

PRESS RELEASE**AVA FORYSTEK NAMED
2022 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AT
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Ava Forystek of Dublin, Ohio, 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.

Forystek, a sustainable plant systems major from Franklin 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.”

Forystek’s time at Ohio State has provided her with some unique experiences in plant sciences, such as work in Chinese rice paddies.

“My project focused on a viral pathogen in rice and required field trials where we would plant our modified rice in the test paddies,” she said of her World Food Prize Borlaug-Ruan internship at Peking University. “Going out to the rice paddies was unlike anything I had ever experienced. I had so much fun every time we could go out to the fields. I had to wear rubber boots that went up to my waist, and was sucked into the mud with every step I took. As unpleasant as it sounds, it was an amazing experience to plant each rice seedling and be involved with every part of the project.”

She said that experience also taught her something about herself.

“It was amazing to not only be able to live in Beijing, but to do research at one of the best universities in the world,” she said. “I’m proud to have succeeded with my research despite challenges such as the language barrier and moving to a completely new city halfway across the world. I had to learn to have faith in myself and my skills to navigate day-to-day life, and overcoming these challenges left me a stronger and more resilient person.”

It was one of several internships that contributed to Forystek’s studies, including most recently with Corteva Agrisciences. She also was selected as a Wallace-Carver Fellow by the World Food Prize Foundation and



worked with teams at the federal Agricultural Research Service agency at Cornell University.

Forystek has been a member of the Pi Alpha Xi horticulture honor society since her freshman year, and this year served as vice president for the chapter at Ohio State.

After graduation, Forystek plans to continue her plant sciences research.

“I’m currently in the process of applying for graduate programs within plant sciences,” she said. “I hope to one day run my own research lab at a university.”

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.



AVA I. FORYSTEK

DUBLIN, OH

SUSTAINABLE PLANT SYSTEMS - HORTICULTURE

DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURE AND CROP SCIENCE

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

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

2022 DISTINGUISHED SENIOR AWARD

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