

**BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**

**AWARDS CELEBRATION  
2024**



## Welcome

Dan Bergman, Chair,  
Biomedical Sciences Department

## Awards

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

*Jonathan McCabe*

**Excellence in a Discipline: Undergraduate -  
Microbiology**

*Abigail Milkins*

**Excellence in a Discipline: Graduate - M.H.S.**

*Olivia Sweeney*

**Steve Hecht Memorial Scholarship**

*Jonathan Tran*

**Duke Tanaka Jr. Anatomy Scholarship**

*Aidan VanderHart*

**Ilene I. Schooley Biomedical Sciences Scholarship**

*Kaitlyn Knapp, Isaac Laucky, and Annabel Maag*

**Biomedical Sciences**  
**Graduates of Distinction**

Nina Alpers	Rebecca Koratich
Erik Bouwhuis	Josh Kurlinski
Lindsey Bunday	Jonathan McCabe
Aydia Cain	Abigail Milkins
Colin Carter	Jordyn Plichta
Nicholas Cetlinski	Jillian Roux
Taylor Dohm	Delaney Sacra
Savannah Dzumaryk	Naiya Summerville
Megan Gasparaitis	Marie Topolski
Isabella Kandes	Sydney Zimmerman
Kaitlyn Knapp	

**Closing Remarks**

Cynthia Thompson,  
Chair BMS Awards and Scholarships Committee

**Acknowledgements**

Dan Bergman, Jennifer Drake, Sheri Greene and Katie Haynes  
Faculty for their nominations, support of students, and participation

BMS Awards and Scholarship Committee:  
Brian Kipp, Carmen Nochera, Eric Ramsson, Cris Reed  
and Cynthia Thompson

### ***Excellence in a Discipline - Undergraduate Biomedical Sciences 2024 Awardee: Jonathan McCabe***

Majors: Biomedical Sciences, Philosophy

Awards/Scholarships: Biomedical Sciences Excellence in a Discipline Award, Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction, Frederik Meijer Honors College Excellence in a Discipline Award, Thomas M. Seykora Award for Outstanding Contribution, Community Leadership Scholarship, Internship Award Scholarship, Tri County Trotter Scholarship, GV Laker Scholarship, Cook Leadership Academy Independent Initiative Fund, Phi Kappa Phi Scholar, Organic Chemistry Award, GVSU Dean's List (x4), GVSU Phi Kappa Phi Freshman Honoree, GVSU Nominee for the Truman Scholarship



Research: I have worked in Dr. Daniel Bergman's lab on the effects of the pollutant nonylphenol and pain on crayfish behavior. This work was presented at GVSU's Student Scholars' Day and at the Seattle Conference of the Society for Comparative and Integrative Biology. I am also involved with philosophical research focusing on ethics.

Clinical Experience: I worked at Resthaven, a senior living facility in Holland. I was a resident assistant, providing medication and helping with activities of daily living.

Service: Founder/Director – Young PIs Summer Scholar Program; Co-Founder – GVSU Partners In Health Engage team; Founder/President – GVSU Club Connect; Honor's Mentor – Frederik Meijer Honors College; Corewell Health Ethics Committee Student Chair; Student Assistant – GVSU Regional Math and Science Center; Appointment Tutor – GVSU Tutoring and Reading Center; Intern - Office of Research Compliance and Integrity

Future Plans: I will be pursuing a Master of Science in Bioethics at Harvard Medical School. Following this, I will be applying to medical school.

***Excellence in a Discipline -  
Undergraduate  
Microbiology 2024 Awardee:***

***Abigail Milkins***



**Major:** Microbiology

**Minor:** Cellular and Molecular Biology

**Awards/Scholarships:** Grand Valley Award for Excellence, Graduate of Distinction, State Competitive Scholarship

**Research:** I've had the pleasure of researching under Dr. Kathryn Haley since the Fall of 2022 while at GVSU. In her lab, I performed biofilm assays to study Zn-dependent adhesion in two strains of *Staphylococcus lugdunensis*. I also performed MIC assays with a wild-type strain and clinical isolate of *S. lugdunensis* to assess the lowest concentration antimicrobial required to inhibit bacterial growth.

**Future Plans:** After graduation, I plan to find a laboratory technician position in the medical field with the purpose of eventually training and certifying as a medical technologist.

