

AWARDS NEWSLETTER

BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

2020

THE
COLLEGE
OF IDAHO

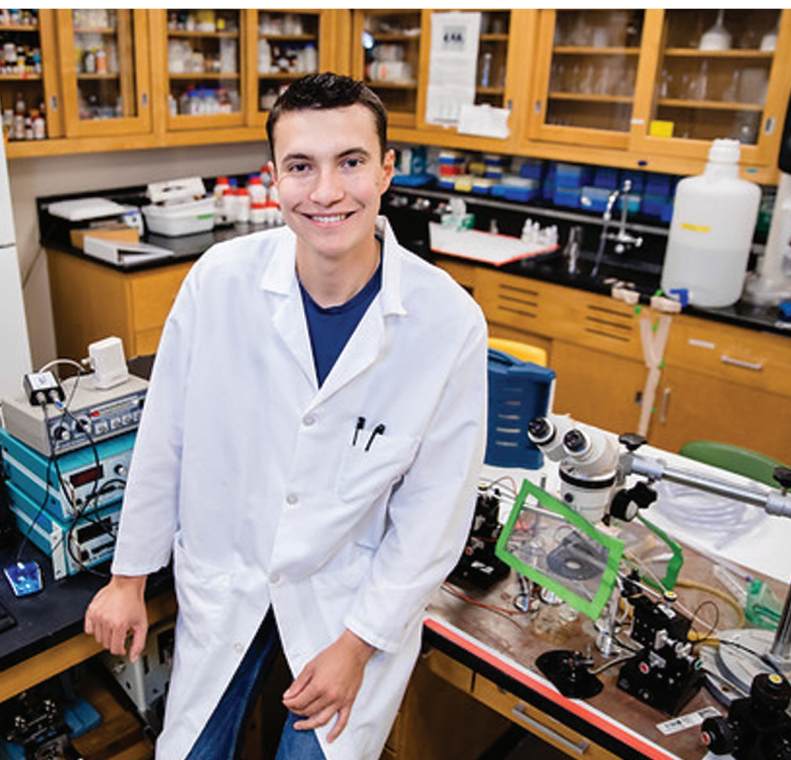


OUTSTANDING BIOLOGY STUDENT AWARD

COLT MERGES

Colt Merges is a graduating senior Biology major who has shown superior leadership ability and dedication to research. Colt has worked since 2018 in the laboratory of Dr. Tom Pirtle (including two full-time summers) on projects ranging from understanding heart function in an invertebrate crustacean (*Daphnia Magna*) to the effects of electronic cigarette flavorings on bone and heart tissues in developing chicken embryos. Colt, who was awarded the Outstanding INBRE Research Fellow Award in 2019, has presented research at both regional and national conferences—most notably at the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology Conference in San Antonio, Texas in January 2020. A scientific paper coauthored by Colt with Dr. Pirtle (titled Select Advanced Personal Vaporizer Nicotine-free Liquid Flavorings Alter the Morphology, Mineralization, and Histology of Developing Embryonic *G. gallus domesticus* Tibia and Femur) is in preparation and will be submitted for publication in the summer 2020. During his time at C of I, Colt has mentored research students and managed research projects. Colt is regularly called on to lead tours of the Biology department for visiting guests. Colt's achievements have culminated in his acceptance to the University of Washington School of Medicine.

This award recognizes and celebrates the accomplishments of a graduating senior biology major who best demonstrates achievements in biology. Achievements include such measures as GPA in biology courses, but also such accomplishments as research involvement, internships, leadership evidence, and other intangibles that, in sum, indicate outstanding prospects as a biologist.



