

## Biological Sciences and Molecular & Cellular Biosciences awards Spring 2021



### Dominic A. Ruggiero

**Excellence in Biological Sciences Award:** This award is presented to a graduating student who excels in the field. The student must have an outstanding record of involvement in research opportunities within the department or within the community of biology. This award is donated by the Biology Club.

In addition to a Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences, Dominic Ruggiero has worked to obtain a minor in Anthropology, with coursework in global health and medical anthropology. Within the Biological Sciences department, he has conducted research in the lab and field as an undergraduate member of the EDGe Lab under Drs. Michael Grove, Courtney Richmond, and Nathan Ruhl, with a particular focus on statistics. He has presented his work at local and international conferences (virtually) and is currently involved in the development of a manuscript for publication about zooplankton subsidies from reservoirs to streams. Dominic is also involved in the Bantivoglio Honors Concentration and was in a leadership role with the Honors Jazz Band. He intends to continue his education with an MPH in epidemiology, where his experience in data science, ecology, microbiology, and anthropology will be applied to understand and mitigate future epidemics.

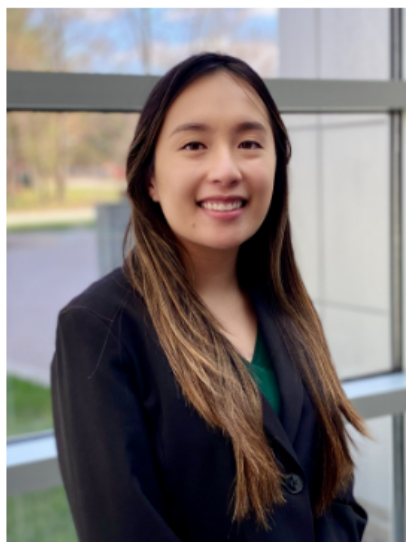


### Olivia K. Smithson

**Robert N. Renlund Preprofessional Award in the Allied Health Field:** Established in memory of Dr. Robert Renlund, a faculty member in the Department of Biological Sciences, this medallion awarded to two students for excellence in premedical or preprofessional studies. This award is donated by the Preprofessional Club.

Olivia Smithson has been an exemplary student and researcher in her tenure at Rowan University. She excelled and stood out in every class in which she was enrolled. Working in the Vojvodic Kruse Lab, she analyzed 1500 hours of honeybee behavior videos and designed and performed associated analysis. She presented research results at both regional and national conferences and was awarded "Best Student Research Poster" at the Evolution of Philadelphia Conference. Olivia received a Bachelors of Science in Biological Sciences, with minors in Neuroscience, Psychology, and German Studies. In addition, she volunteered countless hours as an online and mobile crisis counselor, served in weekly overnight emotional crisis rotations, and supervised Resident Assistant staff through conflict resolution and housing management.

## Dean's Outstanding Senior Award (DOSA)



### **Catherine Nguyen**

#### **Biological Sciences**

Catherine Nguyen is a pre-medical Biological Sciences major with Chemistry and Sociology minors and an Honors Concentration. She is an outstanding student and has been an active part of Thomas Keck's molecular pharmacology laboratory, contributing research to several drug discovery and development projects, and co-authorship on manuscripts. In addition, Catherine is the founder of the Vietnamese Student Association, involved in leadership of the Pre-health Society, and serves as a mentor in the Honors program. Outside of Rowan, her experience includes being a medical scribe, volunteering as a 7 Cups of Tea listener, at a medical center in Vietnam and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Catherine also participated in a MEDLIFE trip to Peru. She is first generation American and fluent in Vietnamese.



### **Alyssa Sanders**

#### **Molecular & Cellular Biosciences**

Alyssa Sanders is graduating with her B.S. in Translational Biomedical Sciences. Alyssa has been a three-season athlete throughout her undergraduate studies (cross-country, indoor and outdoor track and field) and has earned numerous academic student-athlete awards, including being named a Rowan Scholar-Athlete of Distinction each year. Since the spring of her sophomore year, she has also been a dedicated student researcher in the Nucci Lab. In addition to leading a research team and training incoming students while balancing two individual research projects, Alyssa has presented her work at multiple scientific conferences including the National Meeting of the American Chemical Society. She also presented at the meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Pharmacological Society where she won first prize in the poster contest for her excellence in communicating her work. In addition to her distinction in the classroom, on the field, and in the lab, Alyssa is also lead author of two publications on her research. Alyssa has been accepted into a Ph.D. program at Drexel University and plans to pursue a career as a teacher-scholar.