



The Royal Society of Western Australia

RSWA Awards

Student Medallists 2010 (presented 2011)

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.

This year the medals were presented by councillor Professor Kate Wright, Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Training, Curtin University.



Stephanie Austin - Curtin University

B.Sc.(Molecular Biotechnology) 1st Class Honours

Stephanie's Honours project was on deep sea novel sulphate reducers. In other words, sulphate reducing bacteria from cores taken 2 km below the sea floor. Since completing her honours degree, Stephanie has commenced a PhD through Curtin University at CSIRO in continued pursuit of her interest in subsurface environments, and the use of Systems Microbiology to advance understanding of the roles of microorganisms in biogeochemical cycles. The project involves the investigation of microbe-mediated processes relevant to the development of alternative methods for leaching minerals from low-grade ores. Ultimately, it is hoped that the findings of the study may contribute to reducing the environmental impact of mining operations and enhance the economic feasibility of exploiting deposits contained in refractive ores. Following successful completion of her PhD, Stephanie hopes to pursue a career in research.



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Linette Umbrello - The University of Western Australia
B.Sc.(Wildlife Management) 1st Class Honours

Linette Attended Northam Senior High School and grew up fascinated with animals and nature so she enrolled in Wildlife Management at UWA. She did her fourth year project at Whiteman Park, investigating the success of introducing woylies onto the Swan Coastal Plain. She surveyed subterranean fungi in the reserve to estimate resource abundance for woylies and also inspected the effect of woylie diggings on soil water repellency.

After volunteering at the WA Museum for six months Linette began a 12 month part-time contract as a Technical Officer of Terrestrial Vertebrates. Some of the areas she works in include working with the museum's extensive tissue collection, organising the Indonesian mammal database and auditing the dry mammal collection. Linette would like to continue her studies in the future by doing a PhD, but in the meantime is enjoying the experiences she is gaining by working.



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Alicia Sutton - Murdoch University
B.Sc.(Marine Science) (Honours)

Alicia's Honours project was on Krill, euphasiids, an important component of zooplankton. She studied euphasids off the southwest of Australia within and around a developing warm core anticyclonic eddy – it was the first study to investigate euphasids within a developing eddy of the south-west coast.

Alicia says her time studying at university has been a wonderful and rewarding experience, and she was fortunate enough to study at both Murdoch University and the University of Western Australia. She always knew she wanted a career in the zoology and marine science field. After finishing her undergraduate degree, she was not planning on further study. However, after a year off, she felt the urge to study again and undertook her Honours on krill. She has since been working for the Centre for Marine Futures, and once again, has decided to return to study and do a PhD next year. At first, the thought of 3 more years of study was daunting, but now she is excited about taking on this challenge.



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Eric Law - The University of Notre Dame Australia
B.Sc.(Environmental Science)

During his degree course, Eric undertook a comprehensive range of units that included Environmental Education, Pollution and Toxicology, Environmental Impact Assessment, Natural Resource Management, Change Management, and Australian Ecology. Over the course of his degree, Eric received 21 Distinction and High Distinction grades out of a possible 24.

Since graduating, Eric has been working in the Impact Assessment and Permitting Division of AECOM, a global provider of professional technical and management support services. In his endeavour to further his technical knowledge, this year Eric commenced a Masters degree at The University of Notre Dame on the sustainability of commercial vegetable crops irrigated by groundwater on the Swan Coastal Plain.



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Vanessa Stylianou - Edith Cowan University
B.Sc.(Environmental Science)

Vanessa has just completed her Bachelor of Environmental Science at ECU. She has always been interested in nature and the environment, particularly with regards to its management. Although not yet complete, her university experience so far has been amazing. She says she has been so fortunate to have been taught by enthusiastic and highly knowledgeable lecturers, which has been complimented by hands-on learning through laboratory and field work. There has also been many unique networking and work experience opportunities, both within the university as well as in external organisations, including CSIRO, DEC and the City of Joondalup. Currently, Vanessa is enrolled in Environmental Management Honours and is examining the morphological and physiological traits of *Eucalyptus loxophleba* ssp. *lissophloia* along a rainfall gradient, and the role of phenotypic plasticity in facilitating the adaptation of the species to varying climatic conditions across Western Australia's mid-west. On completion of her Honours project, Vanessa hopes to pursue a research career and aspires to work for a year or so overseas.



Vanessa Stylianou's father accepting the medal on her behalf