The 2015 Annual meeting of OSURA was held in May and it was again good news for five OSU students!

A total of $5,000 was awarded to outstanding students who are interested in careers that promote healthy aging. The scholarship program is one of the most successful OSURA activities because of the involvement of the membership – contributing to the scholarship fund and serving on the selection committee.

The following are biographical sketches of the recent awardees:

**Briana Frink**

Briana, a sophomore from Belo Horizonte, Brazil, is majoring in Chemical Engineering with a Pre-med option and a member of the University Honors College.

She attended the American School of Belo Horizonte (high school) and holds dual-citizenship in the United States and Brazil. She has been active with Engineers Without Borders and founded Girls4Engineering, an outreach group to attract girls to engineering using social media. Her major focus is to attain a career in the medical field “to help others achieve lives where they feel healthy and where they do not have to be handicapped or affected by a disease.” Briana’s research in the Department of Biomedical Sciences focuses on how environmental factors, and specifically the gut microbes, affect systemic metabolism. Over time, environmental insults including diet and lifestyle can alter our gut microbiota. Her work is helping advance our understanding of how alteration of our gut microbiota can contribute to the development of obesity, type 2 diabetes and metabolic diseases. As we age, our risk of developing these diseases increases and her work in exploring ways to curb theses relates well to the issues of healthy aging. Through her research and coursework, she is developing the tools and knowledge base to allow her to pursue a career in the medical field to promote healthy aging.

**Zach Goode**

Zach, a junior from Fairview, Oregon, is majoring in Biochemistry and Biophysics and is a member of the University Honors College. He is an active participant in the Honors College undergraduate thesis research program. In his essay he states “I decided that majoring in biochemistry and biophysics would provide a perfect combination of quantitative chemistry and physics that holds major significance in modern research surrounding human health and biotechnology.” His initial research experience is directly along these lines: currently he is participating in an OSU research laboratory where he is working with DNA sequences to gain novel genomic information as well as carrying out a wet-lab project to express and purify protein samples; thus gaining important experience in structural biology. Since proteins play such a large role in cells, their study in the structural biology discipline can contribute to advances in understanding molecular mechanisms for aging and potential ways to combat diseases associated with aging. Zach is excited by his work in this area. He plans to go on to graduate school, earning a PhD in structural biology and do research “to actively contribute to a massive collection of information that is improving our world.” This summer Zach will work in a lab at the California Institute of Technology involving ribosome biogenesis.

**Stefan Herrenbruck**

Stefan, a junior from Lake Oswego, has majors in the College of Businesn and College of Agricultural Sciences.

He has been active in student organizations in the College of Business and the OSU Austin Entrepreneurship Program and is in the University Scholars Program. His long-term goal is to create a financial planning organization for all income brackets under the belief that “conquering financial concern is a major victory in achieving a happy and fulfilling life.” Stefan also wrote, “Despite our advances in medicine and extended life expectancy, the quality of life and retirement continues to be hampered by a widespread lack of financial wellness.” At OSU he has played a major role in developing a college-level financial literacy course, for which he is now the teaching assistant and in which he gets young people thinking about retirement and long-term financial wellness. He has taught financial literacy in elementary classes and is working to take the financial literacy program statewide. When he was co-president for OSU Enactus, the team opened a food bank in Tillamook County, collected over 100,000 pounds of food for the local food bank, created a microloan program for Nicaragua and served as mentors and business consultants for local businesses.

**Duy Nguyen**

Duy, a senior from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, is majoring in Computer Science with minors in Mathematics and Psychology. He is a member of the University Honors College.

Duy has been an undergraduate researcher in the Personal Robotics Lab for two years. He is currently conducting interdisciplinary research linking together robotics and social psychology. Specifically, he is investigating how various intelligent assistive devices can improve the quality of life of persons with severe motor disabilities – an area that holds promise for improved aging for many who have suffered a disease or debilitating health event. His current research project focuses on identifying facial expressions that indicate a person is losing interest in a conversation. “The robot can have the ability to read the body language and facial expression of its users then give out appropriate action.” He intends to eventually earn a Ph.D. in robotics, especially in human-robot interaction. In addition to his research, Duy has served as a Peer Mentor at OSU and as a volunteer in the Lego Robotics Program at Garfield elementary school. He is an orientation leader for the INTO Program, and he is a frequent volunteer for the Center for Civic Engagement.

**Stephanie Zhao**

Stephanie, a junior from Beaverton, Oregon, is majoring in Biology and is a member of the University Honors College.

Her goal is to pursue a career in clinical practice and research in geriatric medicine. As she put it, “To contribute to healthy aging, we need both doctors and researchers. I plan to pursue both to advance the general health of aging for my community and beyond.” At OSU she has been working in a healthy aging laboratory for the past two years. Currently she is focusing on the effects of Rapamycin on cells; with the intent of increasing health span – the number of disease-free years lived. Stephanie has diverse talents and interests. She studied piano and violin for many years. She was a member of the Portland Youth Philharmonic for six years and was invited to be a soloist with the Corvallis-OSU Symphony. Additionally, she engaged in competitive swimming for several years. Her volunteer activities are equally varied; she has been a volunteer for Stone Soup and the Heartland Humane Society in Corvallis, as well as the Avamere Rehabilitation Center in Beaverton, where her interest in healthy aging was stimulated.