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Beering Scholar Student Association
Fellow Boilermakers,

Our Beering Scholars have accomplished a lot in 2016. From our inaugural recruitment year under the administration of the Purdue Honors College to our second annual Beering Alumni Panel, we’ve expanded on what works and grown our community of scholars at Purdue.

This year, current scholars were more involved than ever before with the recruitment and selection process for the Scholarship class of 2020. In addition to our BSSA representative on the selection committee, over a dozen current scholars had the chance to participate in video interviews with scholar finalists for our eight-person class. Each of these eight scholars has flourished as part of our community and part of the Honors College since arriving at Purdue. They show nothing but promise for the future.

Our service activities have continued and expanded in the past year, with new events including Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, writing letters to veterans, and making tie blankets for the Children’s Hospital. In particular, Purdue Space Day was again a huge hit, with scholars helping to run a day camp to educate local kids about space exploration. Through these volunteer activities, among others, we’ve made a tangible impact on the Purdue community.

Within the Beering Scholar Student Association, we’ve elected new officers for the 2017 calendar year, with Gina Clepper (2019) taking over as president, Andrew Santos (2020) as treasurer, and Paul Dawley (2020) as secretary. This year also marked our first annual BSSA Retreat, which we hope will become a new tradition for our organization.

Finally, our second Alumni Panel was a huge success. For the first time, we were able to include a mix of on-site and remote panelists through video-conferencing and bring in a wider range of experience and viewpoints from our panelists. This resulted in increased alumni participation and increased attendance from last year.

Overall, we’ve had a fantastic year. We look forward to continued growth as we induct a new class of scholars and as current scholars graduate and move on to an exciting future. With any luck, the next year will be even better!

- Matthew Snell, BSSA President, M.B.A., May 2018
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Alumni, Welcome to Our New Home!

By Andrew Santos, B.S. Physics, May 2020

The BSSA was proud to host this year’s Honors Alumni Panel in the beautiful Honors Residences. The purpose of the annual event is to connect current Honors students with successful alumni and to discuss how experiences at Purdue prepared those alumni for life after college. The panel is part of university-wide activities for homecoming weekend and is a great way for alumni to give back to the Purdue community. This year, our fantastic alumni panelists were Matt Bartlett, Jennifer Dobbs-Oates, Jonathan Pfluger, Johanna Smith, and Allison Turner. Andrew Santos, a first year Beering Scholar, served as host. Here is Andrew’s take on the evening:

Connections.

Among all the topics discussed on the Friday of Purdue’s Homecoming weekend, this idea was emphasized the most. Not only did our spectacular panel of alumni agree on the importance of networking, but they also embodied their words by serving as a supportive network themselves. At the mixer for in-person attendees preceding the event, I witnessed each panelist surrounded by students asking questions and engaging in conversation. The wonderful advice from our alumni continued throughout the evening. Despite minor complications of long distance communication with our virtual guests, we had a lively conversation that spanned a wide range of topics, including the influence of professors, campus and community involvement, hobbies, study abroad experiences, and Canadian numbers you can call to get a poster of the Queen of England shipped to your address (The number is 1-800-O-Canada, in case you are interested).

All of this excitement was housed within the new Honors College and Residences, or HCR. As a freshman at an enormous university, I had to take a moment to appreciate the opportunities that Purdue had already handed to me on a black and gold platter by creating this shared space. The facilities are a wonderful way to bring all of the Honors community together, especially with the communal living and learning areas such as the Beering Reading Room, STEAM lab, and even workstations where students can power electronics using a stationary bicycle. With Honors freshmen and upperclassmen united under the two roofs of the two HCR buildings, I quickly felt the intimidating population of Purdue—tens of thousands of students—shrink down to several hundred familiar faces.

These new improvements would not exist without support from our alumni, and we certainly find our college experiences enriched by their guidance and dedication. Thank you to those who participated in this year’s panel. We are grateful to have such a caring network of past scholars and would love to increase interaction between current scholars and those who have already graduated and gone on to accomplish fantastic feats.

Here’s to another year of sharing stories and connecting with each other.

