

UMW Students Featured in the FY2020 Endowment Report



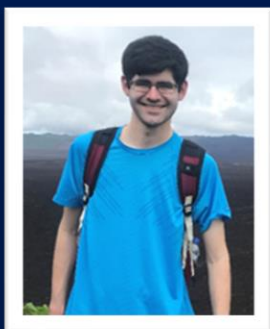
Amira Akam is a junior from Northern Virginia, majoring in psychology with a minor in Spanish. She is also in the 5-year Pathway to Initial Licensure: Elementary Education Graduate Program. *“Growing up, my teachers played a significant role in my growth and development, and I aspire to have that same impact by inspiring my future students and helping them find their potential.”* She has engaged in many practicum experiences in Stafford and Spotsylvania counties and Fredericksburg city. Although practicum looked a little different in Fall 2020, she is gaining valuable insights that will help her be successful in her own classroom one day.



Rick Altenburg graduated in May 2020 with a B.A. in Historic Preservation and Religious Studies. He is from New Jersey. At UMW, he was able to explore archaeology, confirming his interest and vocation. His post-graduate plans include pursuing a master’s degree in anthropology. He advises new students to UMW *“not to waste time doing things you don’t want to do! Make the most of your college experience by exploring what you are most interested in. Just because your friends are doing something doesn’t mean you have to do it, too.”*



Nichole Boigegrain is a senior from Northern Virginia. In 2019-20, Nichole worked with Dr. Holly Schiffrin on both a research team and an individual honors project. Nichole earned departmental honors for that project. She completed her coursework in her psychology major in December 2020. After graduation, she plans to work in a variety of psychology-related fields before committing to a Ph.D. program to become a clinical psychologist. In addition to her departmental honors, Nichole was recently elected into UMW’s chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. <https://www.umw.edu/news/2020/10/15/phi-beta-kappa-inducts-stars-at-academics-and-adaptability/>



Thomas Bustamante is a senior from the Richmond area majoring in biology. Thomas has benefited from UMW’s many opportunities to take his learning beyond the classroom – from study abroad with UMW in the Galapagos to research projects, including the Summer Science Institute and an individual honors project. He credits his first research project with shaping him and his ideas about the world. *“I would not be the same person I am today if it were not for that first*

leap.” Graduate study in freshwater ecology and conservation are his immediate plans following his graduation from UMW. Eventually he hopes to become a professor.

<http://umwrcd.net/tag/thomas-bustamante/>

<https://international.umw.edu/study-abroad-2/program-search/umw-facultyled-programs/galapagos-2/>

<https://www.umw.edu/news/transcript/thomas-bustamante-rcd/>



Mandy Byrd is a senior from the Northern Neck majoring in Business Administration and Communication and Digital Studies. Mandy has a full calendar, fully participating in internships on campus, leadership in both department and campus organizations – musical, social justice, and academic. Like so many UMW students, she found the adjustment to COVID-19 life challenging. She describes the end of the Spring 2020 semester as “*one of the most difficult experiences*” of her college journey – due to the fear and the uncertainty, but also a lack of high-speed internet access necessary for online learning. Returning to campus eased this problem, however, the hybrid model is still a challenge. Mandy is thankful for the support of her parents and family, the Rappahannock Scholars program that put her on the college track back in freshman year of high school, and also her scholarship donors because “*you make my education possible and less stressful!*”

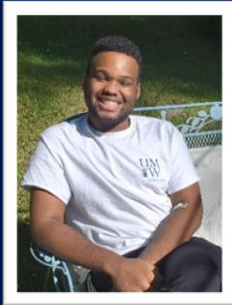
<https://www.umw.edu/news/2020/10/07/social-justice-summit-spurs-students-to-action/>



Kranston Blakey is a sophomore from Central Virginia, planning to major in Communication and Digital Studies. When not in class, he is on the Men's Club Volleyball team and plays the piano and ukulele, too. As a Dorsey Scholar, Kranston volunteers regularly on campus and in the surrounding community. Ball Circle is his favorite spot on campus, especially sitting in an Adirondack chair, listening to music.



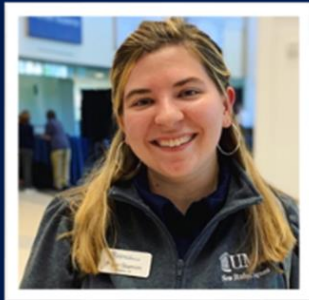
Andy Chen is a senior from central Virginia majoring in Studio Art. He is a first-generation student. His favorite activities on campus include working on the committees which produce a Taste of Asia and Lunar New Year. COVID-19 has posed some challenges for Andy. The important in-class connections between students and professors were not easily available. But he is optimistic and sees that “*we are all working together to push through.*” His advice to new students is equally positive and realistic, “*take chances at something when you first arrive, because sometimes those chances don't come around a second time.*”



Justin Daniels is a sophomore from Richmond, Virginia, planning to study computer science and Spanish. His love for UMW prompted him to apply to be an orientation leader, helping usher new students into the UMW community. His favorite place on campus is the Simpson Library. He has always loved the atmosphere in libraries, *"Simpson Library is one of the best, maybe because of the tree houses. When I am not in the classroom or the library, I am probably reading somewhere."*



Makayla Ferrell is a senior from Alexandria, Virginia, majoring in computer science and mathematics. Makayla is rightfully proud of landing on and maintaining her place on either the Dean's List or President's List every semester! She was also recently elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Experiential learning at UMW took Makayla to Reading, England, in spring 2020. *"Although my experience was cut short by COVID, I had an amazing time abroad. I am also currently completing undergraduate research in the mathematics department focusing on public-key cryptography. After graduation, I will begin working for the Department of Defense as a software engineer."* Her advice for new students is sensible: *"Don't be afraid to try new things or clubs. You never know what will happen or who you will meet!"*



Piper Giannini is a senior from southern Virginia, majoring in English: creative writing. Her proudest personal accomplishment at UMW was being elected into **Phi Beta Kappa** in spring 2020. Despite COVID-19, Piper was able to complete a summer internship with the Defense Intelligence Agency. *"I was able to remotely complete my internship over the summer, which was great."* **Piper responded to the isolation and negativity of COVID-19** by trying to make the best out of the situation. She and some friends worked together to create a UMW Positivity Post to highlight good things and offer inspiration during this difficult time.