***Excellence in a Discipline -  
Graduate  
Master of Science in Biomedical  
Sciences 2024 Awardee:***

***Olivia Sweeney***



**Major:** Master of Health Science in Biomedical Sciences (M.H.S.)

**Awards/Scholarships:** Graduate Excellence in a Discipline, A.O. Duer Award Recipient, Ernest I. Nolan Award for Distinguished Achievement in the Arts and Sciences at Madonna University

**Research:** In Dr. DeLano-Taylor's lab, I tested if a novel transcriptional regulator (PM-NATO3) could drive dopamine neurogenesis by human embryonic stem cells. This was done using an enriched and a separate minimal cell culture condition. My thesis focused on whether key factors were increased in conditions with PM-NATO3, which would indicate either an increase in the yield of dopaminergic neurons or an acceleration of maturation.

**Future Plans:** I have accepted a role as a clinical research coordinator at START Midwest, a specialized clinic focused on phase I cancer clinical trials.

### ***Steve Hecht Memorial Scholarship 2024 Awardee:***

***Jonathan Tran***

Jonathan Tran was unable to attend the awards ceremony. However, the Biomedical Sciences Department wishes to acknowledge him as the awardee of the 2024 Steve Hecht Memorial Scholarship.

### ***Duke Tanaka Jr. Anatomy Scholarship 2024 Awardee:***

***Aidan VanderHart***



Major: Clinical Exercise Science

Awards/Scholarships: Dean's List Fall 2020 - Fall 2023, Duke Tanaka Jr. Scholarship Recipient 2023

Research: I have completed research as part of the Anesthesia Research Center at Massachusetts General Hospital. Research conducted was in the areas of migraine diagnosis/intervention, delirium, and anesthetic drug interventions.

Clinical Experience: I have spent almost one year as a physical therapy technician at Hulst-Jepsen forging connections with patients and assisting them with exercises during their rehabilitation journey. I have also spent time shadowing the Boston Red Sox team doctor (Dr. Haylee Borgstrom) and a physiatrist at MGH (Dr. David Binder).

Service: I spent a semester as a fieldwork student at Hulst-Jepsen Physical Therapy. I also spent a semester as a teaching assistant for the BMS 309 Cadaver Lab.

Future Plans: I plan on continuing my education at Grand Valley State University and begin my pursuit of a Doctorate of Physical Therapy in August 2024.



### ***Ilene I. Schooley Biomedical Sciences Scholarship 2024 Awardee:***

#### ***Kaitlyn Knapp***



**Major:** Biomedical Sciences

**Awards/Scholarships:** Dean's List, Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction, Ilene I. Schooley Biomedical Sciences Scholarship, Ruth Chamberlain Global Issues Scholarship, GV Award for Excellence Scholarship, GV Faculty Scholarship, Thompson Working Family Scholarship, State Competitive Scholarship, Lakers Go Abroad Scholarship, Frederik Meijer Honors College

**Research:** I worked under Dr. Ian Cleary and Dr. Derek Thomas to investigate the opportunistic pathogen *Candida albicans*. I was accepted as an S3 Summer Scholar, where I investigated the overexpression of the PHO13 gene on the virulence traits of *C. albicans*. I expanded this research for my Honors Senior Project to determine if a similar gene, 19.1405, has similar effects. I presented this work at the GVSU Summer Scholars Showcase, the West Michigan Regional Undergraduate Science Research Conference, and Student Scholars' Day.

**Clinical Experience:** During the summer after my freshman year, I worked as a pharmacy technician at Walgreens. I went on to obtain my CNA and worked at two assisted living facilities during the remainder of college. I was also able to shadow multiple MDs, DOs, and PAs across various specialties.

**Service:** I have worked as a K-12 Connect Tutor. I joined the national co-ed service fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega, and spent the past 4 years serving the campus and area communities through their service activities. I have spent countless hours giving back to Dance Marathon, a club that raises money for Helen Devos Children's Hospital.

**Future Plans:** I have accepted a seat at the Kettering College Physician Assistant Program near Dayton, Ohio, which begins May 6th, 2024.

### ***Ilene I. Schooley Biomedical Sciences Scholarship 2024 Awardee:***

***Isaac Laucky***

Isaac Laucky was unable to attend the awards ceremony. However, the Biomedical Sciences Department wishes to acknowledge him as an awardee of the Ilene I. Schooley Biomedical Sciences Scholarship.

