

# Inquiry: The University of Arkansas Undergraduate Research Journal

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## Office of Nationally Competitive Awards

Inquiry Editors

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## Office of Nationally Competitive Awards 2021-2022 Student Profiles

*The Goldwater Scholarship* (established by Congress in 1986) works to provide a continuing source of highly qualified scientists, mathematicians, and engineers by awarding scholarships to college sophomores and juniors who intend to pursue careers in these fields. Scholars receive up to \$7,500, and the award can be renewed for an additional year. To be competitive students should have some experience with research at the time of application.

- **Mary Jia**, a Stuttgart native and an honors biomedical engineering major, was named a 2022 Goldwater Scholar. Jia's primary research focuses on developing a prime editing solution for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, and she is supported by a State of Arkansas Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship. She is first author in an article submitted to the *Journal of Magnesium and Alloys* for her research into the assessment of a novel boron nitride magnesium nanocomposite for orthopedic implants. Jia has been active on campus in the Biomedical Engineering Advisory Board and the First-Year Engineering Program Research Mentor Program. She is a Bodenhamer Fellow and an Arkansas Distinguished Governor's Scholar. She will pursue a PhD in biomedical engineering.
- **Joseph Roll**, from Joplin, Missouri, and an honors physics and mathematics major, was also named a 2022 Goldwater Scholar. Roll's primary research examines second harmonic generation of SnS monolayers, work that was supported by a State of Arkansas Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship. His contribution to an experimental research team to analyze a thin slab of SmSbTe has been published in *Advanced Quantum Technologies*. Outside of the lab, Roll is a Student Ambassador, serving as a tour guide to prospective students and their families. He has received the Davis P. Richardson Scholarship and the New Arkansan Non-Resident Tuition Award. Roll will pursue a PhD in theoretical physics.

*The Fulbright U.S. Student Program* awards fellowships for U.S. graduating college seniors, graduate students, young professionals and artists to study, conduct research, and/or teach English abroad. Stipends and the length of stay in the selected country vary depending on the individual program. Recipients of the Fulbright U.S. Student fellowships are referred to as *Finalists*.

- **Hannah Allred** graduated in May 2022 with a BA in Spanish, minoring in anthropology. She applied as an undergraduate and received the award to teach English in Galicia, Spain. On campus, Allred was heavily involved with the Volunteer Action Center, including serving as both a volunteer and chair of the VAC's Passionate About Literacy Program. Off campus, Allred was a Latino recruitment specialist intern for the Girl Scouts Diamonds in Rogers and a substitute teacher in Fayetteville Public Schools. She plans a career teaching in a bilingual school.

- **Duru Erkan** graduated *summa cum laude* with a BA in French and a BS in biology in May 2022. She was an Honors College Fellow and Arkansas Governor's Distinguished Scholar. Erkan was selected as a Finalist to teach English in Belgium. On campus, Erkan was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa in 2021, and she was involved in the International Culture Team, Inspirational Chorale and Honors College Advisory Board. She also volunteered for the Canopy NWA After School Buddy Program, as well as at Washington Regional Medical Center in the Emergency Department. She plans a career as a pediatrician.
- **Sol Halle** graduated *summa cum laude* with a BA in international and global studies and political science, minoring in French, in May 2022. She is a Finalist for an English teaching assistantship in Madrid, Spain. She was involved with National Model United Nations, being named Outstanding Delegate in 2019. In 2021, she was named an En Voz Alta Mentee with the Women's Action for New Directions organization. Recently, Halle completed a virtual internship with the U.S. Department of State. Halle plans a career in the Foreign Service.
- **Charlie Rodgers** graduated *summa cum laude* in December 2021 with a BS in exercise science, minoring in psychology. He is a Finalist for an English teaching assistantship in the Czech Republic. He served as a research assistant of the Exercise is Medicine Research Group and was awarded a 2021 Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship to support his undergraduate research. He has also served as distribution leader for Razorback Food Recovery, vice chair of Honors College of Education and Health Professions, and vice president of the Pre-Physical Therapy Club. Off campus he interned with Big Brothers Big Sisters NWA and worked as a camp counselor in North Carolina. He plans to pursue a PhD in epidemiology.
- **Lexi Scott** graduated in May 2022 with a BAT in Spanish education, minoring in history. She is a Finalist for an English teaching assistantship in Madrid, Spain. Scott has a longstanding interest in teaching and tutoring, volunteering to teach adult ESL classes at El Buen Samaritano in Austin, Texas, as well as at a bilingual private school in Honduras. She also worked as a resident facility director and served as a SOAR volunteer, helping Spanish-speakers improve their literacy skills. She plans a career as a Spanish educator, and she wants to help establish more bilingual schools in Arkansas.

