

PRESS RELEASE**RACHEL LEITSON NAMED
2021 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AT
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Rachel Leitson of Pepper Pike, Ohio, 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.

Leitson, a construction systems management major from Cuyahoga 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.”

Arriving at Ohio State, Leitson knew she wanted to be an engineer. But something wasn’t quite clicking in her introductory classes. As she explored similar options, she found construction systems management and a community where she felt she could thrive.

In both learning and teaching, Leitson excelled.

“Rachel proved herself an outstanding learner and teacher among her peers. Her abilities did not go unnoticed,” wrote nominator Jeffery Suchy, a lecturer in the CFAES Department of Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering.

Leitson was recruited to be a teaching assistant for the electrical and lighting systems course. Excelling in that role, she quickly learned not only that she loved helping her peers but also learning how to listen to each student’s unique needs so that she could support them.

With construction management being a male-dominated field and major, Leitson sought mentorship and support from other women in the field through various organizations. She became active in many of them.

Leitson also found the time to complete three internships and compete with her fellow construction systems management students in regional and national construction competitions.

After graduation, Leitson plans to continue working full time in the construction industry until she begins a master's degree in management.

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.



RACHEL H. LEITSON

PEPPER PIKE, OH

CONSTRUCTION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

DEPARTMENT OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL AND
BIOLOGICAL ENGINEERING

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

WRITER(S)

Alayna DeMartini
demartini.3@osu.edu
614-292-9833

SOURCE(S):

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



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

2021 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AWARD

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100 Agricultural Administration
2120 Fyffe Road | Columbus, OH 43210

614-292-6891 | students.cfaes.ohio-state.edu