

PRESS RELEASE**NATALIA JASPEADO BECERRA
NAMED 2021 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AT
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Natalia Jaspeado Becerra of Mexico City, Mexico, 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.

Becerra, a student athlete and food science and technology major, 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.”

A member of the Ohio State Women’s Swim and Dive Team, Becerra was also named to the CFAES dean’s list, Towers Agricultural Honorary, and Honorable Mention Scholar Athlete by the College Swimming and Diving Coaches Association of America. She was also a CFAES Peer Mentor, an Ohio State Varsity Scholar Athlete, and a Scholar All-American Academic All-Big Ten Honoree.

In 2020, she was also a recipient of the Ross/Abbott Laboratories Undergraduate Minority Endowment Scholarship.

Becerra cited Rafael Jimenez-Flores, professor and endowed chair in dairy foods, as her most influential mentor while at CFAES. Originally from Mexico City himself, he is also affiliated with Ohio State’s Center for Latin American Studies.

“Dr. Jimenez has always been supportive, welcoming, and encouraging in getting my research work started, which has been such a valuable learning experience,” said Becerra. “I was so thankful to have someone to push me and encourage me, especially because as a student-athlete it could have been easy to postpone it due to my busy schedule.”

Her nominator wrote, “A high-performance swimmer since the age of 10, Natalia made the decision in 2016 to leave Mexico City and move to the United States to pursue her academic and athletic goals, and to compete at the highest level. She has been successful in both. She is a very detail-oriented, analytical, adaptable, and curious person who enjoys working in a laboratory setting. We are excited that she plans to follow her interest in research and pursue a master’s degree. She will succeed in whatever she sets out to accomplish.”

Following graduation, Becerra will complete a quality assurance internship with Birchwood Foods in Columbus. She is still considering what will come next. “I have some options here, as well as back home in Mexico City, so I am continuing to explore,” she said. “Attending graduate school is a strong front runner for me, and I know I want to work in the food industry.”

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.



NATALIA JASPEADO BECERRA

MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

FOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
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2021 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AWARD

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