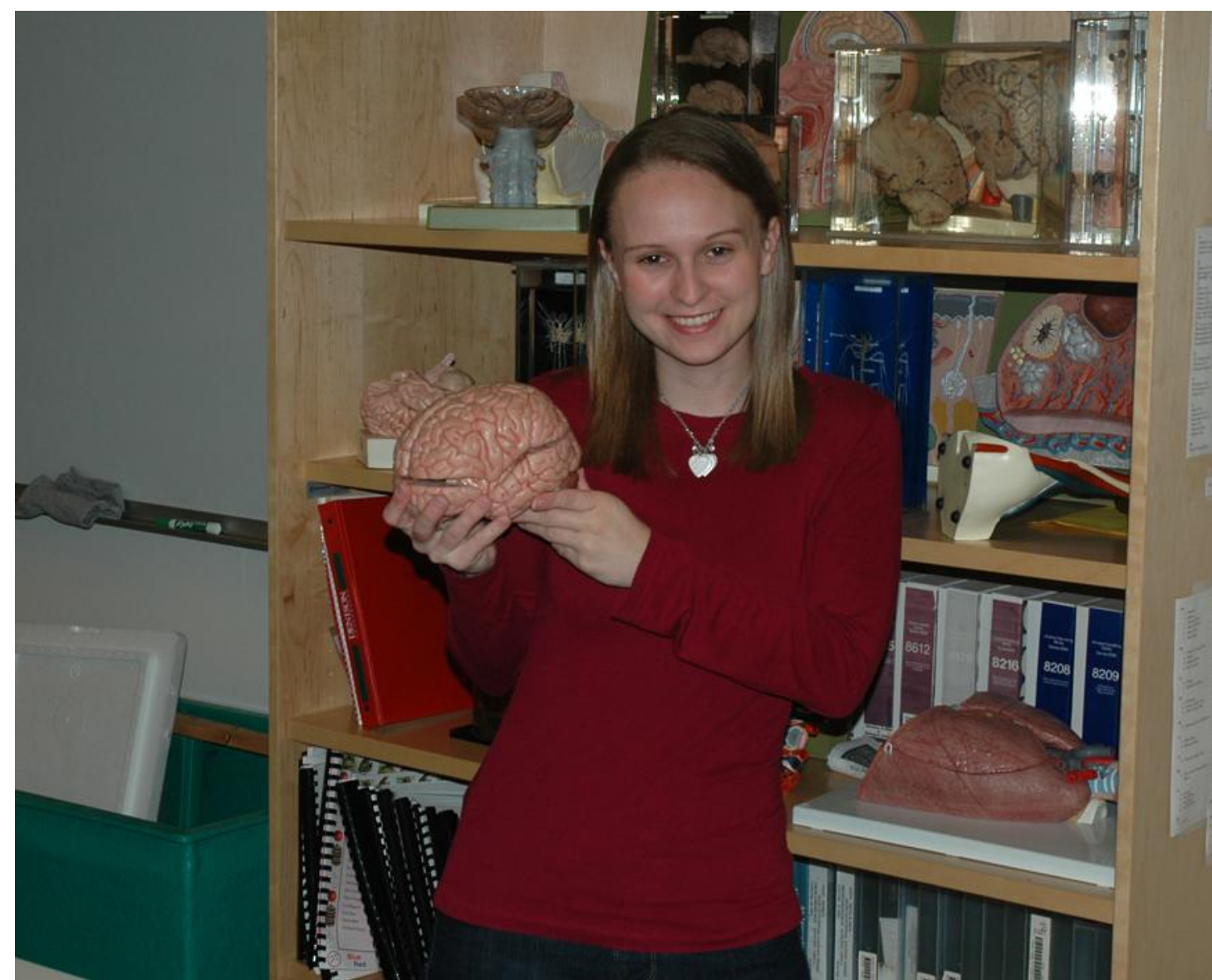


Senior Fellow Awards in the Department of Biology are based not only upon excellent academic performance and service to the department, but also the positive attitude and contributions brought to the classroom, research lab and the general environment of the major. The Biology Faculty view Senior Fellows as students who pursue biology for its own virtue and provide excellent role models for other students.



**Jenny Albertz**

There is not one particular aspect of biology that I love the most, or one specific event that caused me to fall in love with biology; I have been falling in love with it since grade school. I find it fascinating to discover how things work and why we and other organisms behave as we do. Having the opportunity to dissect brains, make cultures of different yeasts, observe and collect animals from nature in a class is amazing!

The fact that biology provides us with the ability to study nearly any process, behavior, system, organism, or mechanism that occurs in our environment is one of the reasons that it continues to entice me. Additionally, because the field of biology changes so often it is very exciting to read and discover new things that are being learned and published every day. I love being able to study the mechanisms that regulate my body and brain in one class, and then go to my next biology class to learn about animal courting rituals—how fun!

