

PRESS RELEASE

MICHAEL L. ZUCCARO NAMED 2024 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Michael L. Zuccaro of Henrico, Virginia, has been named a 2024 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 23 award recipients exemplify the CFAES mission in areas such as academics and scholarship, research and innovation, service and involvement, and influence and leadership.”

Zuccaro is an animal sciences major specializing in animal biosciences in the Department of Animal Sciences. He was nominated by college faculty and staff who felt that he personified the award’s attributes of academic, disciplinary, and professional excellence.

The Henrico County resident pursued two internship opportunities. “At the Midwest Poultry Consortium in Iowa, I saw how the poultry industry is managed. Learning poultry nutrition and how critical it is to poultry companies was fascinating,” he said. “I enjoyed learning the metabolism of the nutrients within the birds, while also trying to maintain a cost-effective budget for growers. Learning the specifics of poultry diseases aided in performing necropsies and doing barn walk-throughs on turkey farms. It also gave me a glimpse of all the threats farmers must protect animals from while trying to raise healthy birds.”

A second internship opportunity on a beef cattle and sheep ranch in Montana allowed Zuccaro to develop hands-on management skills in the ruminant industry. He was also able to work in a veterinary clinic on his Christmas and summer breaks.

“I gained hands-on experience with dogs, cats, ferrets, rabbits, guinea pigs, and many other house pets. This work opened my eyes to many possible avenues within veterinary medicine,” he said. “I was able to assist in surgery operations, run blood tests, run urinalyses, and learn microscopy skills. These are invaluable experiences that will help me in the future.”

On campus, he served as a CFAES Student Ambassador, and a member of the Animal Welfare Judging Team and Animal Sciences Community Alliance. He also worked as an intramural referee, organic chemistry mentor, and an iCan Shine Bike Camps buddy (teaching mentally and physically handicapped children how to ride a bike).

“These experiences have allowed Michael to build his leadership, empathy, and inclusivity skills,” said Sheila Jacobi, associate professor of animal sciences. “He takes pride in assisting students to learn biological concepts and proper animal welfare that are foundational in animal well-being and production.”

Zuccaro also excelled in research and innovation. According to Jacobi, he pursued additional opportunities

in research by gaining experiences in muscle biology research. “He also took advanced classes whose foundations were research data-based. As a co-instructor in two of these courses, I watched his ability to assimilate data and use critical thinking skills to elevate the classroom environment,” she said.

After graduation, Zuccaro plans to attend veterinary school and pursue a career in veterinary medicine.

A reception for the Distinguished Senior Award recipients and their families was held on Thursday, April 4, hosted by Ann Christy and Cathann A. Kress, Ohio State vice president for agricultural administration and CFAES dean. Meet the 23 outstanding students and learn more about each via a YouTube video release at go.osu.edu/CFAES2024DSA.

“Honoring the award recipients for their excellence will be a highlight for us this spring. These students have excelled and most certainly will continue to thrive in their future careers,” said Christy.

In autumn 2023, there were 2,224 undergraduate students in CFAES pursuing Bachelor of Science degrees in 21 majors. Learn more about CFAES academic programs at go.osu.edu/B4V2.



Michael L. Zuccaro

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

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