

PRESS RELEASE

SHANE ALLAN NAMED 2023 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Shane M. Allan of Grove City, Ohio, has been named a 2023 Distinguished Senior at The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES).

“The Distinguished Senior Award is the most prestigious undergraduate award in CFAES and honors top graduating seniors on the Ohio State Columbus campus,” said Ann Christy, CFAES professor and associate dean for academic programs. “The 25 award recipients exemplify the CFAES mission in areas such as academics and scholarship, research and innovation, service and involvement, and influence and leadership.”

Allan, a plant pathology major and entomology minor, was nominated by college faculty and staff who felt that he personified the award’s attributes of academic, disciplinary, and professional excellence.

After completing his associate’s degree in biological science at Columbus State Community College, Allan transferred to Ohio State. “I was always fond of fungi, so I decided to transfer to Ohio State as a microbiology major. After taking multiple courses in plant pathology, I decided I was more passionate about this major and switched over,” he said.

Looking back on his time at Ohio State, Allan identified his most enjoyable experience as doing field work studying beech leaf disease, a new disease spreading across Ohio. “I have always enjoyed nature, and my whole goal in being a plant pathology major is to help conserve the forest,” he said. “I enjoy spending time in nature and working to combat a disease killing the forest is an experience I will never forget.”

He was also able to work with commercial growers of pawpaw, going out into their fields and sampling plants. Pawpaws are not a common crop and have a limited growing range, so Allan considers himself lucky to work with them and the “world-class CFAES researchers who are at the top of their field. I’m proud to hopefully provide some relief to the growers who are experiencing the death of their trees,” he said.

According to his nominators from the Department of Plant Pathology, Allan has excelled in academics and developed a strong suite of research skills in plant pathology. He worked in the research programs of Enrico Bonello, professor of molecular and chemical ecology of trees, and Jason Slot, an associate professor who specializes in fungal evolutionary genomics and mycology.

In Slot’s laboratory, he was a pivotal contributor to studies of fungi that cause disease in insects. In Bonello’s laboratory, he not only conducted research on beech leaf disease, but also helped maintain trees for a major study on a fungal disease of Austrian Pine. The study is revealing important information on the survival of pines in a warming climate. In another project, he processed thousands of samples to test a new technology to study

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disease resistance in tree species - a spectroscopy instrument that is showing great promise in identifying disease-resistance of trees in the field.

They wrote, “It has been gratifying to watch Shane develop as a scientist. He has worked very hard and made outstanding achievements both in the classroom and in research. He discovered plant pathology as a way to combine his love of science and his desire to help people. He is well-deserving of this honor.”

Bonello also said, “He is an active learner and conscientious worker, and one of the best students who has ever worked for me.”

A first-generation college student, Allan has overcome a multitude of challenges, often carrying a heavy workload to finance his education. After graduation, he will work at Ohio State’s plant disease diagnostic clinic as a research technician. He also plans to pursue graduate education in a field related to forest health.

A reception for the Distinguished Senior Award recipients and their families was held on Wednesday, March 22, hosted by Ann Christy and Cathann A. Kress, vice president for agricultural administration and CFAES dean. Meet the 25 outstanding students and learn more about each via a YouTube video release at go.osu.edu/CFAES2023DSA.

In autumn 2022, there were 2,248 undergraduate students in CFAES pursuing bachelor of science degrees in 22 majors. Learn more about CFAES academic programs at go.osu.edu/B4V2.



Shane M. Allan

GROVE CITY, OH

PLANT PATHOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF PLANT PATHOLOGY

Photo available by sending a request to flood.13@osu.edu

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