

Senior Fellow Awards in the Department of Biology are based upon excellent academic performance, service to the department, and positive attitude and contributions brought to the classroom, research lab and the general environment of the major. The Biology Faculty view Senior Fellows as students who pursue biology for its own virtue and provide excellent role models for other students. We extend our sincere thanks and congratulations to this year's awardees for their exceptional contributions to the Department of Biology!

Meredith Atwood



Entering Denison, I was a Political Science and Environmental Studies major set on becoming an environmental lawyer. But from my first day of Science and the Environment in the ENVS department, I began to realize that I was meant to be outdoors discovering nature. This realization further developed when I studied in Costa Rica the summer after my first year. I could not have been more ecstatic to have classes in the rain forest where I had a notebook in one hand and binoculars in the other. Before I knew it, I was addicted to biology.

I initially began taking biology classes as a supplement to ENVS, but soon the biology classes became central to my education. My growing desire to learn as much as I could about ecology convinced me that I needed to become a major, which ended up being the easiest decision for me to make. I could no longer imagine sitting in an office when I could be outside getting dirty! I have always loved the outdoors and I finally realized it could be more than a lifetime hobby; it could be my life. A career in biology is one where I will be able to ask questions, spend time outside, and explore our natural world. Nothing could be more exciting to me! I have finally found a passion where my curiosity is expected and I can quench my desire to learn because there is always something new to consider and explore. It is a gift to have found my love for biology and to feel like I am finally where I am meant to be.

Biology helps us understand the system that we are a part of, which is critical in order to protect our planet and all of the organisms living here. I have been fortunate enough to research some of these ecological questions with regards to amphibians through research with Dr. Homan. This experience has assured me that research in conservation and wildlife biology is in my future. She, like many other Biology faculty, challenges me to come up with new questions, push my boundaries, explore, and discover. I am very thankful to her and the entire department for their support both inside and outside of the classroom. I feel lucky to be a part of the major and I know that this is just the beginning of my learning and questioning.

Chris Dibble



Frogs. I love frogs. And turtles. And salamanders, lizards and snakes. And bears and birds and bongos. And octopi, okapi and orangutans. And, well, just about everything else living under the sun. Or water. Or dirt. Even plants have some redeeming characteristics... though I'm still trying to figure out what they are. There has never been a part of me that did not want to work with animals. The amount of complexity in the natural world is astounding, and the fact that we're all built from the same stuff is even more so. I want to devote my life to understanding how this, we, everything came to be; of all the "C" descriptions, curious is my favorite.

That sense of questioning, that quest for knowledge really began at Denison. It started when, sitting in Dr. Smith's laboratory freshman year, I asked myself "Why on earth am I sifting through this lizard's stomach looking for partially digested insects?" At first I didn't get it, but after seven hundred or so repetitions, I began to formulate an answer; it beats working at Sears. The real difference between this department and others is the ability to interact with faculty and be treated as legitimate, capable individuals. You're not just a string of D-numbers begging for a better grade. Take advantage of that; do research, ask faculty about their work (most people love to talk about it!). Chances are, if you have a question about anything living, someone in the department can help you find the answer.

Cecilia Murch



I caught the "horse fever" when I was seven. I was the little girl who galloped around the backyard and preferred my riding boots over any other shoes in my closet. My love for horses, and animals in general, initially sparked my interest in the sciences. Although I eventually grew out of the galloping-around-the-yard phase, I never got tired of the questions involved in investigating the behavior and functioning of animals. Over time, I realized that my practical experience with animals could gain even more depth with an understanding of scientific mechanisms at the molecular, organismal, and ecological level.

My biology education at Denison has greatly enhanced my ability to conceptualize and apply the workings of nature. Research experiences have afforded me the opportunity to explore molecular science and to strengthen my critical thinking skills. The courses I have taken here have broadened my interests and exposed me to the many aspects of science that are inextricably connected to the well-being of animals, people, and the environment that we share. From mutating sea urchin DNA to identifying plant microbes, I have found my experiences in biological inquiry to be challenging and rewarding, and certainly fascinating! I am excited to apply the knowledge I have acquired at Denison to the veterinary profession, and to infuse my work with the passion I hold for research and integrated fields of biology.