### ***Ilene I. Schooley Biomedical Sciences Scholarship 2024 Awardee:***

#### ***Annabel Maag***



**Major:** Biomedical Sciences

**Minor:** Psychology

**Awards/Scholarships:** Ilene Schooley Biomedical Science Scholarship, GV Laker Scholarship, Johnson STEM PATHWAY Scholarship, Thompson Working Family Achiever Scholarship, Student Summer Scholars (S3) Award, Dean's List, GVSU Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, and Frederik Meijer Honors College

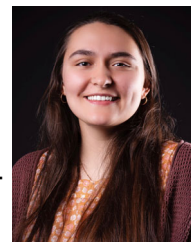
**Research:** Freshman year, I worked with Dr. Martin Burg on a project to identify neurons that contained Gal4 protein in *Drosophila melanogaster*, using epifluorescence microscopy. I now work with Dr. Ruijie Liu to better understand the use of real-time PCR analysis to compare the expression of key fatty acid metabolism genes between control, diabetic, and U0126-treated mouse hearts.

**Clinical Experience:** I worked as a recreational aide at Mission Point Nursing and Physical Rehabilitation Center. During summer 2023, I worked as a patient attendant at University of Michigan Hospital. During this school year, I volunteered at Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital in their Brain Injury Unit.

**Service:** Since winter of 2023, I've been a K-12 Connect Virtual Math tutor. As a Community Building and Education Lead for Partners in Health Engage, I advocate for access to healthcare and healthcare resources. I volunteer at Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital and through the American Red Cross Club to support blood drives, Kid's Food Basket, and other community events in Allendale and Grand Rapids.

**Future Plans:** Over the 2024 summer, I will do research with Dr. Liu as a Student Summer Scholars Awardee. After graduation, I hope to pursue a medical degree and a Ph.D. to support my interests in rehabilitation medicine.

### ***Nina Alpers***



**Majors:** Biomedical Science and Spanish

**Awards/Scholarships:** Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction, Dean's list for all semesters at GVSU, GV Award for Excellence Scholarship, Emily and Frank Smiddy Memorial STEM Scholarship, GV Excellence-in-a-Discipline Award for Spanish

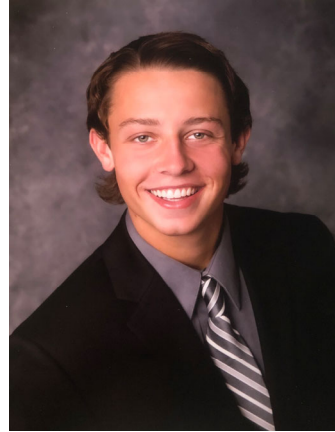
**Research:** I participated in research in Dr. Bergman's Crayfish Neuroscience lab where we used the crayfish as a model to study the mechanistic causes of neurophysiological chronic stress by using the hydrophobic chemical nonylphenol as a stressor, and then modulating that stress using serotonin and a serotonin agonist. In addition, for my honors senior project, I performed a qualitative study that looked at the determinants of quality of life in assisted living facilities in the Grand Rapids area.

**Clinical Experience:** I have worked as a nurse's aide for three summers and during school breaks at Freighterview Assisted Living. This work has shaped my deep passion for medicine and my future career choice of becoming a doctor. I want to be able to serve vulnerable populations such as that of the elderly.

**Service:** I have served as a volunteer at the Community Food Club in Grand Rapids since my sophomore year, helping with checking out shoppers and stocking shelves, while also using my Spanish skills to facilitate a welcoming and helpful environment. During the summers, I volunteer at events at my old elementary school and during summer school. I also participate in various drop-in events around campus, including multiple beach clean-ups, making cards for kids in Spanish, and bagging food and decorating the bags for Kids' Food Basket.

**Future Plans:** After graduation, I will be studying abroad in Spain to complete my Spanish major. I also plan to study for the MCAT while continuing to shadow and gain clinical experience in preparation for applying to medical school.

### ***Erik Bouwhuis***



Major: Biomedical Science

Awards/Scholarships: Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction, Grand Valley Award for Excellence, Dean's List

Clinical Experience: I have worked as an EMT with Rockford Ambulance Service since July 2023 as well as shadowed physicians in both primary care and rheumatology.

Service: During the 2021-2022 school year I volunteered to teach 8th grade math at St. Joseph-Wright, the grade school I attended as a child, due to a teacher shortage.