While at Denison, my interest in biology has flourished. I have been exposed to an enormous range of topics from immunology to genetics to neurology to ecology and animal behavior, as well as numerous others. I am especially thankful for all of the experiences and learning that I have achieved within the biology department, as well as very thankful to the faculty for their time and acumen. I will use the knowledge that I have gained, as well as the curiosity for questions that remain unanswered, to shape and motivate my future professional goals and biological ventures.



**Alyssa Rossodivita**

If you know me at all, you will not be surprised to hear that I actually remember the day in elementary school when I first learned about cells. My teacher drew a blob on the board, added a couple of colorful little circles and squiggles in the middle of the blob, and began to tell us the story of this tiny, cellular world to which I was oblivious, but by which I was quickly fascinated. It was after that day in Mrs. Karikas' fourth grade class that I went home and—enthusiastically—told my mom all about diatoms,

amoebas, cell membranes, and cell nuclei (I mean, who could resist?). I told her that these cells went around eating things, digesting, making energy, and...living! Just like us! And wait, Mom, the best part is: we are *made up* of these tiny cells!!! From there, it only became worse: every time I would see the word "cell," a little bubble of curiosity and excitement grew inside me that just got increasingly bigger as I figured out just how much there was to learn about these cells, how amazingly self-sufficient and complex they were, and their omnipresence in our lives. You can imagine my reactions freshman year as I browsed the biology textbooks in the Denison Bookstore and saw what I would be learning throughout my next four years. Now, here we are, and I still get that bubble of excitement, making my humbly aware of just how lucky I am to have been here, read these books, heard these lectures, done those labs (yes, even the labs...), and now to be working in Dr. Thompson's lab, growing and experimenting with DNA in my very own yeast cells. Through these last few years, I have made it my charge always to try my best to appreciate the amazing intricacy and simplicity of the living world, our bodies, and our DNA. This interest and admiration I have for the molecular world is still very much alive in me, and even with my plans to work in public health, I have a hunch (and a hope) that I will be seeing these things in some capacity of my career, someday. But, even still, I cannot see this bubble inside me ever being popped. Biology is just too cool.



**Chase Foy**

"Chase, are you feeling okay?" This was the response from my family members when I told them that I wanted to be a biology major in the pursuit of medical school. I remember their reaction perfectly, and I was somewhat offended. But they had a point...I was not the greatest high school student, and I definitely was not the person that you would want to trust your life with. I did not have anything close to straight A's, heck, I barely graduated in the top half of my class.

I was a lot more interested in my golf game than the text books. I think they saw me slacking off through business school to obtain a thrilling job working 40 hours a week in a cubicle.

Like a specified cell receiving its last signal to differentiate, a dormant neuron reaching its threshold voltage to create an action potential, or a group of microorganisms that achieve a high enough concentration to be able to create a biofilm...actually just go ahead and call me a late bloomer...that's sciency enough. My educational revelation did not come as a surprise to me, but I know I could not have done it at any other institution. I have had countless opportunities, from TAing and tutoring students, to microbiological research on a Cystic fibrosis lung cultivator; I cannot help but think that my educational experiences would have been dramatically different elsewhere.

The passion for science that the faculty and department demonstrate has rubbed off on me. In the last few years, learning for me has not been restricted to the classroom. I find myself thinking all the time about biological processes outside of class. I ask and develop questions for everything. I am proud to say that I think like a scientist. I know my profession that I choose I will daily use the lessons and knowledge I have learned from the biology department, and I know that my career will be exciting as I will practicing the science I have too become passionate about. I have been prepared to embark on a scientific journey with many more paths available to me than I could ever imagine. I greatly look forward to my life as a scientist.



**Nicole Yohn**

Biology always seemed like it was the fit for me. Or at least generally speaking, the sciences just seemed to always be my thing. Don't get me wrong, being a student at Denison and being good at science doesn't mean you can ace every class; instead these are the classes that I look forward to and appreciate the most. This is because what the biological sciences hold are more than just a resource of knowledge but also opportunity. Understanding the role of an amino acid

structure unlocks the key to a protein's folding structure that can then unlock the key to a debilitating disease such as muscular dystrophy. Inside each structure, molecule, cell, and organism I can see opportunity.

Within four years I've had the chance to capture and classify over one hundred species of insects, attempt to isolate the eve homoeobox gene from a green sea urchin, and try to determine the regulation pathway of carcinomic human bladder cells. What I have really appreciated at Denison was the chance to pursue a concentration in Neuroscience within Biology. This is because I love the brain. I love the way it looks, the way it works, the way it's studied, and especially the unanswered questions it evokes. The moment in which my love affair began with neuroscience can be pinpointed to the spring of my senior year in high school when I saw the documentary, "What the Bleep Do We Know?!" That documentary and the questions it poses about the universe, the metaphysical, quantum physics, and the brain keeps me still guessing, questioning, and wondering. From research experience both at Denison and in other environments I have honed in on my passion, which is developmental neurobiology. I want to know how the complex nervous system of an adult is organized from the embryonic stage – each step, protein, signal, mechanism, and detail that goes into it. I guess that's what keeps me interested...I've just got to know especially when I've got the opportunity to figure it out.