

2024 Medallion Awards

Jordyn Brown

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.

Jordyn Brown is an outstanding student who graduates with a B.S. in Biological Sciences, minors in Spanish and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and an Honors Concentration. She studied abroad in Spain, where she assisted in a Spanish classroom, and learned Spanish and American educational, historical, political and cultural practices. Jordyn conducted 3 years of ecological research with Drs. Grove, Richmond, and Ruhl, focusing on the relationships between freshwater plankton, water quality, and surrounding landscape characteristics. She presented scientific posters at multiple meetings, and will submit a research paper for publication. Jordyn plans to pursue a PhD in plant biology.

Jerica Hudson

Maria Tahamont Award: This award is presented to a graduate who has excelled in the study of biological sciences and is named after retired Department of Biological Sciences faculty member Dr. Maria Tahamont.

Jerica Hudson belongs to a cohort of meritorious students selected to be supported by an NIH Program to transfer from RCSJ to Rowan. Jerica is an Honors student, who graduates with a B.S. in Biological Sciences and a minor in Neurosciences. While maintaining an excellent academic record, she performed research in the laboratory of Dr. Claude Krummenacher, where she characterized the antiviral effect of honeybee venom against human and feline herpesviruses and coronaviruses. Her project presentations attracted attention at several regional and international meetings. Jerica is a remarkably motivated student, who will use her research training in the lab and her hospital work experience in emergency departments to pursue medical studies. She is an outstanding example for transfer students to follow and a deserving recipient of the Tahamont Award.

Nitish Kasarla

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 & Biomedical Sciences, this medallion is awarded to two students for excellence in premedical or preprofessional studies. This award is donated by the Preprofessional Club.

Nitish Kasarla is a Molecular and Cellular Biology major in the accelerated BS/MD program and will start medical school at Cooper Medical School of Rowan University (CMSRU) in Fall 2024. In the John H. Martinson Honors College, Nitish serves as a BLAST mentor, is a group leader for the Problem-Based Learning program and works in the laboratory of Dr. Thomas Keck on an Honors with Distinction research project focused on analgesic drug discovery targeting the mu opioid receptor. Nitish is the current President of the Pre-Health Society, which strives to provide opportunities for students to learn about healthcare professions, participates in volunteer and service events, provides skills workshops, and networking with other students pursuing careers in healthcare. He is particularly proud of the March 1, 2024, Pre-Health Society Reception, which brought undergraduate students together with medical students from CMSRU and Rowan School of Osteopathic Medicine and raised money for the Cooper Rowan Clinic in Camden, NJ. He is excited about his upcoming medical school training and currently most intrigued by cardiology or surgery.

Alicia Petraný

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.

Alicia Petraný is an excellent student pursuing dual Bachelor of Science degrees in Bioinformatics and MCB, and participating in a 4+1 program for a Bioinformatics Master's degree at Rowan. Engaging in rigorous research under the guidance of Dr. Yong Chen, Alicia has contributed to diverse projects, designing probabilistic models and deep learning-based methods for analyzing next-generation sequencing data. Her accomplishments include notable publications and presentations at prestigious conferences. Alicia has been awarded the NCWSSL National Scholarship and the Jewish National Fund Fellowship. Her commitment to community service and leadership roles as a member of the South Jersey Area Wind Ensemble and Original Hobo Band highlights her holistic approach to personal and professional growth. She intends to pursue a Ph.D., aiming to develop algorithms with translational impact in bioinformatics.

2024 Dean's Outstanding Senior Awards



Katelynn Albanese

Biological & Biomedical Sciences

Katelynn Albanese is a Biological Sciences major and Bantivoglio Leadership and Service Training Mentor in the Honors College, with minors in Chemistry and Business Administration. In her time at Rowan she proved to be an exemplary student, leader, and researcher, while also holding animal hospital and zoo internships. She was a key member in Dr. Hough's seaside sparrow research lab, where she analyzed 10 years of songbird data and documented the permanence of song dialects across three different locations in southern New Jersey and presented her group's findings at Rowan's Research Day and the National Meeting of the Animal Behavior Society. Katelynn is truly an outstanding student who has been accepted into several competitive DVM programs. She will make a compassionate and skilled veterinarian.



Yesenia Flores

Biological & Biomedical Sciences

Yesenia Flores is graduating with her B.A. in Biological Science with a minor in Psychology. Yesenia has been a dedicated and talented student researcher since beginning her undergraduate career at Rowan University. As an inaugural fellow of the U-RISE at Rowan University NIH training program she has made tremendous contributions to a multitude of research projects in the Carone research laboratory. Yesenia has presented her findings at local and international meetings such as at the ASBMB conference in Seattle and completed a prestigious REU program at the University of Chicago. Yesenia's passion for science is inspiring and is looking towards pursuing a doctoral degree in molecular biology where she will undoubtedly make significant contributions.



Miles Fort

Biological & Biomedical Sciences

Miles Fort transferred to Rowan University during his junior year from Rowan College of South Jersey and graduated in December with a Bachelors of Arts in Biology and a minor in technical and professional writing. During his time at Rowan, he developed a passion for scientific communication and completed a semester-long research internship with Dr. Vilceanu examining how podcasts are used in public health initiatives. He is currently working as a laboratory technician at National Refrigerants, Inc., and he is continuing research involving manufactured scientific controversies within nonfiction publishing. He plans to pursue a graduate degree in scientific communication.