Future Plans: I plan on continuing to work for Rockford Ambulance Service and Belmont Plastic Solutions as I apply to medical school this spring in the hopes of pursuing a career in rheumatology.

### Lindsey Bunday



Major: Biomedical Science

Awards/Scholarships: Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction, GVSU Presidential scholarship, GVSU Award for Excellence, Dean's list every semester, Frederik Meijer Honors College

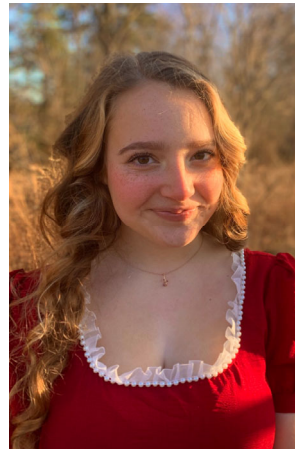
Research: Poster presentation at the 2024 Student Scholars' Day for my capstone project: Traumatic Brain Injury and Approaches to Treatment

Clinical Experience: I worked as a patient care assistant at Trinity Health Saint Mary's (Grand Rapids) on the inpatient oncology and med-surg unit. I also job shadowed physician assistants in primary care, internal medicine, cardiology, dermatology, and orthopedics.

Service: I volunteered as a GVSU K-12 Connect tutor, a GVSU honors college mentor, a counselor on the crisis text line, and for Kids Food Basket. I served as VP media of CHAARG club, then secretary and president of the Pre-Physician Assistant club.

Future Plans: I will be attending graduate school at Des Moines University in June of 2024 to obtain my Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies.

### ***Aydia Cain***



**Major:** Biomedical Science

**Awards/Scholarships:** Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction, Michigan Competitive Scholarship, Perry BS Core Scholarship, Sole of recipient GVSU's Princeton DAT Review Program, Dean's List (8x).

**Research:** I have actively participated in undergraduate research led by Dr. Christopher Pearl centered on using rodent models to investigate male fertility and the mechanisms by which estrogen regulates sperm production and maturation.

**Service:** I have volunteered at various Grand Rapids based soup kitchens, local nursing homes, church youth group organizations and the Kent District Library. I was also elected Social Media Coordinator for GVSU's Pre-dental club. The club's activities included writing letters to the elderly in nursing homes, veterans overseas and patients at St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

**Future Plans:** Following graduation, I will continue to gain clinical experience in dentistry and soon after attend dental school. As a dentist, I look forward to offering need based scholarships and working in underserved communities that wouldn't otherwise be able to afford dental care.

***Colin Carter***



**Major:** Biomedical Sciences

**Awards/Scholarships:** Award for Excellence Scholarship, Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction

**Research:** I conducted research with Dr. Bergman on nociception in Crayfish, identifying how pain can alter crayfish hormones and behaviors. I also did research with Dr. Biroš on lanthanide extraction using a manufactured organic ligand. We synthesized an organic ligand and identified its ability to bind to lanthanide metals in solution and in complex form.

**Clinical Experience:** I have worked as psychiatric technician at Pine Rest Christian Health Services, a psychiatric hospital, where I assisted patients in every day activities.

**Service:** I've volunteer at Kids Food Basket where I pack or prepare lunches for kids in underserved communities. This lunch serves to give them essential food items in their every day diet.

**Future Plans:** I plan on attending medical school to become an anesthesiologist and then to work in the operating room of a hospital.



### ***Nicholas Cetlinski***



Major: Biomedical Sciences

Awards/Scholarships: Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction, Grand Valley Award for Excellence, Phi Theta Kappa Scholarship, Grand Valley Grant/Scholarship

Clinical Experience: I've been working as a nurse tech at Butterworth Hospital. I spent 18 months in their orthopedic medical/surgical department. Recently, I transferred to the cardiovascular department because it aligns with my career goals. I have also been shadowing cardiovascular perfusionists at Butterworth Hospital.

Service: I have been volunteering at Guiding Light Recovery, mentoring the men through early recovery from addiction. Additionally, Kent County Jail has allowed me to volunteer and talk to the inmates about a solution to addiction. I have also done service work at Pine Rest's Detox Unit pertaining to substance use disorder.

Future Plans: Currently, I am applying to graduate schools for cardiovascular perfusion with the goal of becoming part of a surgical team. I have also been working on a memoir called 'Inner Space' that I hope to complete and publish by the end of this year. I plan on continuing my service work to spread hope to those who suffer from addiction. Staying active and physically fit is another priority for me.