ERIC YENSEN AWARD IN ECOLOGY

LILLY WHITEHEAD

Lilly is a senior Biology and Chemistry double major graduating after four outstanding years at C of I. Lilly got involved in research in 2019 with Dr. Carolyn Dadabay, working on local sagebrush secondary compounds where she developed her passion for biochemistry. Lilly participated in research for two summers, and presented her work at the Genomics Underlying Toxin Tolerance (GUTT) EPSCoR Workshop and Symposium, where she won an award for her "Three minute thesis" oral presentation as an undergraduate presenter. Lilly also took the Coastal Marine Ecology course in Florida where she experienced many firsts, including riding a bike in the Everglades, snorkeling with manatees and in coral reefs, and camping in an old lighthouse. She maintained a high GPA throughout her college career, culminating in her acceptance to two graduate programs in Biology. In addition to her academic excellence, Lilly competed with the C of I the Cross Country team for four years and racked up several accolades including six-time CCC All-Academic Team, two-time NAIA Scholar-Athlete, competed twice at the NAIA cross country championships and won fourth place in the track and field 10K CCC championships in 2019. In her downtime Lilly enjoys embroidery and quilting. After graduation Lilly will start her Master's in Science at University of Nevada Reno working with Dr. Lora Richards.

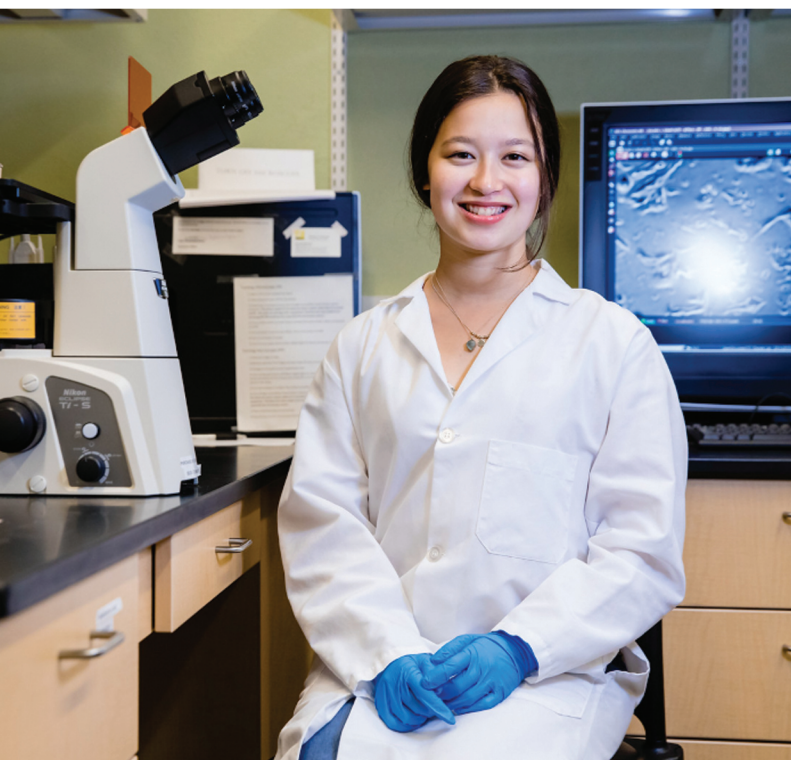


This award recognizes and celebrates the accomplishments of a student who best demonstrates aptitude and achievements in the field of ecology. The award is in honor of biology professor, Dr. Eric Yensen, who retired in 2014 after 33 years of legendary service in the Biology Department.

OUTSTANDING INBRE RESEARCH FELLOW AWARD

SHANAYA FOX

Shanaya Fox is currently a Junior majoring in Biomedical Science. She first became involved in biomedical research as a freshman, when she joined the lab of Dr. Luke Daniels studying glioblastoma (a lethal brain tumor). In her time at College of Idaho, Shanaya was selected for two full-time INBRE summer fellowships and continued working actively in the lab during her sophomore and junior years. She has presented results at two C of I student research conferences, two statewide conferences (2018 and 2019 INBRE Research Conference at the University of Idaho, Moscow, ID), and the 2019 West Coast Biological Sciences Conference for Undergraduate Research (San Diego, CA). Shanaya has been active across campus in a number of other roles, including starting a campus club supporting the Special Olympics, serving as an Academic Support Center Tutor, Student Ambassador and member of Kappa Kappa Gamma, competing in athletics as a member of the diving team, and serving as president of the Pre-Health Professions Club. She plans to continue her involvement in research at College of Idaho and attend medical school following graduation.



