

# W.E.S.S. News

Volume 1, Issue 5

Fall 2013

## Special points of interest

- What are the Eagle STEM Scholars saying about the program?
- Meet the Eagle STEM Scholars!
- Meet our Student Assistant

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Aaron Anderson-Rolfes	2
Alexandria Pinnix	2
Leigha Stahl	2
Mikala Smith	3
Michelle Corley	3
Kelsey Avery	3
Jordan Lewis	4
Jake Roberts	4
Michala Tesney	4
Kierra Montgomery	4
Rachel Taylor	4
Emily Watson	5
Camerun Washington	5
Julia Poppell	5
Margaret Whitley	5
Sommer Barber	5
Ashlynn Brown	5

## From the desk of Rachel Law, Director

Welcome to the sixth issue of the Winthrop Eagle STEM Scholars newsletter. Featured in this issue is the third cohort of incoming freshmen who began as scholars Fall 2013. This cohort consists of 17 diverse and talented scholars bringing the number of scholars in the program to a total of 42. These scholars as with past cohorts are being prepared at the undergraduate level to transition into graduate level programs in the science, math, engineering or health professions as an outcome of Winthrop's INBRE grant. These outgoing students are successfully integrating into the Winthrop Community.

All scholars are participating as a learning community and making a difference serving their peers, the campus and the community. They have the benefit of faculty and administrative support and networking through the STEM community. Freshmen also have upper-

classmen as role models, , and a seminar series designed to assist them in developing the skills needed to succeed in college and their future careers. The fall seminar series included internal and external speakers discussing topics, for example, on team building, collaborative learning, resume writing, and tools to be successful in college. All



Rachel Law

scholars were also required to attend at least two additional technical seminars.

Of the 42 current scholars, 19 made the President's and Dean's Lists. These scholars set high expectations and achieve their goals. Mandatory study halls for freshmen and progress reviews for all scholars are means of enhancing academic success.

Destinee Johnson, the new Student Assistant for the program, assisting in keeping scholars on track is featured in this issue. Amy Moore, the former assistant, is now engaged in her internship for her Masters in Chemistry Education. Thanks to Amy for her role in the program.

The commitment to the success of Eagle STEM Scholars made by the chairs of the Chemistry, Biology and Math Departments, the INBRE grant faculty, the Steering Committee, and senior administration is noteworthy.

## What are the Fall 2013 W.E.S.S. saying about the program?

*Mikala Smith* - "I love being in Eagle STEM! It is like a small community within a big community. There are so many connections I made that are useful when it comes to schoolwork." ■

*Aaron Anderson-Rolfes* - "It is an amazing program with great peers. It's good to

have a group that can help you with everything." ■

*Leigha Stahl* - "The Eagle STEM Scholars Program is a blessing. It has enhanced my Winthrop experience dramatically. I am so thankful for the opportunity to pursue my career interests while being surrounded by a group of

motivated, intelligent, and kind people." ■

*Julia Poppell* - "Eagle STEM is a great program. It has provided me with so many wonderful opportunities to grow academically and intellectually and the chance to

## Meet our new Student Assistant

**D**estinee Johnson is a senior chemistry major at Winthrop University where she is a Ronald E. McNair Scholar and Honors program student. She has been a part of the Eagle STEM scholars program since her freshman year as a student program advisor and mentor. Destinee is actively involved in the chemistry department through biochemistry research with Dr. Nicholas Grossoehme and as the president of the Student Affiliates of the American Chemical Society. After graduation she plans to teach high school chemistry before pursuing her Ph.D. in chemistry. ■



Destinee Johnson

## Meet the New Eagle STEM Scholars

### Aaron Anderson-Rolfes

My name is Aaron Anderson-Rolfes. I am 18 years old and I was born in Charleston, SC. I moved to Columbia when I was three and then moved back when I was five. I graduated from Wando High School in Mount Pleasant. I was the team Captain of the Wrestling Team and threw discus and shot-put for the track team. Now, I am a chemistry major at Winthrop with a minor in Spanish and after graduating I hope to go to medical school to become a



Aaron Anderson-Rolfes

doctor. My hobbies include playing the cello and the guitar, and riding my long-board and surfing. My favorite subjects in school are chemistry and math and I'm hoping to be able to take a music technology class in the future. I am outgoing and love making new friends and although I have many commitments to my scholarships and classes, I am always out socializing with the new people I meet. ■

### Alexandria Pinnix

My name is Alexandria Pinnix (I often go by Alex), and I am an eighteen-year-old sophomore, majoring in Chemistry. I attended Paxon School for Advanced Studies in Jacksonville, Florida, which is my hometown. There, I was enrolled in the International Baccalaureate (IB) and participated in the Advanced Placement (AP) program as well. I earned and received awards including AP Scholar with Distinction, Gamma Beta Boule Scholar, National Merit Semifinalist, National Achievement Finalist, and the Girl Scout Gold Award. As a result of the rigor of my program, I came into Winthrop with 47 credit hours. I entered the Chemistry program with graduate school hope and Ph.D. ambitions. I aspire to do research of some kind in the future and run my own laboratory someday. I've wanted to be in research since I was about six years old. I also (arguably) want to follow in my mother's footsteps (she has a doctoral degree in Biochemistry). ■



Alexandria Pinnix

### Leigha Stahl



Leigha Stahl

My name is Leigha Stahl. I am a freshman biology major at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina. I was born in Columbus, Ohio, on January 3, 1995. Since I arrived in Greenville, I have become a third degree black belt in Tae Kwan Do and a student who is committed to excellence. In 2013, I gradu-

ated from Greenville Technical Charter High School with 48 credit hours toward my college degree as a result of my school's dual enrollment program. Concerning my academic pursuits, I am interested in natural medicine, botany, genetics, nutrition, and biomedical research. Additionally, I am considering careers in the medical/health field such as becoming a physical therapist, doctor, pediatrician, or specialist. Even though my future plans are uncertain, I hope to attend graduate school and earn my masters and/or doctorate degree. My overall goal

is to help people maintain or regain health so that they can live more fully. Whether I aid people or indirectly, I want to encourage and serve others. Besides caring for people, I have a passion for nature. I would love to explore more about ecosystems and especially coastal environments. Aside from my future plans, I love combing the beach for shells, hiking through the mountains, and reading interesting novels. One of my favorite mottos consists of the following: "If you feel blue, paint yourself another color." ■

## SCHOLARS .. Continued from page 2

**Mikala Smith**

My full name is Mikala Rashai Smith. I was born and raised in Spartanburg, SC. I was born a "cancer" person, according to the horoscope, on June 25, 1995. While growing up, I went through a lot of changes. I had braces since the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and just had them removed this summer in July. It is an irony of how the one thing in the world changed my favorite color from red to teal is the one thing I hated wearing because of the limit on certain food I could not eat. I also went through a lot of phases growing up. I blame the influence of books and music for that. I went through a rock phase, which is why pretty much all of my shoes are converses, and I went

**Mikala Smith**

through a gothic phase. I now enjoy gothic rock music the best.

I grew up playing the viola in my school orchestra. It is weird how now that I don't have the obligation to play it since it is not required to do fine arts for at least a year, I miss playing my instrument. Being in orchestra has changed me greatly too. Playing different genres of

music, I often look them up and figured out where they come from since some comes from soundtracks off of movies. I now have great appreciation for the fine arts. That appreciation was deepened during a 10 day field trip to California the summer before my senior year. My school's orchestra always went somewhere, usually in Europe and Asia, every three years. My year was supposed to go to New Zealand and Australia but the economy was still recovering. Nonetheless, I immensely enjoyed my stay.

Summer after 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I became a pro flyer. I like to fly planes now. My favorite airline is Delta. Every year since 7<sup>th</sup> grade, during the summer, I have always flown

somewhere. My first time was to Oklahoma to visit my uncle and family since they came back from either China or Japan. It was so long ago, I can hardly remember. Of course, they moved to Maryland and now I visit during Thanksgiving break. Starting the summer after 8<sup>th</sup> grade, I went to Jamaica. Memories are stuck in my head because they were one times experiences each visit. During my first visit, while riding a banana boat, I was thrown into the ocean after hitting a giant wave. It was a good laughing experience. The second year, I kissed a dolphin and snorkeled with sting rays. My third year, it was the entertainment crew that branded that time my most favorable. ■

**Michelle Corley**

My name is Michelle Corley. I am a freshman at Winthrop University. I am from Lexington, South Carolina. I attended White Knoll High School and graduated with honors as third in my class. While in high school I participated in many AP classes and many clubs. I was very involved in DECA, National Honors Society, Beta Club, and Key Club. I held officer positions in DECA and National Honors Society. These clubs allowed me to participate in many community service projects. I plan to continue volunteering and working throughout my college career. My major is biology and I plan to attend a graduate school after I graduate from Winthrop. I hope to work in an environment that will involve working with animals. I am excited to be an Eagle STEM Scholar because I know it will help me succeed in my academic career and also prepare me for my future. ■

