

# Press Release

March 7, 2019

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

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Charis Ramsing of Columbia, Maryland 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.

Ramsing, a plant pathology major from Howard County, Maryland, 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."

Monica Lewandowski, assistant professor in the Department of Plant Pathology and one of Ramsing's nominators, wrote, "As an honors student, Charis chose a challenging curriculum and earned nearly all A's in her plant pathology and horticulture courses and advanced undergraduate and graduate level courses in fruit and vegetable diseases, plant disease management, and mycology. She also won our A.J. Hoffman Award as a 2018-2019 outstanding undergraduate student."

With a strong interest in international agriculture, Ramsing conducted research with Thomas Mitchell, professor and chair of the Department of Plant Pathology, on the causal agent of rice blast, a serious global disease of rice. Her work evolved into a honors research thesis project on "Evaluating the Longevity of Potential Biocontrol of the Rice Blast Causing Fungus."

Ramsing's experience with diseases of rice led her to pursue an internship at the renowned International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines in the summer of 2018. She was one of two students to receive a Karen A. Holbrook Scholarship from Ohio State's Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Inquiry to help fund her internship experience.

She was also awarded a U.S. Department of Agriculture internship in Fort Detrick, Maryland. Based on her experience with rice blast, Ramsing was offered the chance to work in a research lab to study wheat blast, another serious plant disease. She gained valuable experience working in a Biosafety Level 3 quarantine facility.

Distinguished Senior Award



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
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CFAES

Ramsing also participated in Ohio State's Second-year Transformational Experience Program (STEP). For her STEP project, she traveled through California to examine and document effects of extreme drought in forests and natural lands. "Charis carried out this project as both a photojournalist and a scientist. This was a good example of her rather exceptional talent in science communications," wrote Lewandowski.

Ramsing held leadership positions in the Plant Health and Resource Management (PHARM) student organization. She is passionate about the need to make more people aware of the importance of plant pathology and food security. As such, she was a driving force in creating a new PHARM event, Examine the Famine: Plant Disease Threats to Global Food Security.

She also serves as a CFAES Student Ambassador and member of the American Phytopathological Society's Undergraduate Task Force. Because of her passion for sustainable agriculture, Ramsing put hundreds of hours into revitalizing the student farm on campus, learning how to crop plan and run a farm, and applying her disease spotting skills in the real world.

After graduation, Ramsing will continue her education in a globally competitive European Union-sponsored Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree in Plant Health. The first year will take place in Valencia, Spain and the second will involve rotations at three agricultural universities across France. After completing her master's degree, she hopes to complete a PhD in plant pathology at the University of California Davis.

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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).