The INBRE summer fellowship program is supported by the National Institutes of Health and funds biomedical research in Idaho. This a competitive summer research fellowship to conduct research for 10 weeks during the summer and culminates with a presentation at the Annual Idaho INBRE conference. The Outstanding INBRE Research Fellow Award is given each year by the faculty to distinguished students who have exhibited exceptional dedication to the program, gone above and beyond in the completion of their research project, and presented their findings at a conference.

WILLIAM SYPE SCHOLARSHIP

MACKENZIE DART

Mackenzie is a Health Sciences major planning on becoming a Physician Assistant. Her passion and career goal is to help people suffering from mental illness, particularly eating disorders, not only by treating them, but also raising awareness of this serious disorder. She has served as a TA for Human Anatomy & Physiology and worked as an intern at the ISU-Meridian campus Anatomy & Physiology lab. In the 2020-21 school year she plans on continuing in those roles as well as tutoring and volunteering in the hospital.



Dr. William (Bill) Sype was a long-time member of the Biology Department (1979-2007). He taught Human Anatomy and Physiology and was beloved by his students. On Dr. Sype's retirement, three of his former students established a scholarship in his name and the Cadaver Lab was named in his honor. The scholarship is awarded to a student with a demonstrated commitment to a career in the health professions.

OUTSTANDING PRE-HEALTH PROFESSIONS AWARD

JAKE BRUNER LINDY WESTENDORF

Jake Bruner, a Biomedical Science major, grew up in the small town of Cottonwood, Idaho with a population of approximately 900 people. Jake came to The College of Idaho with dreams of playing college basketball and becoming a physician. During Jake's four years as a Yote, the men's basketball team racked up a 110-24 record, including an undefeated season during his senior year. Jake tied the college record for most games played (134) and ended his career with 519 points and 521 rebounds. Jake has been just as successful in the classroom, accumulating a high GPA and accolades from his professors. Jake was selected for the highly competitive 2019 Summer internship at the Salmon River Clinic in Stanley, Idaho based on his academic success and his desire to be a physician in a rural area. He was able to earn his EMT certification while in Stanley. Jake was on the Dean's List every semester while at C of I. He has volunteered at the Special Olympics, elementary schools, St. Luke's Children's Hospital and Hope House orphanage. Jake is currently in the medical school application process.

Lindy, a Biology major and Gipson Honors scholar for four years, grew up in Idaho but after a C of I class in Scotland (Reading the Hills) longs to travel abroad. Lindy worked in Dr. Gunderson's research lab as an INBRE Summer Research Fellow examining the interaction of aluminum with detoxification pathways in crayfish. She presented her work in the poster titled "Regulation of metallothionein by aluminum in signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*)" at the Annual INBRE Research Conference (Moscow, Idaho. July 29-31, 2019). In her lab classes and while working with Dr. Gunderson's research lab, Lindy discovered her passion for lab-based research, and this motivated her to pursue a career in science. While maintaining a high GPA, Lindy simultaneously worked at four jobs (West Valley Medical Center, Resident Assistant, Physics teaching assistant at C of I, and coffee barista). Additionally, she was an active volunteer at the Treasure Valley Hospice Center, Campus Ministries, and mentored Gipson Program incoming students. Lindy's hard work culminated in her acceptance to several graduate programs, and she will start the Idaho State University Physician's Assistant Master's program after her graduation.

This award recognizes and celebrates the accomplishments of a graduating senior who best demonstrates achievements in preparatory work for a career in the health professions. Achievements include such measures as GPA in science courses, as well as such accomplishments as research involvement, internships, leadership evidence, and other intangibles that, in sum, indicate outstanding prospects as a health care professional.

