

WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT
AWARDS
2022



WORCESTER
STATE
UNIVERSITY



WORCESTER STATE FOUNDATION

INSPIRE GENEROSITY. TRANSFORM LIVES.

It is with sincere gratitude that we acknowledge the support of the Worcester State Foundation, Inc. and the generous supporters, including many of the **41,000 Worcester State alumni**, who have given more than **\$44 million** to the Foundation since its inception in 2001. Wise stewardship of those gifts has allowed the Foundation to directly support student needs and transfer more than **\$34.5 million** to Worcester State University over those **21 years** to assist our hard-working and high-achieving students, while at the same time allowing the endowment to continue to grow, reaching **\$42 million** on June 30, 2021.

The Worcester State Foundation is pleased and proud to honor and reward the highest-ranking students in each of the academic disciplines. We join with the families and friends of today's honorees in the celebration of their achievements.

Academic Achievement Awards



GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT MALONEY

Dear student achievers, faculty, staff, and friends,

The Academic Achievement Awards celebrate the most accomplished students on our campus. Hard-working, motivated, and intelligent—these are the qualities that define the awardees.

Students often tell us that faculty members were the keys to that success. Worcester State's faculty are skilled at tapping into talents that students themselves do not necessarily see, bringing out their very best. Every one of the faculty members recognized by an academic achievement awardee represents many more who have done the same thing for other students. I thank our outstanding, dedicated faculty.

Many awards carry a donor's name. We know that just one scholarship can make the difference between a student persisting toward graduation in four years, or not. I deeply appreciate our alumni and friends who commit financial resources to students.

To the students, faculty, and donors we celebrate today: you are the ones who make Worcester State great. And, to our honorees—congratulations!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barry M. Maloney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barry M. Maloney
President



The George I. Alden Excellence in Teaching Award

This award publicly acknowledges Worcester State University professors who have made a difference in students' lives through their teaching excellence.

Each year, Worcester State University asks students, alumni, and faculty to nominate full-time faculty members who have demonstrated excellence in teaching.

From those nominations, a committee composed of students, alumni, and faculty chooses one tenured faculty member and one pre-tenure faculty member to be honored with this award.



Dr. Erika Briesacher
History and Political Science
Tenured



Dr. Hardeep Sidhu
English
Pre-tenure

University Award Recipients

Ella M. Whitney Award*Esther Konadu*

This award, named for Ella M. Whitney, an 1891 graduate of Worcester State University (then known as the Worcester Normal School), recognizes the qualities Ms. Whitney exemplified as a student and alumna, including scholarship, social aptitude, personality, leadership, executive ability, growth, loyalty, integrity, and, above all else, participation in school activities.

Ellen J. Meyers M.Ed. '88 Memorial Academic Merit Award.....*Amanda Pollicelli*

This award, established in memory of beloved Worcester State University alumna Ellen J. Meyers, M.Ed. '88, by her husband, David Meyers '76, is given to an undergraduate student achiever with disabilities who has also been actively engaged on campus or in their community.

John F. Eager Continuing Education Excellence Award*Elijah Bouthiller*

This award, given in memory of John F. Eager, the late Worcester State University biology professor and former director of the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education, is given to the undergraduate evening program senior who has the highest overall GPA.

Worcester State Foundation Awards Criteria

These awards are given by the University with financial support from the Worcester State Foundation to the graduating senior with the top academic performance in each area.

Academic Award Recipients

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Business Administration and Economics

Bollus Lynch Accounting Award..... *Julia DaSilva*

This award, sponsored by Bollus Lynch as a way to continue its commitment to community-based support in the Worcester area, is given to the highest-ranking graduating senior majoring in business administration with a concentration in accounting.

Dr. William F. O'Brien Jr. '84 Economics Award..... *Andre Zink*

This award, named in honor of Dr. William F. O'Brien Jr. '84, a devoted Worcester State University alumnus and retired faculty member who received the Distinguished Alumni Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Education in 2016, is given to a senior majoring in economics who has achieved high academic standing and/or demonstrated a strong interest in applying economic theory internationally through academic coursework and/or study abroad experiences.

F. Stephen Trimby Economics Award..... *Aidan Lorusso*

This award, named in honor of Professor Stephen Trimby, a retired Worcester State University faculty member whose dedication to the University and to the success of every student who crossed his path spanned decades, is given to a senior majoring in economics who has demonstrated exemplary work in economics, has shown outstanding potential for graduate studies and/or career success, and/or has demonstrated a commitment to use their economics education to advance the betterment of the community at large.