### ***Taylor Dohm***



Major: Biomedical Sciences

Minor: Chemistry

Awards/Scholarships: Award of Excellence Scholarship- GVSU, Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction

Research: I have participated as an undergraduate researcher in Dr. Ian Cleary's lab on biofilm formation.

Clinical Experience: I have worked as a nursing technician for 2 years at Corewell Health, gaining over 1,500 hours of experience.

Service: I have participated in individual volunteer events equating to about 50 hours of service.

Future Plans: My current plan is to matriculate to medical school after taking a gap year. During this gap year I plan to be involved in research as well as advance my clinical skills in my current role.

### ***Savannah Dzumaryk***

**Major:** Biomedical Sciences

**Awards/Scholarships:** Ott Stiner Award, Top Banana Award, Hummingbird Award, Dean's List, Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction

**Research:** My research focused on the interactions between caffeine and sucrose. Data was measured using the NMR instrument and various data analysis techniques were used to understand their relationship. While working with Dr. Schaertel and Dr. Hoekstra, I gained a better understanding of lab techniques within the fields of organic, physical, and general chemistry.



**Clinical Experience:** I was a psychiatric technician at Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services for over two years. I worked one-on-one with psychiatric patients ranging in age from 5 to the late 90s. I had the opportunity to shadow two DO family practitioners and gain more insight into patient care.

**Service:** I volunteered for three years at an after-school program at Trinity Methodist Church in East Town Grand Rapids. I worked with kids, teaching them about science, and math through various activities. I also am a cadaver TA for GVSU, where I help teach students about the anatomy of a human cadaver. I am the vice president of the Pre-med club, and I participate in the Future Female Physician club, Phi Sigma Pi, the pre-med mentor program. I am also a PASS facilitator for CHM 231, and a Tutor and Reading Center tutor. I have previously been a drop-in BIO/BMS tutor, a cadaver drop-in tutor, and an embedded tutor for CHM 115.

**Future Plans:** I plan to become a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine in Michigan to practice holistic medicine in patient care. I plan on taking a gap year to work with a DO family practitioner to expand my knowledge of patient care.

### ***Megan Gasparaitis***

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Awards/Scholarships: Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction, GV Award for Excellence, GV Faculty Scholarship, Dean's List, Track & Field Scholarship, All-Academic Women's Track and Field



Research: I've been working alongside Dr. Bergman and several other students for two years on a project focusing on the behavioral and physical effects of beta-estradiol on crayfish. Our interest in this project stems from the continued increase in oral contraceptive runoff in local waterways throughout the U.S which can impact aquatic ecosystems.

Clinical Experience: I was a phlebotomist at Biolife Plasma Services in Grandville. I also spent time shadowing Dr. Meredith Busman in the emergency department at Butterworth Hospital and Dr. Kimberly Friar at Sparrow Medical Group.

Service: I volunteered in the pre-op, endoscopy, and marketing departments at the University of Michigan Health West Hospital. I was also a member of the Women in Medicine and Science Club and the GVSU Equestrian Team. I mentored GVSU pre-medical students, tutored chemistry, and facilitated biochemistry. Additionally, I volunteered at the Michigan Indoor Track series hosted at GVSU and I worked with Field of Dreams Horse Rescue & Adoption.

Future Plans: I will be attending medical school this fall pursuing a career as a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine.

### *Isabella Kandes*



Major: Biomedical Sciences

Awards/Scholarships: Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction, Princeton Review DAT Scholarship, Dean's List

Service: I have volunteered at David's House Ministries, Allendale Elementary School as a book reader, with Kid's Food Basket, and as a Team Impact Member.

Future Plans: I plan to attend Indiana University School of Dentistry in the summer of 2024.

### ***Rebecca Koratich***



**Majors:** Biomedical Sciences and Behavioral Neuroscience

**Awards/Scholarships:** Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction, GV Award for Excellence, GV National Merit Finalist, GV Presidential Scholarship, Trotter Tri-City Scholarship, State Competitive Scholarship, Dean's List

**Research:** During winter 2023, I assisted Dr. Doug Graham with his research on *C. Elegans*.

**Clinical Experience:** During my sophomore year, I worked as an in-home caregiver. Then, I became a CNA for a summer, and I spent the last year and a half as a nurse tech on Butterworth's heart failure floor.

