

# W.E.S.S. News

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Fall 2014

### Special points of interest

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

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Dakota Hawkins	2
Madeline Weih	2
Rachel Taylor	2
Zchimon Herndon	2
Alexis Green	3
Douglas Johnson	3
Lauren Ramsey	3
Madeline Diaz	3
Sierra Hardee	4
Jesslyn Park	4
William Schreiber	4
Mariah Murphy	4
Brionna Bennett	4
Autumn Leggins	4
Davis Plasko	4
Community Service	5
Special Recognition	5
President's List	6

## From the Desk of Rachel Law, Director

Beginning Fall 2014, the Eagle STEM Scholars Program had participants from all four classes: seniors, juniors, sophomores and freshmen. Twelve seniors, 14 juniors, 18 sophomores and 15 freshmen make up the total of 59 scholars in the program and 4 cohorts. Most of the students are South Carolina residents, but other students are from North Carolina, Maryland, Tennessee, Virginia, and Florida. The President's and Dean's List for the Fall 2014 semester included 54% of these diverse and highly motivated scholars.

Seniors are preparing to enter graduate level pro-

grams in medical fields or the sciences or employment as scientists. Other scholars continue to focus on their academic studies and pursue additional research experiences.

Besides classes, seminars, and study hall, the semester included sev-



Rachel Law

eral networking social events including a welcome event for freshmen, social gathering for all students, and a dessert buffet to kick-off studying for finals.

The Fall 2014 cohort continued the campus tradition of community service by registering 125 students as bone marrow donors. These are a remarkable group of students giving back to the Winthrop University campus and community. Mentored by professors from the Biology, Chemistry, and Math Departments and participating in other programs such as WISE, McNair and ONCA, these scholars are being well-prepared for the life of a scientist. ■

## What are the Fall 2013 W.E.S.S. Saying About the Program?

*William Schreiber* - "I would say the program has been extremely helpful with the transition into college life. It has given me the opportunity to meet and work with other students within my major. I am very excited to continue through college as an Eagle STEM scholar." ■

*Brionna Bennett* - "STEM has meant a great deal to me and my first semester. STEM has given me resources and opportunities to ensure that I do well in the future—what clubs, programs, summer research, etc. that would make me more competitive in reference to schools after graduating. Frankly, I

feel if I had not been a part of the program, I would not have been exposed to as many opportunities. Through the program, I have met older students that have told me their experiences with teacher's, certain study skills and even helped me through my time of indecisive-

See W.E.S.S. page 5

## Meet our New Student Assistant

Jamie Risa Murakami is a senior biology/chemistry double major from Charleston, SC. At Winthrop University, she has been active in research with Dr. James Hanna and Dr. Takita Sumter for almost three years. Jamie has presented her research to the Winthrop community through the Summer Undergraduate Research Experience and the regional chemical community at the Southeastern Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society. She is the treasurer for the Student Affiliates of the American Chemical Society and an inducted member of Beta Beta Beta Biological Honors Society. Jamie is active on campus as a member of the Honors Program, Ultimate Frisbee Club and an Office Host for Resident Life. After graduation she plans to pursue her Ph. D in biochemistry in interdisciplinary studies. ■



Jamie Murakami

## Meet the New Eagle STEM Scholars

### Dakota Hawkins

My name is Dakota Glenn Hawkins. I am from Florence, S.C., where I was born and raised. I graduated from Wilson High School near the top of my class. I plan to major in forensic chemistry and minor in criminology. After graduating from Winthrop, I want to go to graduate school for forensic chemistry. I hope to one day work for SLED or another government agency. ■



### Madeline Weih

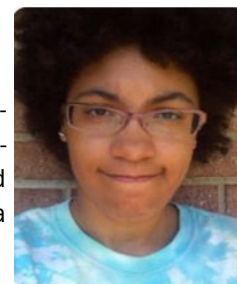
My name is Madeline Weih, and I am from Simpsontonville, S.C. Growing up, I lived in many different places, but my favorite was Mexico. I loved learning about the different culture, learning a new language, and trying all of the good food. I attended Mauldin High School, where I played on the Varsity Tennis Team, and participated in many organizations including National Honors Socie-



ty, Key Club, and Spanish National Honors Society. This summer, I enjoyed coaching tennis. At Winthrop, I plan to double major in chemistry and Spanish with a concentration in pre-medical. I love to work with children, especially the little ones, and because of my love for them, I want to one day be a pediatrician. ■