Raj-Mahendra Jain Business Administration Award..... *Mariela Gjylapi*

This award, established in 2016 by Dr. Renuka Jain, former Worcester State University chair of business administration and economics, in honor of her parents, Raj and Mahendra Jain, is given to a female graduating senior majoring in business administration, with at least 15 credits through the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education, and a GPA of at least 3.5.

Tyler Stratton '12 and Jessica Tea '12 Award..... *Tu Quyen Le*

This award is given to a current (or former) Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) student who has a part-time or full-time job while maintaining a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Second preference shall be given to Sigma Beta Delta students with a concentration in accounting and/or finance.

Worcester State Foundation Award in Business Administration..... *Diminga Boley*

Worcester State Foundation Award in Economics..... *Alesia Kalaja*

Communication

Godfrin Family Communication Academic Recognition Award *Jillian Torres*

This award, established in 2021 by Lisa Godfrin '16 and her family, is given to a graduating senior majoring in communication who has shown exemplary leadership and dedication to the department while at Worcester State.

Matthew Wright '10 Journalism Award *Aivy Lee*

This award, established in 2021 by Worcester State alumnus and photographer Matthew Wright '10, is given to the highest-ranking communication senior with first preference for a student concentrating in digital media.

Tarmey Family Endowed Communication Award *Karen Shalev*

This award, established in 2019 by Worcester State University alumna Marjorie Tarmey '63 and her family, is given to the highest-ranking senior majoring in communication.

Criminal Justice

Central Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association

Spirit of Service Award *Grace Higgins*

This award recognizes a student of a diverse background who has good academic achievement, professionalism, and a record of community service, and exhibits superior potential and commitment to the field of criminal justice.

Dr. Stephen A. Morreale Public Service in Criminal Justice Award *Vinh Tran*

This award, established by Dr. Stephen A. Morreale, Worcester State University chair and professor of criminal justice, is given to a high-achieving junior or senior majoring in criminal justice who demonstrates a thirst for lifelong learning while also serving as an active employee in a criminal justice agency.

Vanessa Dunn Memorial Criminal Justice Award *Megan Shultze*

This award, given in memory of Vanessa Anne Dunn, a Worcester State University student in the criminal justice program who lost her life in 2010, just months before she was scheduled to graduate, is given to the senior majoring in criminal justice with the highest overall GPA.

English

Worcester State Foundation Award in English *Sarah Flynn*

History and Political Science

Professor Cheng & Christina Yuan History Award*Logan Morales*

This award, established in memory of former Worcester State University Professor of History Cheng Yuan and his wife, Christina, is given to the highest-ranking junior majoring in history.

Ronald R. Valerio '75 Academic Major Award in History*James Joyce*

This award, named in memory of the late Ron Valerio '75, a devoted alumnus, past member of the Board of Trustees, Alumni Association's Advisory Board, and Foundation Board, is given to the graduating senior with the top academic performance in history.

Worcester State Foundation Award in Political Science*Eric Miller*

Philosophy

Dr. Daniel C. Shartin Emerging Philosopher Award*Jonen-Marie Wood*

This award, in honor of Worcester State University Philosophy Professor Emeritus Dr. Daniel C. Shartin, is given to a student who has taken multiple philosophy courses and most exemplifies the spirit of the philosophical endeavor in all its logical rigor and creativity.

Psychology

Beth Axelson '70 Psychology Award *Benjamin Morin*

This award, endowed by former Worcester State University Admissions Director Beth Axelson '70, who graduated from Worcester State with a bachelor's degree in psychology, is given to the highest-ranking graduating senior majoring in psychology.

Dr. Lawrence A. Averill Psychology Award*Joseph Hart*

This award, established by a former student of the late Dr. Lawrence A. Averill, Worcester State University psychology professor, is given to a senior majoring in psychology.

Sociology

Faith T. Zeadey Memorial Sociology Award *Phil Kapitan*

This award, in memory of the late Faith T. Zeadey, Worcester State University professor of sociology, social activist, and humanitarian, is given to the highest-ranking senior majoring in sociology.