**Michelle Corley****Kelsey Avery**

My name is Kelsey Stephanie Avery. I go by Kelsey. I am 19 years old, and was born and raised in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. I am the daughter of Preston and Wendy Avery. I have three siblings, two older brothers: Josh and Grayson and one twin sister, Shelby. I have a wonderful dog named Saddie. She is my little baby and I miss her deeply. I am a huge animal lover which is why I want to become a vet. I hope to work as a zoo vet for a while and then go to domestic animals once I get older. I also love to paint and take pictures. My favorite thing to do is to paint the pictures I took. I also love to read. I will read any kind of book. My number one favorite thing to do besides being with my lovely dog and family is to watch movies. I will watch all movies, some I have to watch with a group and some I can watch by myself. I happen to relate a lot of things to movies and I have also watched a lot of movies. I love to do sports or any kind of activity. ■

**Kelsey Avery**

## SCHOLARS .. Continued from page 3

**Jordan Lewis**

My name is Jordan Alexander Lewis, I was born on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1994 in Orangeburg, South Carolina. I am 18 years old. I attended Orangeburg Wilkinson High School in Orangeburg, SC where I was involved in many activities and sports. I was a 4 year member of the boys' varsity basketball team where I earned all-region honors, and a 2 year varsity member of the Football team. I was a recipient of the SC High School League scholar Athlete Award for students who played at least 2 varsity sports while maintaining a 3.5 GPA. I was the vice president of my area NAACP, youth president



Jordan Lewis

of St. John AME Church and the vice president of the youth departments of all the AME (African American Episcopal) Churches in Orangeburg County. I also was invited to the National ACT-SO competition in the original essay category. I am a chemistry major with a concentration in biochemistry and a history minor. My dream is to attend medical school and become a surgical oncologist, OBGYN, or a general surgeon. It is an honor to be an Eagle STEM Scholar and to be surrounded by other like-minded students and professors that care so much about my success. ■

**Jake Roberts**

Jake Roberts

My name is Jake Roberts, and I am majoring in biology with a concentration in pre-dental. I graduated high school at Ninety Six High in Ninety Six, SC. I am on the Winthrop Eagles Track and Field Team. I am a discus, hammer, weight, and shot put thrower. The things that I do and love most include lifting weights, eating healthy, conversing with others, and smiling. After graduating college, I plan on attending a medical university and obtaining a Ph.D. in dentistry. ■

**Michala Tesney**

Michala Tesney

My name is Michala Tesney, and I was born in Stockbridge, GA, and currently live in Summerville, SC. My birthday is January 31, 1995. I am a freshman, and majoring in Biology. In high school, I was in Color Guard at Summerville High School for all four years, and was a captain my senior year. I received multiple awards for my performance. I am now teaching Color Guard at South Pointe High School. After I complete my undergraduate degree, I plan to attend medical school in order to become a Radiologist. I am so honored to be a part of the Eagle STEM program. ■

**Kierra Montgomery**

Kierra Montgomery

Hello, my name is Kierra Montgomery. I am from Florence, SC and I am the youngest of three kids and the only girl. I attended West Florence High School where I graduated board of trustees. During high school I was a member of the Beta Club, the Spanish Club, FBLA, and I traveled to Europe. I was also a volunteer at the Boys & Girls Club for 4 years and an employee for 2 years. I am a Freshman Biology major here at Winthrop, and I plan on minoring in Spanish and Human Nutrition. While at Winthrop I hope to discover what field I want to pursue in biology, and I hope to study abroad to South America. ■

**Rachel Taylor**

Hi! My name is Rachel Taylor. I am from Florence, South Carolina. I am eighteen years old. I was adopted and I am an only child. I attended West Florence High School and graduated with a double cord. I fell in love with science in the sixth grade thanks to a wonderful teacher. I decided I wanted to become a doctor in eighth grade. Once I graduate from Winthrop I plan to attend medical school and become either a general or pediatric surgeon. ■



Rachel Taylor



## SCHOLARS .. Continued from page 4

**Emily Watson**

My name is Emily Watson. I was born on March 10, 1995 in Greenville, SC and moved to Tega Cay, SC while I was in second grade. I went to Fort Mill High School up until my junior year and graduated as valedictorian from the Palmetto Homeschool Association. In High School, I was in the Colorguard for Fort Mill's Band and won "Most Outstanding" my freshman and sophomore years. Also in High School, I was in the Beta Club, A Honor Roll, Honors Society, and I was on the Deans list my senior year when I took Dual-Credit classes at York Tech. I love drawing, acting, playing soccer, playing basketball, snow skiing, water skiing, and playing the piano. I am a Forensic Chemistry major and once I graduate I hope to work in a crime lab. ■