CONTACT US

Are you a former Beering Scholar interested in connecting with current Honors students? Interested in being a panelist next year, either online or in person? See the back cover of this newsletter for BSSA contact information. We are always happy to hear from you!
MEET THE

Maya Black

Degree Plan: Animal Sciences, Pre-Veterinary Medicine, with Biological Sciences and Spanish minors

My Beering Story: Unlike many others, I have always found school to be one of my favorite activities. The opportunity to learn new things every day and later apply that knowledge has always excited me. Since I was young, I knew I wanted to continue my education in college and later veterinary school. I've always looked to the future and planned out my life a few years in advance. As such, I knew what colleges I wanted to apply to by my sophomore year in high school. Purdue was one of my top choices as it is one of the few universities with a veterinary school that also offers early admission to their College of Veterinary Medicine. After applying to Purdue in the fall of my senior year and being accepted, the next question was how to pay for my education. Before applying, I remembered reading over the Beering Scholars page on the Honors College website and imagining how amazing it would be to receive that scholarship. When December rolled around and I received the e-mail inviting me to apply for the Beering Scholarship, I was ecstatic. I remember staring at my laptop, open-mouthed, before running downstairs and telling my mom.

Now, I'm excited to call this campus home for at least the next 8 years. This scholarship has allowed me to pursue my childhood dreams without the burden of a large amount of debt. It has also opened numerous doors on campus through opportunities in networking and in research. I am eternally grateful for this scholarship and for all that it has, and will allow me to do and experience in the future. I’m extremely excited to see where the next few years take me, and I’m happy they will be at Purdue.

Nisreen Islaih

Degree Plan: Biochemistry, minor in French

My Beering Story: What I valued about my high school experience was my ability to explore the sciences in-depth while still pursuing a well-rounded education. Attending Purdue and receiving the Beering Scholarship allows me to carry this into my college career by providing me with endless opportunities. I look forward to exploring the collaboration of biology and chemistry in studying human physiology, starting undergraduate research, and traveling abroad in Morocco to further my study of French and Arabic. Currently, my intended major is biochemistry with a minor in French. After my undergraduate education, I plan to attend medical school, an integral step that will provide me with the knowledge and skills to serve people.

In the short few months that I have been at Purdue, I already feel at home and am confident that I made the right decision in attending this renowned university. I am so grateful to be a part of this community of brilliant scholars, whose passion and love of learning inspire me. They have worked on diverse projects and accomplished incredible feats while also being the most welcoming and humble individuals. It truly is an honor to be among them.
FRESHMEN

Garrett Jacoby

Degree Plan: Chemical Engineering

My Beering Story: My blood has run black and gold for as long as I can remember. Growing up in the small town of Rossville just 30 minutes east of Purdue, I always felt it was my destiny to attend the university I was taught to love since birth. The spring of my senior year, that destiny became reality when I was notified that I had received the Beering Scholarship.

My life has truly changed since that moment. Prior to coming to Purdue, I had identified a few passions and quirks of mine: math, chemistry, curiosity, a never-ending desire to search for answers to unanswered questions, and a willingness to learn. Based on these characteristics, I decided chemical engineering was the right career path for me. I hope someday to leave a mark in the energy industry by working on ways to more effectively and efficiently purify fossil fuels and eventually replace them altogether with a cleaner source of energy. Studying at Purdue to gain tools to work on these real world problems is very exciting.

Although my journey at Purdue has just begun, the things I have learned will last a lifetime. No experience will be as rewarding as the one I have just embarked on, and I can’t wait to take what I’ve learned here and someday change the world.

Noah Smith

Degree Plan: Biomedical Engineering with Economics Minor

My Beering Story: The Fall of 2015 was, for me, filled with innumerable hours of writing college applications, attending interviews and reviewing essays for schools all over the country. I thought I wanted to leave Indiana and have an adventure somewhere far away. When I got the e-mail from Purdue to apply for the Beering Scholarship, I was honored, but thought it an impossibility.

Now, a year later, what I thought was an impossibility is now my reality. My whole life is a new adventure, and I have the Beering Scholarship to thank for bringing me into the Boilermaker Community. I’m surrounded by brilliant, passionate people, and everywhere I turn, a new opportunity arises. At Purdue, I know nothing in this world is out of reach. I’ve loved growing intellectually as I discuss ideas ranging from global politics to mathematical models to slang and everything in between.

