

PRESS RELEASE**ANNIKA DIAZ NAMED
2021 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AT
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Annika Diaz of Upland, California, has been named a 2021 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.

Diaz, an animal sciences major who specializes in animal biosciences, 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.”

Among her achievements, Diaz earned American Society of Animal Science Undergraduate Scholar Recognition in 2019 and 2020 for ranking academically in the top 10 percent of junior and senior animal sciences classes; completed an internship as a research fellow at the San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research; conducted grant-funded coronavirus research with assistant professor and scientist Anastasia Vlasova at the CFAES Wooster campus; worked as a student assistant in Ohio State’s Applied Microbiology Services Lab, helping process and test samples for the university’s faculty, staff, and student coronavirus testing program; and was a member of the Animal Science Community Alliance, the CFAES Department of Animal Sciences leadership team.

Before coming to CFAES as a first-generation student, Diaz participated in a three-week bridge program through the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation in STEM, which equipped 20 underrepresented minority students in STEM—science, technology, engineering, and math—with resources for success in college.

Diaz was supported in her studies by CFAES and Ohio State scholarships including a Morrill Scholarship Program Prominence Scholarship, Lewis R. Jones Diversity Scholarship, Stephen J. and Catherine A. Blake Scholarship, Richard A. Kuohn Scholarship, and Bert W. Martin Fund Scholarship.

**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES**2021 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AWARD****Academic Programs**100 Agricultural Administration
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“Annika is one of the brightest students I’ve ever had the pleasure to know,” Diaz’ nominator wrote. “She has an innovative mind that seeks to make a difference where there is need.”

Diaz “has integrity, a strong moral compass, and a desire to genuinely make a difference in the biomedical industry and in the lives of those less fortunate,” the same nominator wrote. “She’s one in a billion.”

After graduation, Diaz will move to Ithaca, New York, to start graduate school in the biomedical and biological sciences PhD program at Cornell University. There she will concentrate on immunology and infectious disease, with a focus on studying viral zoonoses, diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year’s recognition of the CFAES Distinguished Seniors occurred via a YouTube Premiere video on Wednesday, April 7, 2021. Beginning at 7 p.m., CFAES dean and vice president for agricultural administration, Cathann A. Kress, recognized award recipients on the Ohio State—College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences YouTube channel. View the celebration video at go.osu.edu/CFAES2021DSA.

“Although we could not gather in person, this honor and these 25 students remain an important focus of our college,” Neal said. “Their commitment to their education and dedication to their time as a student in CFAES was recognized with the YouTube Premiere video, and via social media and professional networking platforms. A special award package will also be mailed to each top senior.”

In autumn 2020, there were 2,457 undergraduate students in CFAES pursuing 22 majors and 32 minors. Learn more about CFAES academic programs at go.osu.edu/B4V2.



ANNIKA N. DIAZ

UPLAND, CA

ANIMAL SCIENCES - ANIMAL BIOSCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SCIENCES

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

WRITER(S)

Kurt Knebusch
knebusch.1@osu.edu
330-263-2776

SOURCE(S):

R. Warren Flood
flood.13@osu.edu
614-247-6624



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