### Rachel Buckner

My name is Rachel Buchner. I am a freshmen at Winthrop University. I am from Beaufort, S.C. I was homeschooled through middle and high school and graduated in 2013. My major is biochemistry. I am enjoying being a Winthrop Eagle. ■



### Zchimon Herndon



Hi, I'm Mona and I am 18 years old. I graduated from Fairfield Central High School, number 4 in the senior class. I engaged in the Beta Club, Marching Band, Interact Club, and Student Government Association. I live in the small city of Winnsboro with my mother, a Certified Medical Billing/Coder, my 15-year-old brother, and two sister, ages 9 and 5. Currently I am a freshman here at Winthrop University, where I plan to major in mathematics with a certification in secondary education.

At the present time, I'm seriously thinking about being a pre-calculus or Algebra II teacher. As my learning experience evolves, it might lead to a higher level of math. My favorite quote is by mathematician W.E. B. Dubois, "Believe in life! [All] human beings will live and progress to greater, broader, and fuller life." ■

SCHOLARS .. Continued from page 2

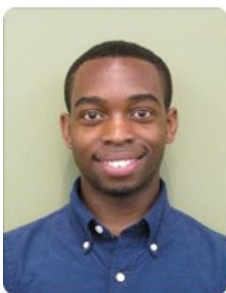
### Alexis Green

My name is Alexis Green, and I am a chemistry-engineering-physics major from Baltimore, Maryland. I graduated from Roland Park Country School, a kindergarten through 12th grade college-preparatory, private school in Baltimore. I plan to minor in French to increase my current fluency in the language before continuing on to learn Spanish. I play basketball and volleyball, though I am not playing for the university, because I grew up in a family of athletes. Aside from sports, my biggest hobby is writing poetry/spoken word. While attending Winthrop, I am aiming to groom myself into an individual better suited to improve the lives of others. This includes: getting my CPR certifica-



tion, becoming fluent in sign language, learning braille and Spanish, and many other useful skills. I currently believe that a foundation in chemistry/engineering, accompanied by these other skills, will mold me into an individual who is better prepared for a life of traveling in order to work in regions of countries in need of help in development. I am aware that there is no particular profession entitled "Humanitarian," so I am working hard to craft myself into the person that I believe could earn such a title. ■

### Douglas Johnson



My name is Douglas Johnson Jr., and I am a freshman majoring in biology. I am 18 years old and was born and raised in Greenville, SC. Before Winthrop, I attended Woodmont High School, where I graduated with honors, taking AP classes and committing to many extracurricular activities. Some of the activities I undertook were Varsity Track and Cross County as well as being Vice President of my school's choir program. Some things I enjoy doing are running, playing the piano, and I tend to laugh a lot. Being an Eagle STEM Scholar is an honor and when I graduate I plan to attend a medical university to obtain a Ph.D. in anesthesiology. ■

### Lauren Ramsey

My name is Lauren Ramsey. I am 18 years old and was born and raised right here in Rock Hill, S.C. I have one younger sister who is a sophomore in high school and a dog named Polly. I graduated from South Pointe High School. My favorite subjects are Math and Chemistry which is why I have chosen chemistry as my major. While in high school, I was very active in the Concert Choir and the Drama Department. I was fortunate to have been chosen to play the part of Jane in our spring musical, Tarzan, my senior year. I hope that I



will be able to participate in some of the drama performances while at Winthrop too. I work part time at Carowinds, in the entertainment department and love my job there. I also love to watch movies (especially Disney movies) and have been to New York several times to see Broadway plays. I would love to study abroad during my Junior or Senior year. I am still in the process of narrowing down my career path and hope that my courses at Winthrop will open my eyes to new opportunities. ■

