

# W.E.S.S. News

## From the Desk of Amanda Cavin, Director

### Special points of interest

- Scholars added to President's List
- Sixth Graduating Class!



Amanda Cavin

What a semester spring of 2020 has been! I don't think any of us anticipated things would end up looking like they have. March brought us the email saying students would not return to campus and faculty and staff would work from home. This has been an adventure but I am so proud of the Eagle STEM Scholars! They persevered and finished strong. Of the 55 scholars currently in the program, 24 of them finished spring on the Dean's List or on the President's List. Considering the challenges offered by completing the semester online, they have so much to be proud of. We are sad to see our graduating seniors leave the Winthrop Community but we are thrilled with where they are headed and what they still plan to accomplish. We wish them all the very best. While we can never know what

the future holds, we hope that all scholars can be back on campus this fall. ■

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## Eagle STEM Scholars Sixth Graduating Class - What Are They Saying?

**J**essika Bonner - My four years at Winthrop were filled with many memorable moments. I am so grateful to be a part of a program that not only gave me multiple chances to enhance my education, but that also allowed me to meet some of my best friends. The Eagle STEM program provided me with the support that I needed to make it through four years of rigorous learning and for that I could not be more thankful. Even though my time at Winthrop was filled with many ups and downs, the people that I met through this program and the aid that I received when I was first starting out as a college student, helped me push through any difficulties I faced. The Eagle STEM program has truly shaped me into the Winthrop Graduate that I am today! ■

Graduating Class - continued on page 2

**Graduating Class - Continued from front**

**M**arlin McKnight - The Eagle STEM Scholars Program was my first home and family at Winthrop University. My college career absolutely would not have been as fruitful if it weren't for the delicate care of the faces that support the Eagles STEM Program. I came into college not knowing exactly what was going on, unsure of what I really wanted to do. I almost fail a few times, almost changed my college campus, but it was the former Eagle STEM Director, Ms. Rachel Law that supported me as a person, not only a student. As the leadership has changed, I've noticed a new freshness to the program: I can tell that the incoming Eagle STEM Scholars are getting the nourishment that they need as well. Ask any botanist if fertilizer helps a plant grow? If the Eagle STEM program is a gardener, the harvest is plenty.■

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**T**iffany Dwyer - The Eagle STEM Program is a big part of the reason I am the student and person I am today. It provided me with a great opportunity to get prepared for college-level courses and introduced me to doing research. I am extremely thankful that I was able to be a part of this program because it is an excellent program that greatly helped me grow as a student and as a scientist. It has been an honor to be a part of the Eagle STEM Program!

.After graduation in the fall, I will be attending Purdue University as a part of their Pharmaceutical Sciences PhD Program in the Department of Medicinal Chemistry and Molecular Pharmacology.■

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**S**ean Wechsler - Being a part of the Eagle STEM community put me in contact with individuals concerned with success and got me involved deeply in the sciences. I was able to receive academic counseling on how to be more successful in my classes and apply for scholarships. Through the STEM program, I was able to begin working in a lab early on to get hands on experience within my field of study. I learned primarily that I really do love chemistry and doing research, but also gained a whole toolbox of techniques and skills that will prove invaluable in my future. As I progressed in my education, I was able to help other younger STEM students with their classwork which helped to solidify information for me. Another great part about being in the STEM program is getting to hang out in the STEM room with other people who are interested in the sciences and care about your success. I would highly recommend this program for any aspiring scientists or researchers at Winthrop University.

My plans after graduating are graduate studies for a PhD in chemistry at the University of South Carolina. In addition to serving as a teacher's assistant, I will be working in a lab concerned with the synthesis of metal-organic frameworks and tuning their electronic behavior. I have been extremely well prepared for this through all the mentor-ship I have been given from the STEM program!■

**J**uliana Quay - I don't think any time at Winthrop would be as amazing as it has been if I hadn't been a part of the Eagle STEM Scholars Program since freshman year. Because of this program, I've met many inspiring people. I've made friends in my cohort and the other cohorts (younger and older than me), and I know I'll have them for a lifetime. I've also had the opportunity to meet faculty who eventually became mentors to me, like Dr. Jason Hurlbert and the Eagle STEM staff (Ms. Law, Mrs. Cavin, Mrs. Ervin, Dr. Harris, and the many wonderful graduate associates I've met over the years). You all will do anything for us Scholars—you're always there to listen and offer advice, and when you learn of different opportunities that might be of interest to any of us, you tell us about them and then do anything you can to help us take advantage of each opportunity. The Summer Bridge aspect of the program was extremely beneficial as well, as it allowed us to get a taste of what college would be like. That summer was somewhat challenging, but I realized how beneficial that experience was once I started classes in fall - I was already used to the campus, I had a few classes under my belt, and I had begun building relationships with other students and faculty. Overall, this program has offered a wonderful sense of community to my college experience, and it has opened many doors for me with some amazing opportunities as well.

