UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

June 5, 2019

Harrison Tasoff

Golden Undergrads

The future looks bright for UC Santa Barbara students Haley Bowden and Ryan Sadjadi, who have joined this year's cohort of Goldwater Scholars. The undergraduates from the College of Creative Studies (CCS) were selected from a pool of over 5,000 applicants, and they join 494 other students from across the nation in earning the prestigious awards.

"I am delighted that, once again, CCS students have brought distinction to [the university] through the receipt of two Goldwater Scholarships" said interim CCS Dean Bruce Tiffney. "I congratulate Haley and Ryan on their accomplishments and look forward to their further success as they complete their time at UC Santa Barbara and move into graduate studies and beyond."

Bowden found herself drawn to physics by the promise of exploring some of the biggest and most fundamental questions about the universe. She dived in almost immediately on entering UC Santa Barbara, and during her freshman summer joined researchers at Las Cumbres Observatory in Goleta. There, Bowden worked on strategies for making the best use of the new Large Synoptic Survey Telescope to advance supernova research.

"Receiving the Goldwater Scholarship is very exciting," Bowden said. "It will allow me to continue to focus on my education and research in the coming year." She is currently working with Professor Crystal Martin to investigate unusual dwarf galaxies called Green Pea Galaxies, and plans to begin applying for doctoral programs this fall to continue her work in astrophysics.

“Haley did an exceptional job on her research last summer,” said Martin. “I’m looking forward to mentoring her this summer and hopefully writing a research paper together.

“We like to say ‘the sky is the limit,’” Martin added, “but the observable universe is the only limit for Haley.”

Ryan Sadjadi’s passion for medicine stems from conversations with his grandfather. “He would recount his experiences as an OBGYN,” Sadjadi recalled. “His ambition throughout his entire life remained to provide care to people without access to quality care.”

“Earning a Goldwater scholarship was more of a family experience than it was an individual one,” said Sadjadi. “The amount of support I received from my parents in pursuing a Goldwater scholarship ultimately made the difference.”

Following his own medical interests in high school, Sadjadi joined a university lab between his sophomore and junior years, learning to use computer modeling to investigate the biomedical applications of organic chemistry. At UC Santa Barbara, Sadjadi has worked closely with Professor James Thomson to uncover a potential genetic or epigenetic cause of type 2 diabetes.

“Ryan truly enjoys research, and has the motivation and intelligence to tackle big problems,” said Professor Dennis Clegg, who advises Sadjadi. “His enthusiasm is infectious.”

Sadjadi said he plans to become a medical doctor with a laboratory dedicated to the development of stem cell-based therapies for type 2 diabetes, and a practice devoted to therapies for patients with related chronic conditions.

The Goldwater award has allowed him to connect with diverse-minded scholars across the country, which should be a boon for future collaborations, he noted.

Since 1989, the Goldwater Scholarship Program has supported sophomores and juniors who have shown promise as budding researchers in the natural sciences, engineering and mathematics. The Barry Goldwater Scholarship & Excellence in Education Foundation awards up to $7,500 for each fellow’s remaining years in college to help defray the costs of their education.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.