<https://eagleeye.umw.edu/2020/07/14/student-publication-spreads-positivity-during-pandemic-2/>



Shannon Hardy is a junior from the Richmond area majoring in theatre and religious studies. She added her Religious Studies major after taking a course called the Hebrew Bible. After UMW, she plans to work for a few years and then possibly go to law school and focus on religious liberty. UMW's general education requirements truly opened her mind to different interests. Her Mary Washington experience - living on campus, classes, and clubs - exposed Shannon to many more different people than in her childhood. She observes

that there is “so much about other people that I had never even considered. We are all the same, but appearances and stereotypes and perceptions from childhood can shape your thinking for life, unless you are exposed to other perspectives.” She credits UMW with her increased understanding and broader perspective on life.

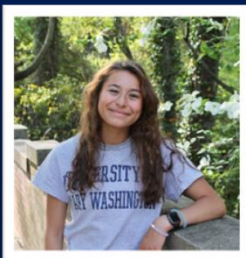


De'Toine Jones graduated in 2019 with a B.S. in computer science and a B.A. in music. He is currently working as a software developer and systems engineer. While at UMW, De'Toine was a member and music director of One Note Stand.

<https://www.facebook.com/TheOneNoteStand/>



Abigail Lasky is a junior from Northern Virginia majoring in biology and is considering a minor in neuroscience. **After college, she plans to work in a hospital or other medical setting before applying to nursing school.** Originally, she wanted to work in environmental protection, but she realized that she wanted to focus on helping people. The COVID-19 pandemic reaffirmed her desire to enter the medical field.



Valentina Leon-Ledezma is a junior from Northern Virginia majoring in psychology and sociology. She is a sprinter on UMW's track and field team. After graduation, she plans to go to graduate school to study higher education administration with the goal to work in student affairs. Overall, the Mary Washington community impressed Valentina with its kindness and welcoming attitude.



Emily Matuczinski is from Tidewater Virginia. She graduated in May 2020 with a major in biochemistry. Her undergraduate research is on utilizing nanotherapies to induce cell death in brain cancer. This project was published in a peer-reviewed journal over the summer. She reflects, “*I'm thankful for the opportunities I have had to do research. Being published is amazing!*” She plans to work with the organization where she interned this past summer and may apply to graduate school. The Mary Washington community impressed Valentina with its kindness and welcoming attitude.



Tabitha Robinson is a freshman from the Northern Neck; she has not selected a major yet. Tabitha chose UMW for the academics, location, beautiful campus, and friendly people. When she's not in a class, she likes to read, write, knit, bake, garden, run, do yoga, play with puppies, get coffee, hang out with friends, and play piano and guitar. Some of her college goals are to become a better writer,

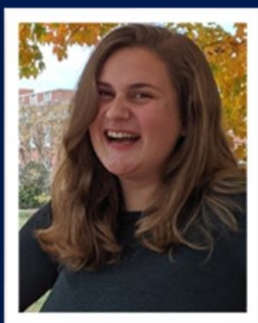
maybe in journalism, and also to improve her public speaking skills. *"The scholarship that I received came as a complete surprise. When I received the scholarship, a weight was lifted off my shoulders. I can now enjoy my freshman year without worrying endlessly about how I'm going to pay for it."*



Dillon Schweers is a senior from Tidewater Virginia, majoring in international affairs and political science. He competes with the Eagles Cross Country Team. He is also a member of the UMW Honor Council. After graduation, Dillon hopes to go directly to law school. Dillon's advice to new students *"If you are not sure what you want to study or do after college, that is perfectly acceptable. I was in that same position and I used my first few semesters to figure out which disciplines truly interested me. And for students that think they know exactly what they want to study, I challenge them to branch out a bit. They may be surprised to find what other topics they discover to be fascinating."*



Addan Sharif is a senior from Fredericksburg, Virginia, majoring in accounting. She studied at the University of Deusto Bilbao, Spain, in the Spring of 2020. Unfortunately, she had to come home in the second week of March. *"COVID changed this year for me by a lot, but I am still glad to have been given the opportunity to spend two months in Spain. It was the greatest time of my life!"* After graduation, she hopes to get a full-time job at an accounting firm and start working toward a CPA. Her goal is to one day work for a Big Four accounting firm. *"Thanks to my scholarship donors, my study abroad experience was possible."*



Jennifer Snyder is a junior from the Richmond area with a major in sociology. Dr. Eric Bonds and his class *"Social Issues"* piqued her interest in the subject so much that she decided to become a sociology major. After college, she hopes to work at a non-profit organization or become a social worker. Jennifer is involved with Community and Outreach and Resources (COAR) as a council leader. She runs a weekly student volunteer program to sort and distribute food at the Fredericksburg Regional Food Bank. She also participates in other COAR campus-wide events like Pumpkin Palooza, Good Neighbor Day, and the Spring Festival.