### Madeline Diaz

Madeline Diaz was born in Las Cruces, N.M. At the age of ten, she moved overseas to Vienna, Austria. While living abroad, she attended the Vienna International School for 6 years. Then she moved to Aiken, S.C., where she graduated Summa Cum Laude from South Aiken High School. While attending South Aiken High School, she was secretary of the Student Council, president of Serateens, and co-founder of the Envirothon Team. Currently a freshmen majoring in biochemistry, Madeline is also an Emerging Leader, 2015 Orientation Leader and 2015 Winthrop Ambassador. She hopes to pursue a career in pediatric oncology. In her free time Madeline enjoys playing guitar, singing and reading. ■



See **SCHOLARS** page 3

## SCHOLARS .. Continued from page 3

**Sierra Hardee**

Sierra Hardee is from Moncks Corner, South Carolina. She graduated from Berkeley High School with a 4.8 GPA and within the top 20 of her class. While in high school, she participated in the Beta Club, the Student Government where she held a class secretary position, the National Honors Society, and the Prom Committee. At Winthrop, she is majoring in chemistry with a focus in biochemistry. After graduating, she plans to enroll in a PA program that specializes in the surgical field. ■

**Jesslyn Park**

Jesslyn Park was born in Queens, NY, but grew up in Charleston, SC, where she graduated from Academic Magnet High School. At Magnet, she played the djembe in an African drumming group called the Dirty Birds, and was the president of the school's Science Club. Currently a freshman majoring in biochemistry, she hopes to pursue a career in research. In her free time, Jesslyn enjoys singing, writing, and sketching portraits. ■

**William Schreiber**

My name is William Schreiber and I am majoring in chemistry. I am from Sumter, S.C. and I have lived there my entire life. I graduated from Sumter High School. I usually find most things fun if I'm doing them with other people. My long term goal is to become a practicing psychiatrist. ■

**Mariah Murphy**

My name is Mariah Murphy. I am a freshman, a member of the Eagle STEM Scholars program, and a member of the Honors Program. My major is Biology and I hope to declare chemistry as my minor. The TRiO Program is another organization that I am involved in. I am excited to take advantage of the opportunities that are provided for me at Winthrop University. ■

**Brionna Bennett**

Hi! My name is Brionna Bennett. I am 17 years old and I am from Irmo, SC. I went to Dutch Fork High School where I graduated a year early in hopes of starting my career as soon as possible. My goal is to major in biology and minor in psychology. After I graduate from Winthrop, I plan to attend medical school. I want to become an obstetrician. ■

**Autumn Leggins**

My name is Autumn Leggins. I am 18 years old. I am a freshman at Winthrop University and I am majoring in biology. After college I hope to go to medical school and become a pediatrician. My favorite subjects are math and biology. While in high school, I was mainly involved in my school's archery club. I love trying new things and learning about new things. Although I have always been on the quiet side, I hope to become better at speaking and socializing as the years pass. ■

**Davis Plasko**

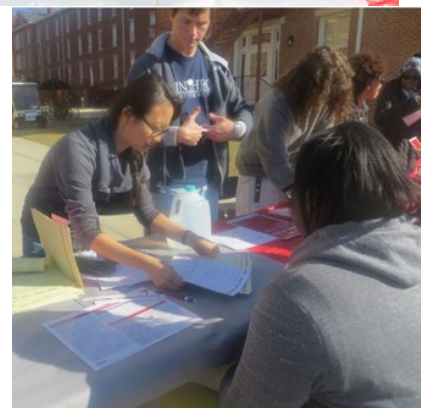
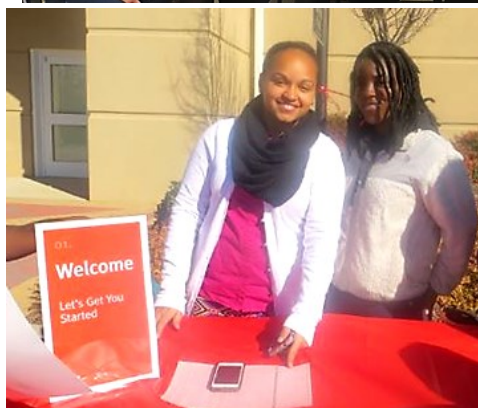
Davis Plasko graduated 17th in a class of 400 from Nation Ford High School with a SC UGP GPA of 4.693 in 2014. He entered Winthrop as a second semester sophomore with 45 transfer credits. For most of his life he lived in Waxhaw, NC but moved to Fort Mill, SC his freshmen year of High School. Davis loves chemistry, math, history, and athletics. During his time in High School, he played tennis and was a part of Beta Club, Key Club, and FSA. Davis aspires to obtain a PhD in chemistry and to start his own research. His plan is to graduate in two or three years. ■