I plan to use this generous scholarship to complete a degree in Biomedical Engineering because of an internship I had last summer at a biomedical devices company. I worked on designing endourology products and figuring out ways to produce them more efficiently. I loved that I was working on products that helped people, and I’m absolutely fascinated by the future applications of medical technology. A long-term goal of mine is to start and manage biomedical device companies like the one I worked at.

I don’t know yet exactly where life will take me, but I have faith that as I continue to move forward, the path I’m supposed to follow will become clear.
Noah Franks

Degree Plan: Computer Science with Economics and Statistics minors

My Beering Story: My name is Noah Franks, and I’m from Nashville, Tennessee. Growing up, every summer I would wait excitedly for the next school year and academic adventure to begin. When I was searching for a college, I was looking for a place that would support my love of learning. What I found at Purdue through the Beering Scholarship has exceeded anything I had ever imagined. It is an incredible gift to have the opportunity to pursue multiple degrees at an amazing university where I can delve into so many interests that I am passionate about.

My greatest passion has always been computer programming, and I am thrilled by the courses offered. My life goal is to build a self-aware, artificial intelligence, and I believe that Purdue will equip me with the necessary skills to achieve my dream. Outside of my coursework, I have discovered communities of curious individuals, like political discourse groups and computer programming clubs, which have enriched my experience on campus. As a Beering Scholar, I have enjoyed activities such as Space Day, in which we helped elementary and middle school students learn about the wonders of space and science. Halfway through my first semester at Purdue, I feel certain that I am well on my way to what will become my greatest academic adventure of all. I am so grateful to be a Beering Scholar and hope to make Purdue proud of its investment in my future.

Andrew Santos

Degree Plan: Physics with Mathematics, French, and Astronomy minors

My Beering Story: I grew up with a forest in my backyard and tiny Wheeler High School seven minutes away. My curiosity was relentless, so I questioned how massive trees were able to come from seeds or how gravity was even real. I spent those years developing an awe for the unknown, and my interest followed me to high school. There, I suddenly encountered something awesome. Meet physics.

It was just one YouTube video that spun me in a quark-y direction. I immediately became entranced by physical concepts, and I kept that intrigue close to my heart. It has led me to being involved in undergraduate biophysics research today, where I can envision myself working as a professor and/or independent researcher in the future. In the coming years, I eagerly anticipate studying abroad (hopefully in France), continuing research, and pursuing a doctoral degree.

Through being selected as a Beering Scholar, I feel overwhelming confirmation in my philosophy that sheer passion can guide individuals down a meaningful path. I can only hope this becomes more evident as I invest myself in the fantastic opportunities ahead. This is merely one way I can express my deepest gratitude to Purdue University and to the donors of this scholarship. Receiving this award is an immense and humbling honor – an impossible accomplishment without my spectacular high school or my loving family. It is thanks to them that I take even deeper pride in myself – in my corn covered hometown, mighty Wheeler, and all.
Paul Dawley

Degree Plan: Chemical Engineering
My Beering Story: “What do you want to do with your life?”

It’s a question infinitely more powerful than its nine syllables and one asked incessantly to seniors in high school who are already struggling through college and scholarship applications. It’s a question that typically evokes to response of a major, or possibly a profession. My response was always “I’m going to be a chemical engineer,” and, after a bit of small talk, that was the end of the conversation. However, this question is one that runs deeper than one’s career intentions, and the Beering Scholarship made me truly consider its magnitude fully. Besides the incredible financial relief the scholarship provides, it carries with it an expectation of passion and drive to succeed in anything the recipient pursues. It’s an expectation to exceed expectations.

Growing up in a Purdue family full of teachers and engineers, I came to see education as a lifestyle and the STEM field as an intellectual playground. I came to love school and all of its subjects, as it was an opportunity for me grow internally and take steps toward my career aspirations, which I found to be working with alternative energy sources as a chemical engineer. However, this sole pursuit of my career wasn’t enough, because life consists of more than just work.

At Purdue, I have joined Purdue Student government and I go on runs daily. I plan on majoring in Chemical Engineering and starting undergraduate research next year. The Beering Scholarship has allowed me to focus on my impact here at Purdue, and the story of my life is just beginning to unfold.

Brian Helfrecht

Degree Plan: Electrical Engineering
My Beering Story: Ever since elementary school, I have had a passion for learning, creating things, and solving problems. For these reasons, I joined a robotics club in the fifth grade that I continued with through graduation. My experience in robotics was life-changing. I learned how to be a leader and how to think outside of the box; I learned how to communicate with others and solve complex problems; most importantly, I learned from my robotics experience that I wanted to pursue a career in engineering, so that I would one day be able to change the world.

When I received the email invitation to apply for the Beering Scholarship, I didn’t think much of it. Going up against fifty thousand other students made my odds of receiving the scholarship comparable to winning the college lottery. However, I applied anyway, expecting nothing but additional essay-writing experience as a result. Needless to say, I was in shock when I received the phone call that I had been awarded the Beering Scholarship. From that day forward, I knew that I would be able to tackle anything the world throws at me.

With the Beering Scholarship, I hope to accomplish my dream of changing the world. I aspire to work in the aerospace industry on cutting edge technologies that will push the boundaries of what is technologically conceivable. I am confident that the resources provided by the Beering Scholarship - as well as the opportunities at Purdue - will enable me to achieve my dreams. Although I have only just begun my time here at Purdue, it has become my new home and the place where I will be able to achieve great things.
New Friends, New Faces in the Beering Buddy Program

By Paul Dawley, B.S. Chemical Engineering, May 2020

The Beering Scholars have formed a tight-knit community through the Beering Scholar Student Association, and their relationships grow through the many events that BSSA organizes. Besides planning service events, the club also hosts recreational activities, many of which are held through the Beering Buddies program.

Beering Buddies is a program in which each freshman Beering Scholar is paired up with an older scholar that he or she will build a relationship with throughout the year. The older scholar provides an immediate friend who can ultimately serve as a mentor and facilitate the freshman’s transition into college. Beering Buddies act as great academic guides for their younger scholars. Older buddies pass down their words of wisdom to the younger buddies, sharing advice about studying, class choice, and clubs.

The buddies interact in a variety of ways, ranging from meeting up for lunch to attending BSSA events together. One such Beering Buddy event was a trip to the Elite Air trampoline park in September. Buddy pairs all came together to jump around and have some fun at the end of a stressful week. Ana Carneiro, Chair of the Scholar Development Committee, planned the event “to provide a fun opportunity for all of the Beering Buddies to get to know one another in a non-academic environment,” adding that it was “a great time socializing and enjoying good company.”

Beering Buddies is a great way to integrate the freshman scholars into BSSA. This inclusiveness is what continues to make the Beering community so strong.

MATCH EACH FUN FACT TO ITS NEW SCHOLAR!

A) I enjoyed chemistry so much in high school that I made 3D models of almost every chemical in my textbook.
B) I have an irrational fear of ants.
C) I failed my driver’s license test four times before passing it.
D) I fell onto the top of a pine tree while mountaineering.
E) I have gone swimming with sharks in Florida.
F) I love frogs and once owned two aquatic ones (Bubble and Kicker) who lived for over ten years!
G) I look like a leprechaun, and I was born on St. Patrick’s Day to a mother named Ginger.
H) I have traveled to Germany, Italy, Austria, and Switzerland; seen the canals of Venice; and slept in a Swiss hotel high in the Alps.

A Season of Service

By Mark Gee, B.S. Biological Engineering, Biochemistry, Agronomy, May 2018

The drive to give back has always been a strong force within the Beering Scholar Student Association. Every semester, we participate in service activities as a group and have a lot of fun! This year, we continued our tradition of participating in Purdue Space Day by leading and staffing the stomp rocket activity. At our station, about 200 students in grades 3-5 learned about rocket science and the importance of testing designs to make improvements. The lesson for the day was “try, try, and try again.” This was one of the most fun Space Day activities we’ve been a part of, as the kids really enjoyed seeing if they could launch their rockets higher than the engineering fountain. (Some of the Beering Scholars definitely enjoyed the challenge as well.)

In November, we traded rockets for rakes and helped out with yardwork as a part of Winterization, an annual community service project. The weather was much warmer this year than in years past, but the warmest part of all was the hot cocoa and conversation we shared with the kind residents of Tippecanoe County.

We also continued to support the academic community at Purdue by offering a weekly study table to help freshmen students in the new Honors Residences. Other service activities included apple picking at the student farm, participating in the Honors Student Leadership Council to provide feedback to the Honors College, and writing thank you cards to veterans. It has been a great semester, and we look forward to more opportunities to give back in the future.
If you asked me what my favorite thing in the world is, I’d have a hard time answering. I might say it is my summer job, or my clubs, or my research. What all these have in common, though, is a passion for those with what we can call “brain disorders.”

Back in high school, I joined a fantastic organization called Best Buddies. In short, it is an international nonprofit whose mission is to improve the lives of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) through friendship, employment, and leadership. To me, it is the most rewarding group I’ve ever been a part of. Members like me are paired with an individual with IDD to form a genuine friendship. My buddy in high school became, and to this day remains, one of my best friends. Here at Purdue, we have a very large, very strong chapter that I have had the pleasure to be a part of and help to lead. Last year, as treasurer and vice president, I helped our chapter win “Outstanding College Chapter of the Year” at the annual international conference. I also have an amazing buddy, Brian, (see right).

My involvement in Best Buddies landed me my summer job as a respite care provider. I work with individuals with IDD in the home and community setting, providing enrichment and support for them and their families. I could go on and on about the skills I have learned that will benefit me in my future career in medicine, but the best part about it is that it doesn’t feel like work. The bonds I have created over the past two years with my clients are incredible, bringing me great joy each day.

Since the field of intellectual disabilities is dear to me, I knew I wanted to do research in that area. I discovered Purdue’s Autism Cluster, a group of prestigious faculty who work on research about autism, which was perfect for me. I ended up in a lab in the special education department that looks at assessment and intervention of challenging behavior in children with autism. Each study helps children communicate their needs and receive assistance, making a significant impact in the quality of their lives.

Through the Honors College, I took a class titled “Brain Disorders,” which led me to discover another facet of my passion: mental illness. I have become the president of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), a chapter of a national grassroots organization focused on education and support for those with mental health issues. On campus, we host events to bring awareness about the reality of mental illness with the hope of breaking the stigma that surrounds it. As part of this relatively new group at Purdue, I have been able to take on big roles in touching others’ lives; last semester, I organized a symposium during which almost 100 people came to learn and talk about mental health (see left). NAMI has taught me the importance of caring for both oneself and others, an invaluable lesson I hope to share.

The next step in my education will be medical school, where I will hopefully be able to live out my passions in a professional setting. Regardless, these passions will continue to provide me happiness, as I plan to remain involved in Best Buddies and NAMI after college. I consider myself so lucky that I have found a way to make a difference in the world while also receiving so much fulfillment and joy.
Scholar Spotlight: One Step Closer
By Ana Carneiro, B.S. Chemical Engineering, May 2018

Going into the pharmaceutical industry has been my goal from an early age. In the future, I want to engage in state-of-the-art research that strives to improve people’s lives, and I would love to be able to see the direct impact of that work. Through the Department of Chemical Engineering at Purdue, I have been fortunate to have the chance to do research that not only interests me, but brings me closer to achieving this goal. My lab group focuses on epigenetic modifications of DNA, changes to DNA that can lead to serious diseases, and recently I started my own project dealing with HIV-specific mutations in DNA.

Human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, is a virus that attacks the immune system by destroying CD4 cells, a type of white blood cell that helps fight foreign pathogens. As of 2015, about 36.7 million people were affected by HIV, with the vast majority of those impacted living in low-income countries. Because HIV targets the immune system, those affected are highly susceptible to other illnesses that can lead to death. However, a normal and healthy life can be achieved through early diagnosis followed by proper treatment. The most common way of treating HIV is through antiretroviral therapy, the intake of various medications that work to prevent the HIV from multiplying. While this does not cure the patient of HIV, it prolongs their life and reduces the risk of HIV transmission.