**Service:** I coached Girls on the Run for two seasons, volunteered with Psych Friends as a peer mentor, and I am a blood donor.

**Future Plans:** I will be attending MSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine starting in July. Go Green!

### ***Josh Kurlinski***

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Minor: Health Care Ethics

Awards/Scholarships: Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction, Dean's List, Luncheon Club of Metro Detroit Scholar-Athlete Scholarship, Alumni Honors Scholarship, Heritage Award Scholarship



Research: I had the privilege of working under Dr. Ruijie Liu, conducting research in his laboratory for three semesters. I presented our work in two posters titled "Characterizing DUSP6, DUSP8, and ERK1/2 Expression Levels in Diabetic Mouse Hearts" and "Testing the Expression of  $\beta$ 2-adrenergic Receptor DNA in HEK293 Cells" at Student Scholars Day last April.

Clinical Experience: I am currently working as a medical scribe for an orthopedic spine surgeon at the SHMG Spine and Pain Management Center in East Grand Rapids. I also shadowed a family medicine physician from Macomb County last summer and had the opportunity to interview the Medical Director of the Kent County Health Department, who is also a family medicine physician. I worked as a nursing assistant at Canterbury-on-the-Lake, an assisted living facility, during the summer of 2021.

Service: I served as a volunteer at the Fred and Lena Meijer Heart Center last year. I also have done lawn care, outdoor house maintenance, and indoor housekeeping tasks for Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers, a Metro Detroit organization supporting disabled and low-income seniors. I had the pleasure of being a Faculty Search Candidate Evaluator in 2023 for the Biomedical Sciences Department.

Future Plans: I plan to continue furthering my clinical and volunteer experience while serving the community. My goal is to attend medical school and become a primary care physician.

### ***Jordyn Plichta***

**Major:** Biomedical Sciences

**Minors:** Psychology, General Business

**Awards/Scholarships:** Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction, GVSU Award for Excellence, GVSU Faculty Scholarship, and Dean's List each semester



**Clinical Experience:** I have worked as a residential psychiatric technician for two years at Pine Rest Christian Homes. While there, I served adult foster care homes, aiding those with physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities with their medical and daily care tasks. I have also worked as a medication technician/lead resident assistant at American House Senior Living in Jenison. I am currently a medical scribe in the Butterworth and Helen DeVos Children's Hospital Emergency Departments.

**Service:** I have volunteered for two semesters through the Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation college volunteer program, assisting physical and occupational therapists with their sessions. Through the Pre-PA club, I have also participated in various volunteer opportunities around campus. With the help of FOCUS missionaries at St. Luke University Parish, this semester I began leading my own women's Bible study.

**Future Plans:** After graduation, I plan to take a gap year to apply to physician assistant (PA) programs starting in 2025. During this time, I also plan to shadow PAs in more specialties and volunteer regularly in the Grand Rapids community. I've also recently accepted a full-time position as an Associate Scribe at a Corewell Health primary care office where I will expand my clinical knowledge in a new specialty, as well as take on training, auditing, and administrative responsibilities. I hope to one day become a primary care PA.



### ***Jillian Roux***



Major: Biomedical Sciences

Awards/Scholarships: Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction, Dean's List, GVSU Award for Excellence, Thompson Working Families Scholarship, APO John Mack Scholarship, I Am GV award, Frederik Meijer Honors College

Clinical Experience: For the past two years, I have worked as a nursing technician at Butterworth Hospital on a Med/Surg GIGU unit. This has allowed me to work with a variety of populations alongside nurses and physicians. Additionally, I have had the opportunity to shadow physician associates in the neuroendovascular and psychiatric fields.

Service: I am a member of Alpha Phi Omega, a national, co-ed, service fraternity on campus. Through APO, I have been able to give back to a variety of communities and organizations during our service events, serving those of all ages and backgrounds. Additionally, I volunteer at Kids Food Basket in Grand Rapids, helping to prepare take home lunches for local students in need.

Future Plans: After graduation, I will be applying to Physician Associate schools to obtain my Master's Degree. During this time, I will continue working as a nursing technician at Butterworth Hospital and plan to volunteer with Mom's Bloom.

### ***Delaney Sacra***



Major: Biomedical Sciences

Awards/Scholarships: Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction, GV Award for Excellence, GV Presidential Scholarship, Grand Valley Scholarship, General Chemistry Award, Graduate of Distinction, Kind-schi Undergraduate Research Fellowship in the Sciences, and Dean's List.