*The National GEM Consortium has a mission to increase the participation of underrepresented groups at all levels of graduate study in engineering and science. The GEM Fellowship provides practical engineering summer work experience through an employer sponsor and an academic fellowship (covering tuition and fees) as well as a stipend which may be used at any participating GEM member university.*

- Chloe Benton, originally from Fort Worth, Texas, graduated in May 2022 *cum laude* with a BS in physics and minors in astronomy, mathematics and philosophy. Benton has received several academic awards, including a Sturgis Study Abroad Fellowship and an Arkansas Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Research

Grant. Her undergraduate research with guidance from Bret Lehmer, associate professor of physics, focused on analyzing how X-ray binary populations vary in galaxies over a range of physics conditions through rich data sets taken from the Chandra X-Ray Observatory. After completing her PhD program, she plans to complete a post-doctoral appointment and ultimately become a U.S. Science Ambassador to make connections between the United States and the National Astronomical Research Institute of Thailand in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

***The Rhodes Scholarship**, one of the world's most prestigious awards, covers all expenses associated with graduate study for two to three years at Oxford University. Every year, 32 American Rhodes scholars are selected, while award numbers vary for other countries. Students of all disciplines are encouraged to apply.*

- **Coleman Warren**, who recently graduated as an honors industrial engineering and political science major, was named a 2022 Rhodes Scholar for graduate study at Oxford University in the United Kingdom. Warren, a native of Farmington, is also a 2021 Truman Scholar. In addition, he is the recipient of the Chancellor's Scholarship and the Governor's Distinguished Scholarship as well the Industrial Engineering Sophomore Scholar Award, an Arkansas Academy of Industrial Engineers Scholarship, and the Gold President's Volunteer Service Award. In the summer before his sophomore year, Warren served as an AmeriCorps VISTA Summer Associate for the Food Bank for the Heartland in Omaha, Nebraska, which later led to his creating Simple + Sweet, an artisanal ice cream business that has so far donated over 12,500 meals to local food banks and was recently recognized by Good Morning America.

***The Truman Scholarship** (created by Congress in 1975 as a living memorial) awards \$30,000 for post-graduate study to students pursuing careers in public service. Students apply during their junior year. They are selected first as finalists, then after a rigorous interview process, may be selected as Scholars. Funds are awarded when a student enters graduate school. Coleman Warren was a 2021 Truman Scholar. Julianne Kantner and Grace Stoops were 2022 Truman Finalists.*

- **Julianna Kantner**, a 2022 Truman Finalist (and a Marshall Finalist), is on a pre-law track. She is deeply involved in refugee resettlement efforts in Northwest Arkansas, has served as president and vice president of Students with Refugees, and volunteers with non-profits working towards food security and youth mentorship. She is also vice president of Rotaract where she trains students on strategies for social change. For her honors thesis, she is researching volunteer program development in refugee resettlement and launching an advocacy training program for college students to assist the local resettlement agency. Kantner intends to pursue a law degree to gain the legal knowledge necessary to represent clients and provide legal aid to marginalized communities.
- **Grace Stoops**, also a 2022 Truman Finalist, studies public health with a minor in medical humanities, with a long-term focus on student health education at both secondary and college levels. On campus, she founded Sexual Health Organization and Outreach (SHOO). SHOO provides sex education to U of A students through events,

seminars, and guest speakers. She has also volunteered at The Little Light House, a nonprofit school for disabled children, and is currently a hospitality and management intern at the YMCA of the Rockies. Stoops plans to obtain a Master's in Public Health with an emphasis in health education and initially work for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In the future, she hopes to use her extensive research to expand SHOO nationally as a non-profit and create outreach programs for college students.

***Udall Scholarship Foundation*** (created in honor of Morris K. and Stewart L. Udall) awards 55 merit-based scholarships of up to \$7,000 and 55 honorable mentions to college sophomores and juniors each year. Students apply in the categories of the environment or in Native American healthcare or tribal policy (students in this latter category must be Native American).

- **Taylen Day**, an honors junior from Arlington, Texas, was named a 2022 Morris K. and Stewart L. Udall Scholar. Majoring in psychology, Day has actively engaged in the Native American Student Association, assisted in research in the DREAM lab and worked as the Volunteer Action Center president. Off campus, she has also worked as an ophthalmic work up technician at Retina Partners of NWA and a summer administrative intern at the Methodist Mansfield Medical Center. Day's professional aspirations are to serve as a medical doctor to the Native American population. More specifically, she wants to meet a great need within the community by working with Native American women as an OBGYN and plans to use her work to raise awareness about the medical and mental health issues that Native American women have historically faced.

Students wishing to applying for any of these or other competitive scholarships or post-graduate opportunities should contact the Office of Nationally Competitive Awards.