Emily Watson

**Julia Poppell**

I was born in Baltimore, Maryland on April 28, 1995 and moved to Beaufort, South Carolina my freshman year of high school. I attended Battery Creek High School for my first two years and Beaufort High School for my last two years. I graduated from Beaufort High School. Throughout high school, I was involved in the drama club, student government (sophomore class vice president), and the Beaufort High School Voices (choir). I lettered in soccer during my sophomore year of high school and was a member of the Beaufort High School Chapter of the National Honor Society. I participated in community service events, such as volunteering at CAPA (Child Abuse Prevent Association) and many others. I attended Seaside Vineyard Fellowship and was a helper and eventually a teacher in the children's church. I also participated in Young Life, a Christian youth organization for high school students. I chose Winthrop University not only for its reputation for having high merit, but also for the emphasis the university places on cultural diversity. I am currently a math major, but may—at some point— switch to chemistry. I would like to minor in religious studies and hopefully study abroad at some point during my college years. ■



Julia Poppell

**Ashlynn Brown**

Ashlynn Brown

Hi my name is Ashlynn Brown. I am eighteen years old and my birthday is March 4th. I have two younger half-sisters that are five and three years old. I graduated from Blythewood High School and was a part of the National Honors Society, JROTC, and FFA. I am majoring in Biology with a concentration in Pre-Veterinary Medicine and a Minor in Spanish. I plan on attending the veterinary school at Georgia and eventually want to own my own veterinary clinic. I have a passion for science especially biology and chemistry. My favorite thing in the world is working with animals and I plan to make them the most important thing in my life. I have three dogs, two gerbils, two hermit crabs, a cat, a frog, and a rabbit. I plan on volunteering with a local animal shelter to help animals any way possible. I am thankful for being able to be a part of the Eagle STEM program; I think it is a great opportunity to have such a good support system at our backs. ■

**Camerun Washington**

Camerun Washington is from Summerville, South Carolina. He graduated from Cane Bay High School as Valedictorian and an AP Scholar. He is a Biology & French double major with intentions of obtaining a MS in Genetic Counseling. In addition to being an Eagle STEM Scholar he is also in the Honors Program as well as a cellist in the chamber & symphony orchestras here at Winthrop. ■



Camerun Washington

**Margaret Whitley**

Margaret Whitley

After graduating from Emerald High School- Greenwood, SC- in the fall of 2013 I entered Winthrop as a sophomore. Presently I only have the intention to study chemistry and Spanish. I am exploring the many opportunities offered in the field of chemistry. It is such a blessing to be at Winthrop, especially in the STEMs scholar program. Winthrop has so many opportunities to grow and I am open for any possibilities. I am especially big on traveling. After moving ten times and studying in Brazil my sophomore year of high school I hope to live abroad permanently. With me I will take all the knowledge bestowed on me through Winthrop University. ■

**Sommer Barber**

Hello, my name is Sommer Marissa Barber and I am a freshman Chemistry major. My goal is to start a career in pharmacy with the completion of my education. I'm involved in a lot of activities as well. I love to dance and have been dancing for 15 years so that's something that I am continuing to grow with and I also enjoy improving as a violist. ■



Sommer Barber

## Logan, Manley, Ramirez and Stahl added to President's list for Fall 2013



Jessica Logan

Four Eagle STEM Scholars made the President's List at Winthrop University having achieved a 4.0 GPA for the Fall 2013 semester. Three second year students achieving this milestone were Jessica Logan, Olivia Manley and Kristin Ramirez. First semester freshman Leigha Stahl rounded out the group. Jessica Logan is a chemistry major with a minor in Math. She also plays soccer for the Winthrop Eagles Women's team. Olivia Manley is also a chemistry major. Kristin Ramirez is a double major in biology (pre-physical therapy) and dance, and Leigha Stahl is a biology major and is interested in natural medicine, botany, genetics, nutrition, and biomedical research. We congratulate Jessica, Olivia, Kristin and Leigha on their outstanding academic accomplishments. ■



Olivia Manley



Kristin Ramirez



Leigha Stahl

### W.E.S.S... Continued from front

meet so many amazing people. Being any kind of STEM major is difficult, but having this strong support group has made the burden significantly lighter. I would definitely recommend it to anyone who is interested in biology, chemistry, or math." ■

*Margaret Whitley* - "Prior to joining I sincerely wanted to join as I saw how supported the STEM scholars were through the semester. Now, I am just gracious to be one of those supported students." ■



Eagle STEM Scholars went on a Crowder Mountain hiking trip initiated by Mikala Smith and led by Dr. Nick Grosseohme.

### Eagle STEM Scholars Program

101 Sims Science Building  
Rock Hill, SC 29733

Phone: 803-323-4932  
Fax: 803-323-2246  
E-mail: eaglestem@winthrop.edu

We're on the Web  
[eaglestem.winthrop.edu](http://eaglestem.winthrop.edu)

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 PhD 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.