Research: I have pursued several research endeavors in my undergraduate years. In Dr. Christopher Pearl's lab, I investigated the effects of estrogen on epididymal sperm number and transit time. In Dr. Nick Burton's lab at the Van Andel Institute, I explored the effect of maternal exposure of *C. elegans* to osmotic stress on osmotic stress resistant offspring. In Dr. Martin Burg's classroom lab, I examined the genetic synteny between *D. melanogaster* and *D. willistoni* through genome annotation.

Service: I have been an appointment tutor at the GVSU Tutoring Center for two years where I've tutored a plethora of subjects, from Introductory Biology to Organic Chemistry. Additionally, I was a Chemistry Success Center tutor for a year. I also served as a Structured Learning Assistance Facilitator for Introductory Biology classes for three semesters, providing classroom-setting coaching to students.

Future Plans: I plan to take a gap year after graduation to explore my future options for graduate school.

### ***Naiya Summerville***

**Major:** Biomedical Sciences

**Awards:** GV Laker Scholarship, Dean's list for every semester attended, Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction

**Research:** I worked on a research team in Dr. Bergman's crayfish research lab. Our group of students conducted research on the impact of mechanical injury and nociception on crayfish foraging behavior. We presented our poster and findings at Student Scholars Day on campus.

**Clinical Experience:** I am a nurse technician at Butterworth Hospital in Grand Rapids where I work on the adult bone marrow transplant floor. I was also a part of the Doctor's in Italy Fellowship Program. This program allowed me to learn about Italian healthcare in Genoa, Italy. While in Italy, I had the opportunity to shadow physicians, observe surgeries, practice hands on skills, and attend seminars put on by the physicians.

**Service:** For 4 years, I have been involved with Kesem, a national non-profit that supports children through and beyond a parent's cancer. I have been director of our campus chapter for 2 years, where I have lead a coordinator board, fundraised, and worked to put on a week long summer camp for our kids. I have also served as a camp counselor for this organization.

**Future Plans:** I plan to apply to dental school this upcoming year, and would like to pursue a career in either orthodontics or oral surgery.



### ***Marie Topolski***



**Major:** Biomedical Science

**Minor:** Biology

**Awards/Scholarships:** Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, Grand Valley Award for Excellence, Grand Valley Faculty Scholarship, Dean's List (x4), Frederick Meijer Honors College, Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction

**Research:** I participated in endocrinology laboratory research with Dr. Chris Pearl. Dr. Pearl gave me the invaluable opportunity to work with my peers in analyzing the effects of endocrine disrupters on the male reproductive system. This past semester I was involved in the process of preparing a manuscript based on the male reproductive system of leptin and leptin receptor deficient mice.

**Service:** I am an active member of Grand Valley's Helping Hands Club, which works with community volunteer organizations such as Kids' Food Basket and Cards of Hope. When I'm home, I also volunteer at various food banks in Southeast Michigan, including Gleaner's Community Food Bank and Fish and Loaves Fresh Market.

**Future Plans:** Following graduation, I plan to take a gap year during which I will work in the clinical setting and attend dental school interviews. I plan to attend dental school in fall of 2025.

### ***Sydney Zimmerman***



Major: Biomedical Sciences

Minors: Biology and Spanish

Awards/Scholarships: Grand Valley Award for Excellence, Grand Valley Faculty Scholarship Dean's List, Biomedical Sciences Graduate of Distinction

Research: I have conducted research under Dr. Eric Ramsson since Winter 2021. We study dopamine pathways in the striatum and nucleus accumbens, areas that are heavily associated with movement disorders (such as Parkinson's) and motivation. We use electrochemistry to monitor dopamine changes in mouse brain slices. In Summer 2022, I participated in an Internship with Michigan State on the effects of pesticides on Parkinson's disease and am now published in the Toxicological Sciences journal.

Service: I participated in Zooniverse. This is an online volunteering experience where I helped researchers by examining photos of the environment for their research projects.

Future Plans: I plan to finish my master's degree in biomedical science with a thesis emphasis at Grand Valley. Afterwards, I plan to pursue my doctorate in neuroscience.

**Congratulations**  
**from the**  
**Biomedical Sciences**  
**Department**  
**on your accomplishments!**

**Best of luck in your  
future endeavors!**



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**BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT**