

2021 - 2022 Student Awardees

Join us in congratulating our 2021-2022 Chemistry Student Award winners. Chemistry faculty select each award recipient. It is always a difficult choice due to the strong competition. The College of Science and Mathematics held its awards ceremony on April 21 in the Bailey Science Center auditorium and broadcast on Facebook so that family and friends could participate.



Pictured, from left to right: Thomas J. Falkenhausen, Jason R. Phillips, Grant T. McReady, Kurt Winkelmann, Kahleel E. Guerrier, Estefani Quinones, Hope E. Smith.

We are grateful to the families of Julia Wisenbaker Sumerford and Dr. M. Elizabeth Derrick for their financial support of our students. Thanks to the generosity of these and other VSU Chemistry donors, students received over \$11,000 in awards and scholarships.

Winners of this year's chemistry discipline awards demonstrate excellence in specific courses and fields of research. The winners are:

Physical Chemistry Award	Thomas J. Falkenhausen
Analytical Chemistry Award	Yeong Hun Jeong
Biochemistry Award	Kahleel E. Guerrier
Inorganic Chemistry Award	Jason R. Phillips
Organic Chemistry Award	Estefani Quinones

The Chemistry Department recognizes many other aspects of student excellence, including research, service to the Department, and overall academic performance. The winners of this year's awards are:

Freshman Chemistry Award	Michael Rice
Given for achievement in first-year Chemistry courses.	
American institute of Chemists Award	Grant T. McReady
Awarded to a student showing exceptional promise as a chemist.	
Southwest Georgia ACS Optima Chemical Award	Jayden Thomas
Recognizes outstanding service to the Chemistry Department and SMACS.	
Dr. M. Elizabeth Derrick Award	Jacqueline J. Farmer
Provides a scholarship to an outstanding female student majoring in Chemistry.	
Chemistry Undergraduate Research Award	Estefani Quinones
Awarded to a student showing superior skill as a chemical researcher.	
Outstanding Chemistry Senior Award	Estefani Quinones
Given to a senior demonstrating overall excellent academic performance.	
Julia Wisenbaker Sumerford Scholarship Award	Hope E. Smith
Recognizes an outstanding junior or senior Chemistry student.	

We asked each awardee to tell us their future plans, favorite VSU class, and their extracurricular activities. Here are their responses.

Thomas J. Falkenhausen (Physical Chemistry Award) is starting his PhD this fall at Emory University, with the ultimate goal of becoming a professor at a major research university. Thomas thanks Dr. Gopee Sreenilayam for his research mentoring and Drs. Donna Gosnell and Linda de la Garza for guidance.

Yeong Hun Jeong (Analytical Chemistry Award) will graduate in December and plans to return to South Korea to work at the Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power company. He thanks Drs. Sreenilayam and de la Garza for everything that he learned in their classes.

Kahleel E. Guerrier (Biochemistry Award) performs research with Dr. Dean Duncan and was a peer mentor in Organic Chemistry. His favorite class is Biochemistry. Kahleel entered the PhD program at the University of Kentucky to study cancer biology and toxicology.

Jason R. Phillips (Inorganic Chemistry Award) says that his favorite course so far is Inorganic Chemistry and that there are so many good chemistry professors that he can't pick just one.

Estefani Quinones (Organic Chemistry, Chemistry Undergraduate Research, and Outstanding Chemistry Senior Awards) also received an award from the Georgia Academy of Sciences for Best Chemistry Poster at their 99th annual meeting held here at VSU. Her favorite class was Dr. Tom Manning's Environmental Chemistry. Estefani plans to get a PhD in the fields of neuroscience and biomedical engineering at Cornell University.

Michael Rice (Freshman Chemistry Award) retired from the Air Force after 25 years of

service. He is married with two kids (one will attend VSU this fall). He hopes to attend Pharmacy School at Campbell University, NC in 2023. His favorite chemistry course so far is Organic Chemistry.

Grant T. McReady (American Institute of Chemists Award) plans to work at Optima Chemical in Douglas, GA after he graduates. He credits Dr. de la Garza for encouraging him to get involved in SMACS and research. He enjoys the enthusiasm that Dr. Manning has for his research. He learned a lot about teaching as the peer-facilitator for Dr. Gosnell. Grant thanks Dr. Yakov Woldman for pushing him intellectually in Biochemistry.

Jayden Thomas (Southwest Georgia ACS Optima Chemical Award) appreciates Dr. Manning for his research mentorship, Dr. de la Garza for professional guidance, and Dr. Theresa Grove (Biology) for her support and advocating on his behalf.

Jacqueline J. Farmer (Dr. M. Elizabeth Derrick Award) plans to attend the Physician Assistant program at UT Knoxville then become a physician assistant in Valdosta. She has a strong interest in medicine and a love for helping people. Her favorite professor is Dr. Gopee Sreenilayam.

Hope E. Smith (Julia Wisenbaker Sumerford Scholarship) will graduate in May 2024 with degrees in Chemistry and Biology, then seek a PhD. Hope is performing research with Dr. Shipra Gupta and is interested in internships next year.

Congratulations to our outstanding 2021-2022 student awardees!