

**Alena James '08, '10**  
**2018 Outstanding Young Alumni Award**

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Winthrop University recognizes young alumni, age 35 or younger, whose service to the university, service to the community and professional achievements have reflected positively on all alumni and the university. This year's recipient of the 2018 Outstanding Young Alumni Award is Alena James.

She is a Filipino-American from Summerville, South Carolina, who earned a Bachelor of Science in biology and a Bachelor of Arts in political science with a minor in German at Winthrop.

One of her most transformative experiences was with Winthrop's Summer Undergraduate Research Experience where she conducted scientific research in biochemistry. She also served as Secretary General for Winthrop's Model United Nations program, was the Dacus Library student supervisor and received the 2008 American Legion Award.

James remained at Winthrop to earn a master's degree in biology, taught science classes at York Technical College and Marymount University, earned a second Master of Science degree in biodefense from George Mason University, directed student research in microbiology, and managed the scientific laboratories at Marymount University. She shared her professional experiences in The American Society for Microbiology's Educational Blog.

She also contributed to *The Pandora Report*, a biodefense blog, where she wrote about the use of U.S. drones to fight terrorism, the transporting of Ebola infected patients to the U.S., and the political and technological processes for destroying chemical weapons in Syria.

In 2015, James served as a subject matter expert for the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) where she examined microbial forensic capabilities of Middle Eastern and Northern African countries. Her work with FAS took James to the Czech Republic supporting the U.S. Department of State.

James interned as an Unconventional Weapons Technology Advanced Researcher at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism & Responses to Terrorism supporting varying research projects for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Last year, James received the Marymount University Student Supervisor of the Year Award for Outstanding Leadership. Shortly following, she was selected as a Chemical and Biological Defense ORISE fellow at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. She earned her Project Management Professional certification from the Project Management Institute and her U.S. National Security Risk Analysis certification from the Military Operations Research Society.

As a fellow, James researched solutions to manage infectious diseases at the US border. She presented her research at The Biodefense World Summit in June 2018. Recently, *The Homeland Defense Information Analysis Center Journal* published her findings.

James now works at Engility Corporation as a science and technology advisor to the Department of Defense supporting research and development efforts for chemical and biological defense. She has published 19 articles in her scientific field.