Urban Studies

Dr. Vincent E. “Jake” Powers Urban Studies Award.....*Melanie Riedle*

This award, in memory of Dr. Vincent “Jake” Powers, a highly respected urban historian and founder of the Worcester State University Urban Studies Department, is given to an undergraduate urban studies student who is an innovative, original thinker, whose time in the department has emboldened him or her to pursue personal and professional opportunities not previously considered, and to achieve them with determination, grit, and courage.

Julia Mack Award for Intergenerational Leadership.....*Carl “Bill” Coolbaugh*

This award, in memory of elder student Julie Mack, established by her daughter, Worcester State University alumna and former trustee Barbara Sinott '55, is given to an elder undergraduate majoring in urban studies who has fostered a dynamic intergenerational climate on campus, developed the ability to see the world and its challenges through a multi-generational lens, and shown the capacity and sensitivity to work creatively across ages to meet those challenges.

Maureen Power Service Award*Yeruksew Hoyt-Rouse*

This award, established by Professor Emerita Maureen Power, helps make it possible for urban studies students to participate in service-related projects, including practica, internships, or volunteer opportunities. To be considered for the award, students present to an urban studies review committee a one-page proposal outlining their service plan and explaining why the service is significant to them and their academic/professional careers, and how it advances the mission of the department.

Schwartz Charitable Foundation Urban Studies Award*Nichole Hart*

This award, in honor of Nathan Schwartz, founding donor of the Schwartz Charitable Foundation, who was a business visionary committed to supporting small businesses and community endeavors in Worcester County, is given to the highest-ranking undergraduate senior majoring in urban studies who best represents the mission of the Foundation.

Visual and Performing Arts

Malcolm Gordon Memorial Visual and Performing Arts Award*Karen Shalev*

This award, established by Worcester State University alumnus Alan Gordon '80 in memory of his father, Malcolm Gordon, former Worcester resident and nationally renowned magazine gag cartoonist, is given to the highest-ranking senior in visual and performing arts.

Mary Cosgrove Dolphin Art Award.....*Trang Duong*

This award, established to honor the late Worcester State University Professor Mary Cosgrove Dolphin, a dedicated art educator and artist who touched many Worcester State students during her service, is given to a studio art student who has demonstrated exceptional creative accomplishment in the visual arts.

World Languages

Dr. Dorothy A. Escribano Spanish Award..... *Kathryn Buckley*

This award, established by former Worcester State University Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Dorothy A. Escribano, is given to a full-time, non-traditional sophomore or junior majoring/minoring in Spanish with a minimum GPA of 2.7. The recipient must have demonstrated financial need and have participated in community and/or extracurricular activities, and demonstrated outstanding academic improvement.

Worcester State Foundation Award in Spanish*Gregory Martinez*

SCHOOL OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND HEALTH

Biology

Dr. Anthony Thurston Biology Award*Elise Stone*

This award, established in 2017 by a generous gift from the George F. and Sybil H. Fuller Foundation in memory of former Worcester State University Biology Professor Dr. Anthony Thurston, is given to the highest-ranking senior majoring in biology.

Dr. Marlin B. Kreider Biology Award*Minh Luong*

This award, in memory of Dr. Marlin B. Kreider, a former Worcester State University Biology Professor, is given to a senior biology student who has shown a commitment to a career in biological research.

Dr. Maureen '80 and Edward Shamgochian Biology Award.....*Matthew Hanlon*

This award, made possible by a gift from former Worcester State University Biology Professor Dr. Maureen Shamgochian '80 and her late husband, Edward, is given to a junior or senior biology or biotechnology major with a GPA of 3.5 or higher who is engaged in undergraduate research with plans to attend graduate or professional school upon completion of his or her Worcester State degree.

Biotechnology

Lincoln Donohue '98 Memorial Biotechnology Award..... *Joshua Fung-A-Fat*

This award, established by Kevin and Susan Donohue, the parents of Worcester State University alumnus Lincoln C. Donohue '98, who graduated with the highest honors in biotechnology and went on to work at Genzyme Corp. before his sudden passing at the age of 24 in 1999, is given to an outstanding student in the biotechnology program who shows promise, dedication, and academic success.

Worcester State Foundation Award in Biotechnology..... *Duy Hoang*

Chemistry

Dr. Maureen '80 and Edward Shamgochian Chemistry Award *Alisha Papadakis*

This award, made possible by a gift from former Worcester State University Biology Professor Dr. Maureen Shamgochian '80 and her late husband, Edward, is given to a current sophomore, junior, or senior majoring in chemistry with a GPA of 3.0 or higher. The student must have engaged in scientific research and plan to continue his or her education in the sciences in professional or graduate school.