A common problem doctors in Africa have noticed is that many of their patients have stopped responding to the medication, potentially due to the development of a drug-resistance gene. The goal of my project is to develop a simple test for health care providers to perform on-site. This test would ideally be an inexpensive and quick way to analyze the patient’s DNA to see if they had a mutation indicative of drug-resistance. The method I am currently pursuing to reach this goal is polymerase chain reaction.

Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) is a method of amplifying a target sequence of DNA. It uses enzymes called primers that bind to the DNA in order to effectively “mark off” the section of DNA to be copied. To determine whether a person’s DNA has the specific mutation for drug-resistance, we are designing the primers so that they will theoretically only be able to bind to the DNA if the DNA contains the mutation. If the primers are able to bind (meaning the DNA has the mutation), the DNA will be amplified and detected. If no mutation is present, the primers will not be able to bind to the DNA, which will then not be amplified. However, a single mutation is not enough to use PCR alone to distinguish between the normal and mutated DNA. Therefore, the difference between the normal and mutated strain will be further distinguished through the novel use of a sequence-specific binding protein. This protein will bind in such a way that it suppresses the incorrectly bound primers, only allowing the mutated strain to be amplified. The amplification of the DNA will be detected by the appearance of a precipitate or a color change. This will allow doctors to determine whether or not the patient has the drug-resistance mutation based on whether or not the DNA is amplified. In order to make this test more affordable and feasible in less developed areas, we are exploring the idea of isothermal PCR, which would significantly lower the cost and increase viability. If our designed primers are able to detect the mutated DNA, this technique will allow doctors to perform an inexpensive and convenient test for their patients.

While my experiences at Purdue so far have been rewarding, it is my research that has had the most impact on my future. Doing cutting-edge scientific research in the pharmaceutical industry is where I plan to be in ten years, and I could not be more excited for it.

ADDITIONAL SCHOLAR UPDATES:

Sydney Rivera (B.S. Food Science, May 2017; Masters of Public Health, May 2018) presented her research on the antioxidant capacity of hydrolyzed hemp protein at the 2016 Institute of Food Technologists conference.

Marlow Rumreich (B.S. Electrical Engineering, May 2017; MS Electrical and Computer Engineering, May 2018) co-founded the Women in ECE Committee (WECE), which focuses on creating a more inclusive and positive environment for female ECE students at Purdue.

Hanna Tso (B.S. Biological Engineering, May 2017) will continue her education through the support of the Beering Scholarship at the Indiana University School of Medicine as part of the Class of 2021.
Many Scholars, One Family — BSSA Social Events

By Hanna Tso, B.S. Biological Engineering, May 2017

**Beeringsgiving:** To foster community, the Beering Scholars meet for weekly Beering dinners. Dinners give scholars the chance to catch up with each other on a regular basis outside of other club events. A week before Thanksgiving break, the scholars attended the famous Purdue Thanksgiving dinner in the dining courts for the third year in a row. Every dining court traded its typical menu for traditional foods, like turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, pumpkin pie, and apple cider. “Beeringsgiving” is sure to continue on as an annual tradition, in the spirit of thanks for the delicious food, the Beering Scholarship, and the community we have built.

**BSSA Retreat:** In November, BSSA hosted its inaugural Beering Scholar Retreat. Scholars were invited to spend a fun evening inside the Steven and Jane Beering Reading Room, a charming room in the South building of the newly constructed Honors College and Residences. Starting off with icebreakers and games, the retreat provided a chance for the scholars to relax and get to know each other better. Scholars also wrote letters to those at the Indiana Veterans’ Home for Veterans Day, thanking them for their service to our country. Later in the evening, everyone enjoyed a break with ice cream and cookies fresh out of the oven.
We hope you enjoyed catching up with the Beering Scholars!
The world moves fast, and few places move faster than the world-class Purdue University. Our goal is to continue to build a Beering network, hearing stories from and offering opportunities to all.

We invite you to join the Beering conversation by filling out our brief survey at: http://goo.gl/blbkBz

Visit our BSSA website to find our upcoming events, study abroad and internship destinations, photo gallery, and newsletter archives: http://purduebeeringscholars.weebly.com

Or email us at: purdue.beeringscholars@gmail.com

This newsletter would not be possible without the contributions of a great many. We would especially like to thank Dean Rhonda Phillips and Ms. Catharine Patrone, our BSSA advisors.

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