

PRESS RELEASE**SHANNON DIXON NAMED
2022 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AT
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Shannon Dixon of Melbourne, Florida, has been named a 2022 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 and director of academic programs.

Dixon, a food, agricultural and biological engineering major from Brevard 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.”

Dixon has had an interest in coral research throughout her college career, starting her freshman year in the lab of Andrea Grottoli. She presented an undergraduate research thesis on how ocean warming and acidification affect coral reefs.

This year, Dixon has worked on the production of an engineering prototype that will mitigate bleaching impacts on coral reefs. “Through this project, I have not only gained experience in writing research grants, but I was able to do a field experiment at Reef Systems Coral Farm Inc. This was the first time I got hands-on experience with field research, and it has cemented my interest in pursuing a PhD,” she said.

Outside research, Dixon’s passion at Ohio State has been mentoring incoming students, especially students from underrepresented communities. She also was an undergraduate teaching assistant, teaching Fundamentals of Engineering.

Scott Shearer, chair of CFAES’ Department of Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering, spoke to this interest in his nomination letter for Dixon. “Part of her goals for pursuing a PhD comes from her interest in research, but her other interests lie in helping students, specifically underrepresented voices, excel in their fields to bring more diversity across academia,” Shearer wrote. He said Dixon supported 15 minority students through their transition to Ohio State as a peer mentor. “She finds their ideas and aspirations only add to her excitement for the future of STEM and the world,” he said.

**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES**2022 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AWARD****Academic Programs**100 Agricultural Administration
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Dixon said her other passion has been her four years of club-level competitive swimming. “As an out-of-state student, finding a home on the swim team helped me adjust to campus early on and has helped me push out of my comfort zone to make lifelong friends,” she said.

After graduation, Dixon plans to continue her chosen research path.

“I am going to be completing my PhD in earth science at The Ohio State University under Dr. Andrea Grottoli,” she said. “My professional goals are to combine my engineering background with my passion in coral research to work on creating solutions for coral bleaching.”

Due to persisting impacts of the pandemic, celebration of this year’s CFAES Distinguished Seniors took place during a by invitation reception at the Nationwide and Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center on The Ohio State University’s Columbus campus on Wednesday, March 23, 2022. At the recognition celebration hosted by CFAES dean and vice president for agricultural administration Cathann A. Kress and associate dean and director of academic programs Steven Neal, recipients were presented with special award packages. A YouTube video recognizing the award recipients on the Ohio State—College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences YouTube channel was also released on that same day. View the recognition video at go.osu.edu/CFAES2022DSA.

While this year’s recognition took on a varied format from previous years for the 2022 recipients, Neal said, “We were pleased to be able to acknowledge their commitment to their education and dedication to their time as a student in CFAES by recognizing them with the YouTube video, and via social media and professional networking platforms.”

In autumn 2021, there were 2,859 undergraduate students in CFAES pursuing 22 majors and 34 minors. Learn more about CFAES academic programs at go.osu.edu/B4V2.



SHANNON L. DIXON

PALM BAY, FL

FOOD, AGRICULTURAL AND BIOLOGICAL ENGINEERING -
ECOLOGICAL ENGINEERING

DEPARTMENT OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL AND
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Photo available by sending a request to flood.13@osu.edu

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