Worcester State Foundation Award in Chemistry *Nhu Le*

Communication Sciences and Disorders

Honorable John J. Binienda Sr. Communication Sciences and

Disorders Award..... *Shenae Saunders*

This award, honoring the late Massachusetts State Representative John J. Binienda Sr., a Worcester State University alumnus and educator who served in the Massachusetts State House for 28 years, is given to an undergraduate student who will be entering the Worcester State graduate program in speech-language pathology and will focus on challenges facing children with hearing loss.

Worcester State Foundation Award in

Communication Sciences and Disorders *Moira O'Sullivan*

Worcester State University Chapter of the National Student

Speech-Language-Hearing Association Award..... *Moira O'Sullivan*

This award is given to an outstanding student majoring in communication sciences and disorders in recognition of the student's demonstrated record of leadership, ability, scholastic achievement, and service to the Worcester State University-NSSLHA Chapter.

Computer Science

Worcester State Foundation Award in Computer Science *Christian Shadis*

Earth, Environment, and Physics

Dr. Earl B. Shaw Geography Award..... *Vincent Pellegrino*

This award, endowed by a student of the late Dr. Earl B. Shaw, a former Worcester State University geography professor, is given to an outstanding senior majoring in geography, in recognition of the student's academic achievement and service to the University community.

Worcester State Foundation Award in

Environmental Science *Chloe Dimarzio*

Worcester State Foundation Award in Geography..... *Lauren Vigneault*

Health Sciences

Worcester State Foundation Award in Health Education..... *Sara Burnell*

Worcester State Foundation Award in Public Health *Michele Bravo-Moran*

Mathematics

Dr. Richard Bisk Teaching Mathematics Award *Kaylie Senecal*

This award, honoring Dr. Richard Bisk, former Worcester State University faculty member and chair of the Mathematics Department, is given to a junior or senior with at least a 3.6 GPA, who demonstrates outstanding achievement in mathematics, along with a commitment to teaching for understanding.

Worcester State Foundation Award in

Mathematics for Elementary Education *Emma Poplawski*

Worcester State Foundation Award in Mathematics *Christian Shadis*

Nursing

Ann “Annie” Dolan ’13 Nursing Award for Compassion *Shadya Aghram*

This award, given in memory of Ann “Annie” Dolan, M.S.N. ’13, who was a labor and delivery nurse who returned to Worcester State University to earn her master's degree in nursing education shortly before her death in 2014, is given to a nursing student who has demonstrated an enthusiastic and compassionate bedside manner, and a passion to advance the art and science of nursing.

Dr. Jean and Michael Campaniello Nursing Award*Phyllis Schilp*

This award, established in 2015 by Jean A. Campaniello, Worcester State University professor emerita and former chair of the Dr. Lillian R. Goodman Department of Nursing, is given to a graduate student in community health nursing with a minimum GPA of 3.25, who has completed at least two courses in the community/public health specialty track, and has demonstrated a leadership role in the community through community service activities that improve the quality of life for residents and achieve a greater understanding and appreciation for diversity through community activism.

Dr. Lillian R. Goodman Nursing Award..... *Brian Sarkisian*

This award, in honor of the late Dr. Lillian R. Goodman, founder of the Dr. Lillian R. Goodman Department of Nursing at Worcester State University, and pioneer in the field of nursing education, is given to a registered nursing student who exemplifies leadership, caring, a strong commitment to professional nursing, and a vision for the future.

Dr. Paula L. Dufresne-Sullivan '86 Humanitarian Nursing Award....*Quinn Ferreira*

This award, established in 2019 by Worcester State University alumna Dr. Paula L. Dufresne-Sullivan '86, is given to a graduating senior in Nursing Track 1, 2, or 3 who has demonstrated special qualities of compassion, leadership, and a commitment to humanitarian service to all patients, especially those in disenfranchised populations.

Eileen Bolesky Academic Major Award in Nursing*Meaghan Campbell*

This award was established by Edward '67 and his late wife Eileen Bolesky. Now retired, Ed was a successful senior business executive and Eileen was one of the first nurse practitioners in Worcester, later serving as a school nurse. The award is given to the highest-ranking senior majoring in nursing.

