

## PRESS RELEASE

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# TELLEZ NAMED 2020 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Callia Alessandra Tellez of Dayton, Ohio, has been named a 2020 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, 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.

Tellez, an environmental policy and decision making major from Montgomery County, was nominated by college faculty and staff who felt that she personified the award’s attributes of 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.”

Nominator Robyn Wilson, Tellez’s mentor and a professor of risk analysis and decision science in CFAES’ School of Environment and Natural Resources (SENR), wrote, “ I can honestly say that Callia is the best undergraduate student I have had the pleasure of working with over the past 12 years as a faculty member. She has a natural gift for research, which reflects her ability to think critically and problem solve. She is also one of the most well-spoken and engaging public speakers I have ever met.”

While Tellez received many honors during her collegiate career, the most notable was being named a 2019 Udall Scholar. Tellez calls the national recognition, given for leadership, scholarship, and environmental advocacy, her greatest accomplishment during her time at Ohio State.

Additional academic honors included numerous times on the Ohio State Dean’s List and funding from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion Morrill Excellence Scholarship, the Sultzbach Memorial Scholarship, the Heiligmann Scholarship, the Charles A. Dambach Memorial Fund, the Joseph and Nina Mattus Agricultural Scholarship, the G. Smith International Agriculture Fund, the Bert W. Martin Fund Scholarship Award, and the A. and Mavis Fletcher Endowed Memorial Fund.

Since her freshman year, Tellez worked both full-time and part-time as a researcher in the SENR Environmental and Social Sustainability Lab. She studied Ohio’s most pressing water quality issues such as nutrient runoff, harmful algal blooms, agricultural incentives, and farmer decision-making to improve water quality in four priority watersheds of the Great Lakes. “Being able to experience firsthand how research informs policy emboldened me to pursue higher education and continue research-informed political advocacy,” she said.

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**2020 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AWARD**

She also held many leadership positions serving as president of the Ohio State Sierra Club Student Coalition, a CFAES Ambassador, was on the university's Student Sustainability Council, and was a member of the Ohio State Mountaineers Club

"Although I think very highly of Callia, it is quite evident that others have also noted her abilities and skills as a leader," Wilson said. "At a meeting of SENR's Environmental Professionals Network, she gave such a poised and thoughtful set of remarks that the director of the Ohio Environmental Council promptly offered her a job, and she will start work there after graduation."

After graduation, Tellez wants to advocate for those who are subject to marginalization and injustice, which prevents all from sustaining equal access to the basic right of clean water. She hopes to inform environmental policy at the state level, while narrowing her focus of study for a master's and doctoral degree.

"I wait with anticipation to see how Callia changes the world," Wilson said.

An awards dinner to recognize all 25 CFAES Distinguished Seniors has been canceled due to COVID-19.

"The safety of our community is our top priority," Neal said. "We are deeply sorry the planned celebration will not occur. The commitment and dedication of these students to their undergraduate education will still be recognized with a special award package that will be mailed later this semester."

In autumn 2019, there were 2,486 undergraduate students in CFAES pursuing 22 majors and 31 minors. Learn more about CFAES academic programs online by visiting <https://students.cfaes.ohio-state.edu/>.



## CALLIA A. TELLEZ

DAYTON, OH

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND DECISION MAKING –  
INTERNATIONAL POLICY AND LAW

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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