



# The Royal Society of Western Australia

## RSWA Awards

### Student Medallists 2014 (presented 2015)

The Royal Society of Western Australia Student Medal is awarded annually to graduating science students with an outstanding academic record from the universities in Western Australia. The students are nominated by their institutions.

The 2014 RSWA Student Medallists were given their presentations by our Vice Patron Professor Lyn Beazley at the RSWA Annual General Meeting at the Webb Lecture Theatre, University of Western Australia, on 20 July 2015. The Medallists are:-

**Sarah Henn** - Curtin University

**Guy Coleman** - The University of Western Australia

**Jesse Hults** – Murdoch University

**Bianca Brucciani** - The University of Notre Dame Australia

**Garry Ogston** - Edith Cowan University

Further information about the Medallists and their studies is on the following pages.



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**Sarah Henn** - Curtin University

Sarah was awarded a John Curtin Undergraduate Scholarship, Curtin University's most prestigious undergraduate scholarship, for her studies. She studied a B.Sc. (Laboratory Medicine), majoring in Haematology, Microbiology and Biochemistry, graduating with distinction. She was awarded best student in both Haematology and Microbiology, received the Australian Institute of Medical Scientists Gold Medal as she graduated top of her class, and was a two-time recipient of the Vice-Chancellor's List award. She was also selected for a Summer Cadetship with the Lung Institute of Western Australia, during which she completed a short research project on COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). Following her undergraduate studies she completed a B.Sc. (Biomedical Science Honours), supported by a Cancer Council WA Honours Scholarship, graduating with First Class Honours, and was again awarded a place on the Vice-Chancellor's List, and graduated top of her class. Her honours project focussed on the role of macrophages (an immune cell) and endothelial cells (which line blood vessels), and their response to immunotherapeutic anti-cancer agents. She also developed a novel 3D in vitro model which, with some more work, may be used to better assess cancer treatments in the laboratory in future. Sarah presented her honours work at both the 2014 Cancer Council Research Symposium and the Australasian Society for Immunology Annual Scientific Meeting. Throughout her studies she was also heavily involved in both the John Curtin Leadership Academy and community service projects, in particular Relay For Life Curtin, which raises funds and awareness for Cancer Council WA and fuelled her passion for cancer research. Currently, she is taking some time off studies to travel and volunteer overseas. She will be commencing her Masters in Translational Medical Research, again focusing on cancer, at the University of Heidelberg Medical Faculty in Germany in September. Sarah hopes to follow this with Doctoral studies before returning to Australia to continue her medical research career.





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**Guy Coleman** - The University of Western Australia

As told by Guy:-

The past three years at UWA have certainly been a very positive and successful experience for me. I was lucky enough to be awarded four prizes, which included a Convocation of UWA graduates prize for Achievement in Agricultural Science, Zoology, Botany, Conservation Biology or Marine Science. It was also an honour to be asked to speak at the ceremony as the student guest speaker. On a less academic front, my brother and I rode vintage Russian motorbikes to the Arctic Circle in Siberia in Winter to raise funds for the charity Operation Smile. We successfully raised \$3,500 for children in developing countries with a cleft lip or palate to receive adequate treatment.

Currently, I have taken a break from my studies and after working full time for six months at the Australian Herbicide Resistance Initiative I have been traveling from Azerbaijan to England. I have just started a research technician job at Rothamsted Agricultural Research Station, which has the world's longest running field experiment which commenced in 1843. I plan to work here for 6 weeks before spending 3 weeks helping harvest on a farm in Germany and then over to Northern America via Iceland and Greenland. The year off was to give me time to decide which direction I should head with regards to agriculture or rural medicine. I was fortunate enough to achieve a place in medicine out of high school, however I have a keen passion for agriculture! So the plan is to combine these pathways as best I can and begin my studies in medicine before specializing in rural health. The course begins next year in February.





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**Jesse Hults** – Murdoch University

As told by Jesse:-

I commenced my undergraduate studies at Murdoch University in 2011 with the intention of studying a Graduate Medical Degree upon completion. During my time at Murdoch I benefitted greatly from the knowledge and expertise of the fantastic academic staff who always had an open door and were happy to help.

I have received a wealth of academic, leadership, teaching and community service experiences at Murdoch, this includes activities such as serving as President of a student representative committee in the School of Veterinary & Life Sciences, mentoring and tutoring of Aboriginal high school students with the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience, employment as a Lab Demonstrator and Tutor within the School of Veterinary & Life Sciences, employment as a Senior PASS Leader with the Murdoch PASS program and selection for the Murdoch Student Emerging Leadership Program. These diverse experiences continue to serve me well as a graduate.

Upon graduation as Valedictorian (refer picture below on 16 February 2015), I was awarded the University Medal in recognition of the most outstanding academic achievement among graduates, as well as the Dean's Award in Molecular Biology.

I am presently enrolled at the University of Notre Dame Fremantle studying Medicine, which every day presents new and exciting challenges for me. I hope to eventually undertake Honours as a part of my medical degree and eventually contribute to medical research in my future role as a clinician.





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**Bianca Brucciani** - The University of Notre Dame Australia

Bianca graduated from Notre Dame last July with a Bachelor of Science, majoring in Biology.

During her degree Bianca achieved 16 high distinction and distinction grades and was commended for her outstanding academic performance in upper year science at a School of Arts and Sciences' awards evening.

Outside of the typical units of study expected of a Bachelor of Science student, Bianca completed a six week placement at the Biodiversity Conservation Centre with the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority. Here she assisted with a conservation genetics research project focused on *Stylidium hispidum*.

To complete her degree Bianca also undertook a supervised project investigating the impact of hydraulic fracturing that included a West Australian perspective – an important piece of work on a controversial environmental topic.



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**Garry Ogston** - Edith Cowan University

Garry was nominated as the top undergraduate student in the School of Natural Sciences at ECU studying Conservation and Wildlife Biology for 2014. He achieved an overall score of 79.88 in the Bachelor of Science degree (Conservation and Wildlife Biology).

As told by Garry:-

During my degree I regularly volunteered with organisations such as Department of Parks and Wildlife and Australian Wildlife Conservancy.

I was also invited to join the Golden Key International Honour Society, in which I received the New Member Award for my community/volunteer services.

Since completing my degree mid year 2014 I have been working on a casual basis as an Environmental Advisor (Zoologist) in Perth and the Pilbara.

I have also completed my Honours research, exploring the implications of climate change on two of our freshwater fish in the south-west, and achieved a grade of First Class Honours. My findings from this research have been accepted for presentation in October at the Australian Society for Fish Biology conference in Sydney.

My aspirations are to continue on to complete a Ph.D. with a project lined up looking at the effects of environmental flow and changes in temperature on the physiology and behaviour of freshwater cobbler.



<http://www.terrestrialecosystems.com/garry-ogston/>