kids in Motion Club.

Future Plans: I am taking a gap year to enhance my clinical experience and expand my knowledge of the medical field before applying to Physician Assistant programs. My dream is to become a Pediatric Physician's Assistant and I will be applying to PA programs this spring.

Closing Statement

Dear Students, Family Members, and Faculty,

Each year, the Biomedical Sciences Department commemorates our outstanding student awardees. While this has been a year like no other, the students featured in this booklet have not only preserved, but excelled, in their academic, extracurricular, and professional pursuits. We would like to recognize our graduating awardees and scholarship winners for their exceptional accomplishments both this year, and throughout their undergraduate career. These achievements exemplify the excellence and integrity of the highest caliber students within the Biomedical Sciences and Microbiology programs. Our awardees truly inspire confidence for our future, and we look forward to seeing them flourish as active life-long learners and global citizens. We are confident they will apply their initiative and unique skills to positively influence their communities, their professions, and the broader world.

We wish all of our awardees great success and are honored to have them among the Laker for a Lifetime family.

Sincerely,

Cynthia L. Thompson, Ph.D.
Chair, Awards & Scholarships Committee
Associate Professor
Department of Biomedical Sciences
Grand Valley State University

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