

# Press Release

March 11, 2019

## Griffin named 2019 Distinguished Senior at The Ohio State University

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Matthew Griffin of Pickerington, 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 associate dean and director for academic programs.

Griffin, an environment, economy, development, and sustainability (EEDS) major from Fairfield 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."

Gina Hnytka, director of education and learning programs at the Ohio State Sustainability Institute and one of Griffin's nominators, wrote, "Matthew is the perfect example of a servant leader whose contributions to the School of Environment and Natural Resources (SENR) and Ohio State stand out in a way different from his peers. His dedication to SENR while making a significant impact across campus is one reason Matthew stands out as more than deserving of this recognition."

For his first two years at Ohio State, Griffin was a member of the SUSTAINS Learning Community residential program. SUSTAINS, which stands for Students Understanding Sustainability and Taking Action to Improve Nature and Society, is a collaboration between University Housing, SENR, and the Department of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics.

As part of SUSTAINS, Griffin designed a project proposal supporting community gardening; attended professional development trips to Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and Chicago; and was a regular attendee and event volunteer.

"Matthew has repaid our program tenfold through his ongoing commitment and support of SUSTAINS," Hnytka noted. "Despite being a fourth-year student, he continues to offer connections to other campus projects, mentoring support, tours of athletic facilities via his current internship, and more."

Distinguished Senior Award



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

CFAES

Griffin served multiple years as a SENR Ambassador, providing tours and meeting with prospective students. He also worked as a student assistant for EEDS program student services and was an instructional assistant for SENR's Community, Environment, and Development course for four semesters.

"Matthew provided over 440 of his peers with an exceptional opportunity to engage with the interrelated issues of community, environment, and development," wrote nominator Joe Campbell, course instructor and lecturer in SENR. "He had a significant impact on supporting and coordinating 26 student teams through a challenging series of assignments."

Griffin served as president of Net Impact, a sustainability and business student organization, and was a member of the Ohio State Student Sustainability Council, supporting many sustainability events and helping plan Time for Change Week.

He held four internships, first as a sustainability intern for the Old Worthington Society, where he surveyed Worthington, Ohio, residents on their interest in sustainability initiatives. Next, Griffin interned with Hubble Contacts before working on a variety of projects as a sustainability intern for the city of Columbus. His final internship was with Ohio State's Department of Athletics and Office of Business and Finance as a sustainability intern. One of his projects was to guide the 2018 NCAA women's basketball Final Four tournament through the rigorous Council for Responsible Sport sustainability certification program. With Griffin's help, the tournament earned the certification level of Evergreen, the highest level possible.

After graduation, Griffin plans to pursue a position where he can work with a community and address environmental justice issues. He also wants to eventually attend graduate school for either a master of business administration or a degree in higher education management. His ultimate goal is to work in higher education and develop programs for sustainability education.

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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).