

College Chemistry Achievement Awards

February 13, 2020

The College Chemistry Achievement Awards are presented annually by the Chemical Society of Washington to outstanding seniors majoring in chemistry and biochemistry from each of the area four-year colleges and universities. The faculty of the school selects students based on their academic and research achievements.

Ivy Antunes

St. Mary's College of Maryland

Supervisor: Dr. Pamela Mertz

Ivy Antunes is an outstanding biochemistry and biology student, with a GPA of 3.982. She has been doing research on avian corticosterone binding globulin since the Fall 2017 semester. In addition, she had an NIH summer internship in 2018 and a summer fellowship in 2019 to work at field site in Tioga. She has presented her work at two conferences, Experimental Biology 2019 and the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology in 2020. Ivy was a coauthor on an additional poster presentation at Experimental Biology 2018. She serves as president of our ASBMB student chapter and is the historian for Tri Beta. She has served as a peer mentor for a first year seminar class and an organic chemistry lab assistant. Ivy also keeps busy working as a manager for the climbing wall on campus. She plans to go to graduate school to study food science.

Helen Havens Clark

Georgetown University

Supervisor: Dr. Cynthia Rosenthal

Advisor: Dr. Diana C. Glick

Sponsor: Dr. Diana C. Glick

Havens Clark has been an excellent student, researcher and colleague to her fellow chemistry and biochemistry majors throughout her years at Georgetown University. It is my pleasure to nominate her for the CSW College Chemistry Achievement Award. Havens has flourished in her biochemistry major coursework, but found her inspiration in her research with Dr. Cynthia Rosenthal at the Georgetown University Medical Center. As much as her academic success demonstrates her capacity to solve challenging problems, it is through her research that she developed skills (CRISPR Cas9, western blots, RT PCR, cell viability assays, to name just a few) and successfully applied her hard-earned knowledge to cutting edge biochemistry. From the summer after her freshman year and each academic year until her early completion of coursework in December 2019, she studied the CD133 marker for melanoma stem cells. Havens stands out as an exceptional student (overall GPA 3.89) compared to all chemistry and biochemistry majors I have taught. The fact that she did this while also working part time at the library, volunteering every weekend as a math science tutor is indicative of her discipline and dedication. A highly motivated and ambitious student, Havens was a frequent attendee at our undergraduate research seminars. She was an active member in the ACS student chapter Chemistry Club and served as a peer tutor in our weekly program. Perceptive, inquisitive, an independent thinker, and a strong advocate for undergraduate engagement in chemistry and research, she is highly regarded by her peers and professors. After completing her biochemistry degree requirements in 3.5 years, she is currently working full time at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia as a Research Coordinator for the Hematology and Thrombosis Center. She will graduate from Georgetown University May 2020. Havens has my highest recommendation for the CSW College Chemistry Achievement Award.

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Deanna Greco

The Catholic University of America

Advisor: Cynthia Brewer

Sponsor: Greg Brewer

The College Chemistry Achievement Award for 2020 from the Catholic University of America is presented to Deanna Greco. She will graduate in May 2020 with a BS in Biochemistry and a 3.98 gpa. She has been on the Dean's list every semester since enrolling at CUA. She is a 2019 Barry M. Goldwater Scholar. During the summer of 2018, she worked with Dr. Juan Perilla at the University of Delaware on elucidating the structure of a protein that is associated with infectious disease. Her contribution to Dr. Perilla's work culminated in her being a coauthor on a publication in Nature Communications. This past summer she returned to U Del where she worked with Dr. Karl Booksh to make chemical instrumentation accessible for individuals with disabilities. She has presented her research at The American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Annual Conference. Dedicated to increasing opportunities for those with disabilities, she gave a presentation at the American Chemical Society's Reaching Students with Disabilities Symposium and serves as an ambassador for Leader Dogs for the Blind. In the future, Deanna plans to attend a neuroscience PhD program with the ultimate goal of conducting research and teaching at a university.

Janelle Junior

The University of the District of Columbia

Supervisor: Dr. Xueqing Song

Advisor: Dr. Xueqing Song

During her time at UDC she has been able to maintain a 3.8 GPA in pursuit of her Bachelors of Chemistry Degree with an ACS concentration while also upholding a full time job. On multiple occasions she has been selected for the Dean's List when she has taken a full time schedule and maintained good standing throughout her degree. She has become one of the top senior's in her class receiving Excellence in Chemistry awards in the College of Arts and Sciences at the end of each academic year. While at UDC, she has been able to participate in multiple research projects with her fellow classmates as well as work on research projects individually. In the Spring 2019 semester, she assisted on research dealing with NMR cleavage reactions of Thiolic acid with Triphenyltin chloride that built upon previous research exploring mercaptoacetic acid and triphenyltin. In the Fall 2019, she was able to work in UDC's accredited Environmental Quality Testing Laboratory (EQTL) doing senior research that explored two different methods of determining cation-exchange capacity in soils in different environments. This research was used to explore adding a service to the UDC's EQTL. She also started research on speciation analysis of organotin compounds in sediment by HPLC – ICPMS.

Favian Liu

American University

Supervisor: Dr. Alex Zestos

Favian Liu is an international student working with Dr. Zestos in the Department of Chemistry at American University. Originally from Singapore, Favian has been working diligently on several projects including developing carbon nanotube yarn microelectrodes for measuring DNA and RNA, and neurochemicals in zebrafish. Favian has also developed novel and innovative projects in the Experimental Biochemistry course where he studied the use of gold nanoparticle modified microelectrodes for purine detection and received a top grade in the course. He recently received the Schwartz Award for summer research from the chemistry department.