Fairlawn Rehabilitation Hospital Award for

Nursing Clinical Excellence *Fiona Weir*

This award is given to a graduating senior who has demonstrated excellence in a nursing clinical setting and has an interest in orthopedics or rehabilitation medicine.

Occupational Therapy

I. Robert and Aviva Freeland Occupational Therapy Award.....*Apphia Donoghue*

This award was established by the late I. Robert Freeland, charter member of the Worcester State Foundation Board and a 2002 recipient of an honorary degree from Worcester State University, and his wife, Aviva, a Worcester-area philanthropist. It is given to the highest-ranking senior majoring in occupational therapy.

EDUCATION, LIBERAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

Education

Class of 1952 Endowed Elementary Education Award*Emma Poplawski*

This award, in honor of the Worcester State University Class of 1952 and its many esteemed educators and devoted alumni, is conferred each year to the highest-ranking graduating senior majoring in elementary education.

Donald Cousineau '57, M.Ed. '60 and Elaine (Curran) Cousineau '57, M.Ed. '60 Elementary Education Award*Kaylie Senecal*

This award, given in honor of Donald Cousineau '57, M.Ed. '60 and Elaine (Curran) Cousineau '57, M.Ed. '60, established with love by Miss Curran's first-grade student, dear friend, and fellow alumna Diane M. Aramony, to honor their dedication to the innumerable young students whose lives they have enriched, is granted to a graduating senior majoring in elementary education with a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Dorothy J. Hargrove '63 Early Childhood Education Award*Breana Hogan*

This award, provided by dedicated alumna Dorothy Hargrove '63 to support students who are seeking careers teaching young children, is given to the highest-ranking senior majoring in early childhood education.

Helen Shaughnessy Elementary Education Award *Mark Parella*

This award, given in memory of Professor Helen Shaughnessy, a highly esteemed teacher, faculty member, chair, and administrator at Worcester State University and the surrounding school district, is given to recognize a junior or senior elementary education student who demonstrates good academic achievement, professionalism, and outstanding potential in the field of elementary education.

Lillian C. and George H. Albro '65 Education Award*Jay Turner*

This award, established by George '65 and Lillian (Brooks) '65 Albro, lifelong educators and benefactors of Worcester State University, is given to a junior or senior majoring in elementary education or minoring in middle or secondary education with a GPA of 3.5 or higher. Preference is given to students who graduated from Leicester High School, or are from Leicester, Mass.

Madelin A. Wilmarth Early Childhood Education Award.....*Kateri Hart*

This award, in memory of Worcester State University Professor Madelin A. Wilmarth, a pioneer in the field of early childhood education, is given to the junior majoring in early childhood education with the highest GPA.

Ruth Cohen Blumsack Early Childhood Education Award... *Elizabeth Poitras-Cote*

This award is given to a student majoring in early childhood education with a minimum GPA of 3.5. The recipient must show exceptional abilities in working with and teaching young children.

Liberal Studies

Robert H. Kyle Award for Excellence in Liberal Studies..... *Calli Korbey*

This award, established by Worcester State University Associate Vice President and Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education Dr. Bobbi Kyle and her family, in memory of Robert H. Kyle, who embraced lifelong learning and interdisciplinary education, is given to the highest-ranking graduating senior majoring in liberal studies.

The Lt. Col. James F. Sheehan '55, USMC Ret., Academic Excellence Award Recipients

First-Year Achievement Award.....*Delaney DeNorscia*

Sophomore Achievement Award.....*Lauren Connolly*

Junior Achievement Award*Amanda Lo*

Senior Achievement Award.....*Moirra O'Sullivan*



“One of the best ways to show appreciation for what we have received is to give other students the same opportunities we had.”

—Lt. Col. James F. Sheehan '55,
USMC Ret.

The Lt. Col. James F. Sheehan '55, USMC Ret., Academic Excellence Awards

In 2013, the late Lt. Col. James F. Sheehan, USMC Ret., gave \$500,000 to his alma mater, Worcester State Teachers College (as it was known in 1955). It was the largest cash gift in the history of the University. In announcing this gift, Lt. Col. Sheehan humbly and simply shared, “It’s about time I gave something back.”

Lt. Col. Sheehan, who passed away in 2016, was the most generous benefactor in WSU’s history, sharing an overwhelming \$4.5 million to benefit students and faculty.

After an incredibly successful and varied career in the United States Marine Corps, Lt. Col. Sheehan used his math and business skills to embark on a second successful career as a venture capitalist. He and his wife settled in Florida, where they established 14 scholarships through a number of charitable organizations.

