

## PRESS RELEASE

# ABIGAIL THIEL NAMED 2023 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Abigail R. Xing Ping Thiel of Upper Sandusky, 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.”

Thiel is an environment, economy, development, and sustainability major in the School of Environment and Natural Resources (SENR). She was nominated by faculty and staff who felt that she personified the award’s attributes of academic, disciplinary, and professional excellence.

The Wyandot County resident shared that her most valuable learning experience was traveling out of the U.S. for the first time when she participated in the European Cities and Sustainable Urban Planning Practices education abroad program. The 24-day program included travel to the cities of Munich, Cologne, Berlin, Hamburg, and Copenhagen.

“While abroad, I was challenged to consider how different components of the built environment affect the functionality and quality of different public and private spaces. Site visits and case study assignments increased my knowledge of sustainable design, architecture, urban planning, and mobility,” Thiel said. “One of the biggest impacts from this program was being able to experience quality public transit and bicycling infrastructure. The lessons I learned while abroad inspired me to think about how they could be applied to development back at home.”

Closer to home, she completed an internship with the City of Hilliard, Ohio in its planning division. “This internship reaffirmed my interest in working in the public sector, and it gave me a new set of professional skills. I learned how to read city code, site plans, and other engineering and architectural plans,” Thiel said. “I also became familiar with the decision-making processes that guide development and land use planning in the city. And, I gained an insider perspective about the work that goes into city planning, code enforcement, and local government administration and management. I even got to review development proposals for a new Amazon data center and a new private dental office.”

Her work experience included working as a student research assistant for the Blueprint Columbus program, assisting graduate students with their research projects by collecting water sampling data, maintaining research equipment, and managing research data. “This job has given me lab and fieldwork experience,” Thiel said, “and it provided insight about water sustainability efforts in the City of Columbus.”

Extracurricular activities included serving as president and treasurer of the student organization, Time for Change, and overseeing the planning for Time for Change Week, an event focused on promoting environmentalism and sustainability among the Ohio State community. Thiel was also an active member of Net Impact and represented the chapter at Environmental Professionals Network events. She served as a member of the SUSTAINS Learning Community and a SENR Ambassador, then as a senior she became an active in the Momentum Contemporary Ballet student organization. She also appeared on the Dean's List each semester.

After graduation, Theil would like a career where she can support communities on a local scale. "I am most attracted to employment in the public sector," she said, "but am open to any opportunities that focus on my interests in environmentally conscious and socially equitable infrastructural development and community building. I plan to stay in the Midwest and hopefully get involved in the exciting work that is currently going on in the Central Ohio region."

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).



## Abigail R.X.P. Thiel

UPPER SANDUSKY, OH

ENVIRONMENT, ECONOMY, DEVELOPMENT  
AND SUSTAINABILITY - HONORS

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES

Photo available by sending a request to [flood.13@osu.edu](mailto:flood.13@osu.edu)

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