During the Summer Bridge Program, I had the opportunity to shadow in Dr. Jay Hanna's organic chemistry lab, and then Dr. Jason Hurlbert's biochemistry lab. Both of those experiences were extremely rewarding - I had never been in a "real" chemistry lab before and I was getting to interact with older students and learn about their summer research, and meet faculty that I would eventually have as professors. Because of that opportunity, I was also able to go back to Dr. Hurlbert's lab and continue shadowing during the fall and spring of my freshman year, and I even got to attend a national conference, the American Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB) my freshman year. I spent the summer of 2018 working in Dr. Hurlbert's lab and presented my research at another national conference, the Southeastern Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel (SAEOPP) as well as the regional American Chemical Society Conference (SERMACS). I continued to work for Dr. Hurlbert throughout my four years here at Winthrop, and I have enjoyed every second of it. He and I were supposed to travel to San Diego this April (2020) to present our work at ASBMB once again, but the conference was canceled due to COVID.

Last summer (2019), I had the amazing opportunity of participating in a research experience for undergrads (REU) at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

I am graduating with a B.S. in Chemistry with a concentration in Biochemistry, and I will be attending Vanderbilt University this fall as part of their Quantitative Chemical Biology PhD program. At first, I had a time deciding whether I wanted to pursue medical school or graduate school, but all of the mentors I gained through Eagle STEM helped me make the right decision. Not only did they take the time to listen and offer advice when I was still working on making a decision, but now that I've made a decision, they are still there to mentor me and help me reach my goal. I also strongly believe that the opportunities I've been given through the program (research positions, tutoring and peer mentoring, etc.) are what make me a great candidate for graduate school.

I can't emphasize enough how grateful I am for this program and what it has done for me. Before I came to college, I imagined it as being a scary, lonely place. However, the Eagle STEM Scholars Program and the Chemistry department here at Winthrop are like a huge family. Being a science major is hard, but it would be a lot harder without the support I've received from my chemistry and Eagle STEM family. I'm so, thankful that I chose to come here and that I got accepted into the Eagle STEM Scholars Program. I would 100% recommend this opportunity to anyone. ■

## Dwyer, Alexander, Frazier, Dupuy, Patterson, Walters Made the President's List or had 4.0 GPA for Spring 2020



**Tiffany Dwyer**

Six Eagle STEM Scholars made the President's List at Winthrop University having achieved a 4.0 GPA for the Spring 2020 semester.

One senior who achieved this milestone was Tiffany Dwyer. The two junior students that achieved this milestone were Kiera Alexander, and Sydney Frazier. The three freshmen that achieved this milestone were Mack Dupuy, Lauren Patterson, and Eric Walters.

Tiffany Dwyer is a biology major with a medicinal chemical and molecular pharmacology focus. Tiffany plans to attend Purdue University as part of their Pharmaceutical Science PhD program. Kiera Alexander is a human nutrition major. Sydney Frazier is a biology major with a pre-med concentration. Mack Dupuy is a biology major with plans to work for CDC or NASA. Lauren Patterson is a biology major. She plans on being a veterinary pathologist or a zoologist. Eric Walters is a chemistry major with a concentration in biochemistry.

We congratulate Tiffany, Kiera, Sydney, Mack, Lauren, and Eric on their outstanding academic accomplishments.■



**Sydney Frazier**



**Kiera Alexander**



**Mack Dupuy**



**Lauren Patterson**



**Eric Walters**

Graduating Class - continued from page 3

**M**adison Workman - I am planning to attend Clemson University's Master of Public Administration program. Here I will specialize in Emergency Management. My goal for the future is to work in Emergency Management for a hospital system to protect against man made and natural disasters.■



# Class of 2020 - Congratulations!



Jessika Bonner



Madison Workman



Tiffany Dwyer



Marlin McKnight



Juliana Quay



Sean Wechsler



Not Pictured:  
Morgan Jones  
Zachary Revert



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The Eagle STEM Scholars Program was formed as a result of the INBRE II diversity initiative to effectively matriculate more students from diverse groups into biomedical science Ph.D. programs. Winthrop, because of its diverse population of students, is uniquely poised to increase the number of under-represented minority, low income and first generation undergraduates in South Carolina who matriculate into Ph.D. biomedical science, bioengineering, biochemistry, biology and chemistry programs. It is taking steps to move over the next two decades towards national leadership in this area.