## Eagle STEM Scholars Get Involved in Community Service

### Bone Marrow Registry Drive

This past fall, the 2014 Eagle STEM cohort organized Winthrop University's first on-campus bone marrow registry drive—Cheek Swab for a Cause. The drive took place on Scholar's Walk on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014. With the support of non-profit organization Delete Blood Cancer, Eagle STEM members added 126 potential donors to the registry. The event was a success and received overwhelming support from students and faculty. It was truly a rewarding experience and demonstrated an exceptional team effort from all members of the cohort. ■



### Special Recognition

**Michala Tesney** won a first place and monetary award provided by SC AHEC for her research at the Bench2Bedside Symposium. ■



**Alexander Middleton** was awarded The Janet L. Andersen Award for Undergraduate Research in Mathematical or Computational Biology at Mathfest 2014. He received this award for a paper entitled "A Nonlinear Model of Cancer Tumor Treatment with Cancer Stem Cells." ■



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

ness. I have made friends that have the same interests as me, and students that are going through the same type "shock" of the first year at college. But most importantly, STEM has given me a family away from my home—people that care about my well-being, and success. Personally, I feel that STEM has made my transition from high school to college so much easier. ■

**Madeline Diaz** - "Being a part of Eagle STEM Scholars has allowed me to network with other freshmen who are going through the same things as I am. It has provided me with a wonderful sense of community and support that helped me succeed in my first semester, and it will hopefully continue in the semesters to come." ■

**Madeline Weih** - "Being an Eagle STEM Scholar has been a great experience. It has given me mentors who I can always go to for help, and has allowed me to meet other people going through the same struggles. I am very happy to be an Eagle STEM Scholar." ■

## Logan, Manley, Melendez, Stahl, Tesney, Watson, Williams, Zinna, Made the President's List or had 4.0 GPA for Fall 2014



Jessica Logan

Eight Eagle STEM Scholars made the President's List at Winthrop University having achieved a 4.0 GPA for the Fall 2014 semester.

Diamond Melendez, a senior, achieved this milestone. The four junior students that achieved this milestone were Jessica Logan, Olivia Manley, Ashley Williams, and Jessica Zinna. The three sophomores that achieved this milestone were Leigha Stahl, Jessica Tesney, and Emily Watson.



Olivia Manley

Diamond Melendez is a biology major with a minor in chemistry. Jessica Logan is a chemistry major with a minor in math. She also plays soccer for the Winthrop Eagles women's team. Olivia Manley and Jessica Zinna are chemistry majors. Ashley Williams is a chemistry major with a concentration of Biochemistry and a minor in Spanish. Leigha Stahl is a biology major and is interested in natural medicine, botany, genetics, nutrition, and biomedical research. Jessica Tesney is a chemistry major with a concentration in Business Administration and a minor in biology. Emily Watson is a Forensic s Chemistry major.



Ashley Williams



Emily Watson

We congratulate Diamond, Jessica L., Olivia, Ashley, Jessica Z., Leigha, Jessica T. and Emily on their outstanding academic accomplishments. ■



Diamond Melendez



Jessica Zinna



Leigha Stahl



Jessica Tesney

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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.