

## PRESS RELEASE

# MADISON KACICA NAMED 2023 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLUMBUS, Ohio— Madison W. Kacica of Burton, 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.”

Kacica is an ecological engineering major in the Department of Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering (FABE). She was nominated by college faculty and staff who felt that she personified the award’s attributes of academic, disciplinary, and professional excellence.

She began her undergraduate education at Cuyahoga Community College before transferring to Ohio State where her most valuable learning experience came from the course FABENG 3200S, Engineering for Community Development. In the class, students used engineering design principles to support a local garden in their efforts to combat food insecurity in Columbus.

“I helped design a rainwater harvesting system that acted as a thermal heat bank for their outdoor high tunnel,” Kacica said. “This was the first time I saw how the skills and tools I gained in the classroom could make a tangible difference in the community. More importantly though, I gained a stronger sense of my role as an engineer in solving societal issues.”

The first-generation college student interned at Battelle Memorial Institute in West Jefferson, Ohio, where she was exposed to many unique experiences. “Many of the projects we worked on related to precision agriculture, specifically through spray drift and droplet size characterization, as well as volatility assessments in controlled environments,” she said. “It was exciting to work in an environment with state-of-the-art technology.”

At Battelle, the Geauga County resident also had the opportunity to manage an independent research project that studied how rain events affect the volatility of agrochemicals. “This was particularly exciting because I co-authored a poster that was presented at the 2022 American Chemical Society conference,” she said.

Kacica identified Buck-I-SERV trips where she worked on a wide range of environmental and social issues in underserved communities as her most rewarding experiences. “I helped plant thousands of cypress trees in the bayous of New Orleans, cleaned up their parks and beaches, and worked in their food banks and gardens, constructed aviaries in Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park in Memphis, Tennessee for the park’s endangered

owls, and helped service a campground and support efforts for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians,” she said.

According to her Fabe nominator, “Madison is motivated to learn and experience new things and show her support to marginalized groups. She is empathetic to the struggles that many of these individuals face. She also worked as a student research assistant in professor Jay Martin’s lab where she found her passion in working with the natural environment to address issues related to water quality and sustainable food systems. This led her to work towards Honors Research Distinction and she is currently working on her thesis.”

After graduating cum laude with honors distinction, the Geauga County resident plans to attend graduate school at Ohio State continuing her research in the field of sustainable agriculture. She also plans to take the Fundamentals of Engineering exam to begin working toward her professional engineering license.

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](https://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](https://go.osu.edu/B4V2).



## **Madison W. Kacica**

**BURTON, OH**

**FOOD, AGRICULTURAL AND BIOLOGICAL ENGINEERING  
- ECOLOGICAL ENGINEERING**

**DEPARTMENT OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL AND  
BIOLOGICAL ENGINEERING**

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