The Lt. Col. James F. Sheehan '55, USMC Ret., Academic Excellence Awards are given annually to full-time WSU students with the best GPA in the first-year, sophomore, junior, and senior classes. Lt. Col. Sheehan’s gifts also created an endowment for the Sheehan Honors Program, now named in his honor, which provides \$50,000 per year to support scholarship and research.

Rewarding and encouraging academic excellence became Lt. Col. Sheehan’s legacy. He had hoped his success and support would be emulated by those students to whom his awards and scholarships have provided, and will continue to provide, assistance.



“I want to evoke emotions through my art, and reach as many people as I can.”

—Delaney DeNorscia, Class of 2025

The Lt. Col. James F. Sheehan '55, USMC Ret., Award *First-Year Academic Achievement Award*

First-year **Delaney DeNorscia '25** has long had a fascination with the arts. The Honors Program student recently declared her major in theatre and minor in writing. “I’m very excited,” she said. “I’ve always been interested in the arts: writing, drawing, acting and singing.”

The Holden native is the treasurer for Almost Off Book, the student drama club. She recently authored two short plays, *The Dating Fairy* and *What’s Up G-Man?*, that were staged as part of the club’s show this spring. Delaney also played the role of *The Countess* in the fall production of *Picasso* at the Lapin Agile.

Outside of school, Delaney uses her art tablet to draw cartoons and comics. She has a love of singing, as well, and for years took voice lessons. “When I’m driving or home alone, I’m always singing to myself,” she said.

Delaney is excited to see where her interest in playwriting will lead her. “I know that I want to experience everything I can along the way, and I hope to do that through the things I really love,” she said. “I guess I’m trying to connect to my artist side.”

She envisions a career that allows her to express herself—and reach others. “Creativity is one of the most important things to me. I want to evoke emotions through my art, and reach as many people as I can,” she said.



“I have had the opportunity to take so many classes, and I’ve found a lot of special interests.”

—Lauren Connolly, Class of 2024

The Lt. Col. James F. Sheehan '55, USMC Ret., Award *Sophomore Academic Achievement Award*

After a first year of remote learning, sophomore **Lauren Connolly '24** says she is enjoying exploring life at Worcester State—from interesting classes and extracurriculars, to all the city has to offer.

“I’ve really enjoyed coming to college,” she said. “I felt it was really an experiment with finding out what I want to do. I have had the opportunity to take so many classes, and I’ve found a lot of special interests. I’m really happy I’m meeting a lot of people.”

A business administration major from Ashburnham, Mass., Lauren says she wants a career that allows her to work with people. “Business is an open track where I can experiment with that. I’m going where life takes me,” she said.

Outside of the classroom, Lauren is a musician. She began playing the alto saxophone in the third grade. In high school she auditioned for jazz band, but they didn’t have any more alto spots, so she picked up a new instrument: trombone. “They both have their own charm and different sounds,” she said of her two instruments. “I love both of them.” She went on to play in both the marching and jazz bands at Oakmont Regional High School and hopes to join the Worcester State Jazz Ensemble.

“I have been working on my music outside,” she said. “I’m a big fan of jazz. I do a lot of improvisation. It’s fun and it helps me relax. I did play in a lot of ensembles, and recently I have enjoyed playing at my own pace.”



“It’s made me so aware of how important it is to be there in the community and do what you can, because there is always someone who needs you.”

—Amanda Lo, Class of 2023

The Lt. Col. James F. Sheehan ’55, USMC Ret., Award *Junior Academic Achievement Award*

From plants to the human body, biology major **Amanda Lo ’23** is fascinated by how things work. With double minors in chemistry and psychology, she is considering medical school.

“I’m a hands-on person, and I enjoy solving problems,” she said. “The idea of someone coming to you with a problem and being able to figure out what they have seems fun, like detective work.”

Amanda is currently doing a research project with the plant species *Arabidopsis*, a small flowering weed, to compare the growth rates of mutant *Arabidopsis* with enlarged chloroplasts—the part of the plant where photosynthesis happens—with regular plants in both light and shade conditions. She has 50–60 of them growing in the University’s greenhouse.

“I’m finding the mutants are growing faster. They are bigger, so they can absorb more light and make food for themselves,” Amanda said. “They got flowers way before their normal counterparts.”

