

## Press Release

March 11, 2019

### Besancon Named 2019 Distinguished Senior at The Ohio State University

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Ashley Besancon of Wooster, Ohio has been named a 2019 Distinguished Senior at The Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES).

"The Distinguished Senior Award is the most prestigious undergraduate award in CFAES, recognizing the top graduating seniors from each of the academic units on the Columbus campus," said Steven Neal, CFAES professor and associate dean for academic programs.

Besancon, a food science and technology major from Wayne County, will be honored at an on-campus awards dinner on March 27 where all 25 distinguished CFAES seniors will be recognized.

The CFAES Distinguished Senior Award honors academic, disciplinary and professional excellence.

"One of the hallmarks of our College is an emphasis on student success, and it is heartwarming to see it exemplified through the accomplishments of our students," Neal said. "Recipients are our future innovators and leaders who have already made an impact within the academic environment at this university and beyond."

Julie Townsend, administrative manager in the Department of Food Science and Technology and Besancon's nominator, wrote: "Ashley's college career didn't start with a love for food science, but we are fortunate that she discovered it at the end of her first semester of college. With a dream of becoming a veterinarian, she began her studies at the University of Findlay with a pre-vet focus, but it just didn't feel right."

Always an avid baker who loved experimenting in the kitchen, Besancon began searching culinary schools. Questioning if that was the right lifestyle for her, she decided to circle back to Ohio State, where she had originally applied and been accepted. "While flipping through the CFAES majors brochure, she stumbled upon the food science major. She couldn't believe she had never heard of it before, and there was her dream major: food and science, all wrapped into one," Townsend noted.

With a new plan for her life, Besancon transferred to the OSU Mansfield campus in the spring, then to the Columbus campus in the fall. Since then, she has made the most of the opportunities available to her, serving as a CFAES Liaison to Student Council, a Food Science and Technology Peer Mentor and holding an officer position in the Food Science Club.

Besancon also works as a student research assistant in faculty member Barbara Kowalczyk's lab. In that position, she categorized National Institute of Food and Agriculture-funded projects based on target commodity, target pathogen/hazard, and area of Farm to Fork continuum for eventual assessment of the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Food Safety Challenge Grant Program. She also developed a corresponding research paper that she presented this past fall and will also present this spring.

Distinguished Senior Award



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

CFAES

Besancon was selected to intern with The J.M. Smucker Company for two summers. During her first summer, she worked as a consumer foods technical services organization (TSO) formulation intern. She investigated ingredient interaction in Smucker's Sugar Free Caramel Sundae Syrup and optimized the gel set in Smucker's Sugar Free Red Raspberry Spread. She concluded her internship with a presentation to company leadership describing her project experience.

During her most recent internship with Smucker's, Besancon was assigned to the pet food and pet snacks research and development group. She created a Natural Balance dry dog food product catalog, complete with a competitive assessment. She also coordinated and analyzed canine feeding studies for Natural Balance dry dog food, carried out the palatant coating process on dry kibble to evaluate three experimental palatants, leveraged cross-functional resources and participated in trials at three different plant locations. Again, she concluded her internship with a presentation to company leadership describing her project experience.

In September 2018, she received and accepted a full-time job offer from The J.M. Smucker Company. After graduation, Besancon will relocate to Lawrence, Kansas. She will be based out of their Topeka pet food plant in a technical services role, servicing their extruded pet food and pet snack products with a focus in formulation optimization.

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Electronic files of head shot for this individual award recipients may be secured by making an email request to Warren Flood at [flood.13@osu.edu](mailto:flood.13@osu.edu).