

## PRESS RELEASE

# LAURA TAVERA MONTAÑEZ NAMED 2021 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Laura Tavera Montañez of San Juan, Puerto Rico, 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.

Tavera, an animal sciences major who specialized in animal industries, 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, Tavera was named to the CFAES dean’s list five times; was a member of the 2020 Ohio Dairy Challenge winning team; was a member of the CFAES Animal Science Community Alliance, including serving as vice president; was a member of Ohio State’s Puerto Rican Student Association, including serving as president; and was fundraising coordinator for three university-wide efforts supporting Hurricane Maria and earthquake relief for Puerto Rico, ultimately helping collect donations of a semi-truckload of food, goods, supplies, and more than \$4,000.

Tavera began her research experience during her first semester at CFAES, working with college faculty, staff, and doctoral students on studies related to ruminant nutrition. She also was an undergraduate teaching assistant for CFAES courses on equine nutrition and animal nutrition.

Tavera completed an internship at the Waterman Dairy Center at CFAES’ Waterman Agricultural and Natural Resources Laboratory in Columbus, and secured a second internship with Land O’Lakes Purina Animal Nutrition in Defiance, Ohio, that unfortunately was canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Tavera has “incredible determination, resilience, and positivity,” her nominator wrote. “A force for change,

she inspires other students with her work ethic and her candidness about her own struggles with mental health and as a minority student. Within her major and across the university, she speaks for minorities to make sure their unique experiences, challenges, and successes are heard.”

Tavera’s “resilience to life’s challenges,” the same nominator wrote, “can be positively infectious.”

Tavera was supported in her studies by CFAES and Ohio State scholarships from the Dr. Marjorie Josephine Cram Chema Memorial Scholarship Fund, Henderson Fund in Agriculture, William J. Brakel Endowed Scholarship Fund in Dairy Science, and Thomas M. Ludwick Scholarship Fund.

After graduation, Tavera hopes to work in the dairy industry as a dairy nutritionist.

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](https://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](https://go.osu.edu/B4V2).



## LAURA I. TAVERA MONTAÑEZ

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ANIMAL SCIENCES - ANIMAL INDUSTRIES

DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SCIENCES

Photo available by sending a request to [flood.13@osu.edu](mailto:flood.13@osu.edu)

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