The project could have implications in the commercial crop industry. “We largely depend on crops to feed us,” she said. “It is important that we investigate the potentially beneficial genetic mutations of *Arabidopsis* plants. Since it’s a model organism, we can apply these findings to our food sources.”

Outside of school, Amanda works as a Spanish medical interpreter at a local free medical clinic. “I’ve learned a lot, and it’s made me very aware of my privilege,” she said. “It’s made me so aware of how important it is to be there in the community and do what you can, because there is always someone who needs you.”



“Giving someone a voice was so impactful to me.”

—*Moira O’Sullivan, Class of 2022*

The Lt. Col. James F. Sheehan '55, USMC Ret., Award *Senior Academic Achievement Award*

In high school, **Moira O’Sullivan ’22** had the opportunity to shadow a speech-language pathologist who worked with individuals who had experienced strokes, traumatic brain injuries, or neurological issues. After that experience, she knew what she wanted to do as a career. “I loved how caring it was, and it is very personable,” she said. “Giving someone a voice was so impactful to me.”

She is graduating with a degree in communication sciences and disorders and a minor in Spanish for health care professionals, and she is heading to graduate school for speech-language pathology.

She keeps a full schedule that includes tutoring at Worcester State for classes in speech disorders and anatomy and physiology for speech and hearing. On the weekends, Moira, who is from Ludlow, Mass., works as a receptionist at a skilled nursing and rehabilitation center. Through Worcester State, Moira has taught for three years in the AmeriCorps-affiliated program Jumpstart, which provides language, literacy, and social-emotional learning for preschool children in under-resourced communities. As a team leader, she leads learning activities with preschoolers ages 3 to 5.

On any given day they might have story time and learn all the vocabulary words in the book, sing songs, make puppets, do puzzles, or make artwork. “It’s extremely rewarding,” Moira said. “It’s so chaotic, and that’s when it is the most fun.”

Her work at Jumpstart has her considering speech-language pathology with children. “I love working with kids,” she said. “There is a lot more you can do with kids in hospitals and private practice.”



Academic Chairs

Biology	<i>Dr. Jennifer Hood-DeGrenier</i>
Business Administration and Economics	<i>Professor Mark Love</i>
Chemistry	<i>Dr. Meghna Dilip</i>
Communication	<i>Dr. Julie Frechette</i>
Communication Sciences and Disorders	<i>Dr. Kristina Curro</i>
Computer Science	<i>Dr. Karl Wurst</i>
Criminal Justice.....	<i>Dr. Stephen Morreale</i>
Earth, Environment, and Physics.....	<i>Dr. Allison Dunn</i>
Education.....	<i>Dr. Christina Kaniu</i>
English	<i>Dr. Donald Vescio</i>
Health Sciences	<i>Dr. Mariana Calle</i>
History and Political Science	<i>Dr. Charlotte Haller</i>
Mathematics.....	<i>Dr. Michael Winders</i>
Nursing.....	<i>Dr. Michelle Page</i>
Occupational Therapy	<i>Dr. Joanne Gallagher Worthley</i>
Philosophy	<i>Dr. Frank Boardman</i>
Psychology	<i>Dr. Brandi Silver</i>
Sociology.....	<i>Dr. Francisco Vivoni</i>
Urban Studies.....	<i>Dr. Timothy Murphy</i>
Visual and Performing Arts.....	<i>Dr. Samuel O’Connell</i>
World Languages.....	<i>Dr. Ana Perez-Manrique</i>



Paul Tsongas Scholarship Criteria and Recipients

These scholarships are given each year to Massachusetts residents for full in-state day school tuition and fees. Recipients must have a GPA of 3.75 and a combined SAT of 1200. The scholarship is renewable for a maximum of four years to recipients who maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.3.....

- Rachael Curley*
- Gabrielle Decosta*
- Laura Dennis*
- Daniel Fiester*
- Maureen Grady*
- Johany Jeune*
- Maxwell Jordan*
- Juliana Kallio*
- Richard Laperchia*
- Alyssa LeBlanc*
- Marissa Luchini*
- Eric Miller*
- Avery Oldakowski*
- Timothy O'Leary*
- Bethany Peterson*
- Jessica Poyser*
- Jimelca Suarez*
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Thank You

The Provost's Office thanks the many employees, as well as all Academic Ceremonies Committee members, who help make this program and the event special and meaningful for our students.

Art for student awards by Mark Waitkus



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