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Arianna Lopez

American University

Supervisor: Dr. Monika Konaklieva

Ms. Arianna Lopez is a Biochemistry major and a track athlete at American University. She has an impressive overall undergraduate record in her courses. Since the summer of 2018 she has been working with Dr. Konaklieva on the design and synthesis of novel lipid modulators. The latter are intended to increase HDL levels and limit plaque buildup in associated with cardiovascular disease. Her commitment to this project reveals her excitement about science. Ms. Lopez has prepared several lead compounds and presented the results of her work at STEM Research Student Session, NASA District of Columbia Space Grant Consortium Research Conference, 2020. Ms. Lopez will continue her graduate study at AU to master organic synthesis. After obtaining her MS degree, she is planning to pursue an MD career. Some of her other achievements include: National Dean's List 2017-2019 and NASA and Schwartz Scholarships recipient, 2018-2019 and the ACS Division of Organic Chemistry Undergraduate Award, 2020 nominee.

Tristan G. Moon

George Mason University

Supervisor: Abul Hussam

Advisor: Rebecca M. Jones

Sponsor: Rebecca M. Jones

An outstanding student and leader amongst his peers, Tristan Moon revitalized the Chemistry Club, Mason's student chapter of the American Chemical Society. He served as a Learning Assistant in math and chemistry, was a member of Mason's Honors college and worked in the chemistry stockroom. Tristan's research on the preparation and analysis of nanosilica particles and noncovalent interaction of n-Alkylbenzenes was under the mentorship of Dr. Abul Hussam.

He graduated with honors in chemistry in December 2019 and is currently pursuing a graduate degree at VCU.

Rohan Shah

University of Maryland College Park

Supervisor: Prof. Lyle Isaacs

Rohan Shah went to Howard high School in Howard County, Maryland. He is now a junior at the University of Maryland at College Park, double majoring in biochemistry and Biology (specializing in Physiology and Neurobiology). He is a participant in the Honors GEMStone program at UMD, for which he is undertaking a student-directed research project in immunology with his teammates. For his individual research in the Isaacs lab, Rohan is determining the influence of buffer, BSA, etc. on the K_a values of host-guest complexes to be used as in vivo anesthesia reversal agents. Rohan has distinguished himself in the group by taking the project from beginning to end. Along with his grad student mentor Sandra Zebaze, he is in intellectual control of the project, including designing and interpreting demanding isothermal titration calorimetry measurements. Outside of academics, Rohan is an avid climber and member of the Terrapin Trail club

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Maximillian Thomas

Georgetown University

Supervisor: Dr. Negarjuna Gavvalapalli

Advisor: Dr. Negarjuna Gavvalapalli

Sponsor: Dr. Negarjuna Gavvalapalli

It is my pleasure to nominate Maximillian Thomas, senior and a chemistry major at GU, for this award. Max is carrying out his chemistry honors thesis in my research group and is working on synthesis of bifacial cyclophane based pi-conjugated polymers. Qualities of Max that amazed me are his in-depth thinking and understanding of the subject. His level of understanding of the project and the questions he asks about the project are at the same level as that of the graduate students. Max has made an excellent progress in my research group. This is mainly due to his commitment to research and hard-working nature. He synthesized two novel monomers that involve multistep (4 to 5) synthesis. He also converted these monomers into polymers using a metal-catalyst. He has done detailed structural characterization of the polymers (NMR, IR, GPC, UV-vis). We are submitting a paper on these findings with him as a first author. A first author paper for an undergraduate student is very rare and captures the Max's abilities in research lab. Max took organic (undergrad-level) and polymer courses (grad-level) with me. He got "A" grade in both the courses. Max is a double major in both Chemistry and Physics and his GPA is also exceptional (3.92) for a double major in Chemistry and Physics. Additionally, Max is the president of the ACS Chapter GU Chemistry Club coordinating many community outreach activities including the highly valued peer tutoring program in chemistry. Based on my observation of his abilities in both class-room and research lab, I rank him among the top 1% of the students I have worked with so far.

Hana Jensen Yarbrough

St. Mary's College of Maryland

Supervisor: Daniel T. Chase

It is with great pleasure to nominate Hana J. Yarbrough for a Chemical Society of Washington College Chemistry Achievement Award. I first met Hana as a sophomore in my Organic Chemistry I and II courses where she displayed a consistent cheerfulness and exuberance toward the subject. Having performed exceptionally well, Hana joined my research group in the summer of 2018 where she investigated the synthesis and photophysical properties of substituted Aza-BODIPY dyes. Her work has been massively successful as she is expected to receive authorship on no fewer than three upcoming publications which span the gamut of both organic and inorganic chemistry. Hana will be presenting much of this work in the upcoming Spring 2020 ACS National Meeting in Philadelphia. Hana has also served our department as being a Teaching Assistant for the Organic Chemistry courses and is currently the president of our student chapter of the ACS. As Hana's time at St. Mary's draws to a close, she already has her sights set toward graduate work with the anticipation that she will receive multiple offers. Having the opportunity to watch Hana grow and develop as a mature and outstanding young chemist has been a delight to me and my fellow faculty members and we wish to warmly congratulate her on receiving this award.