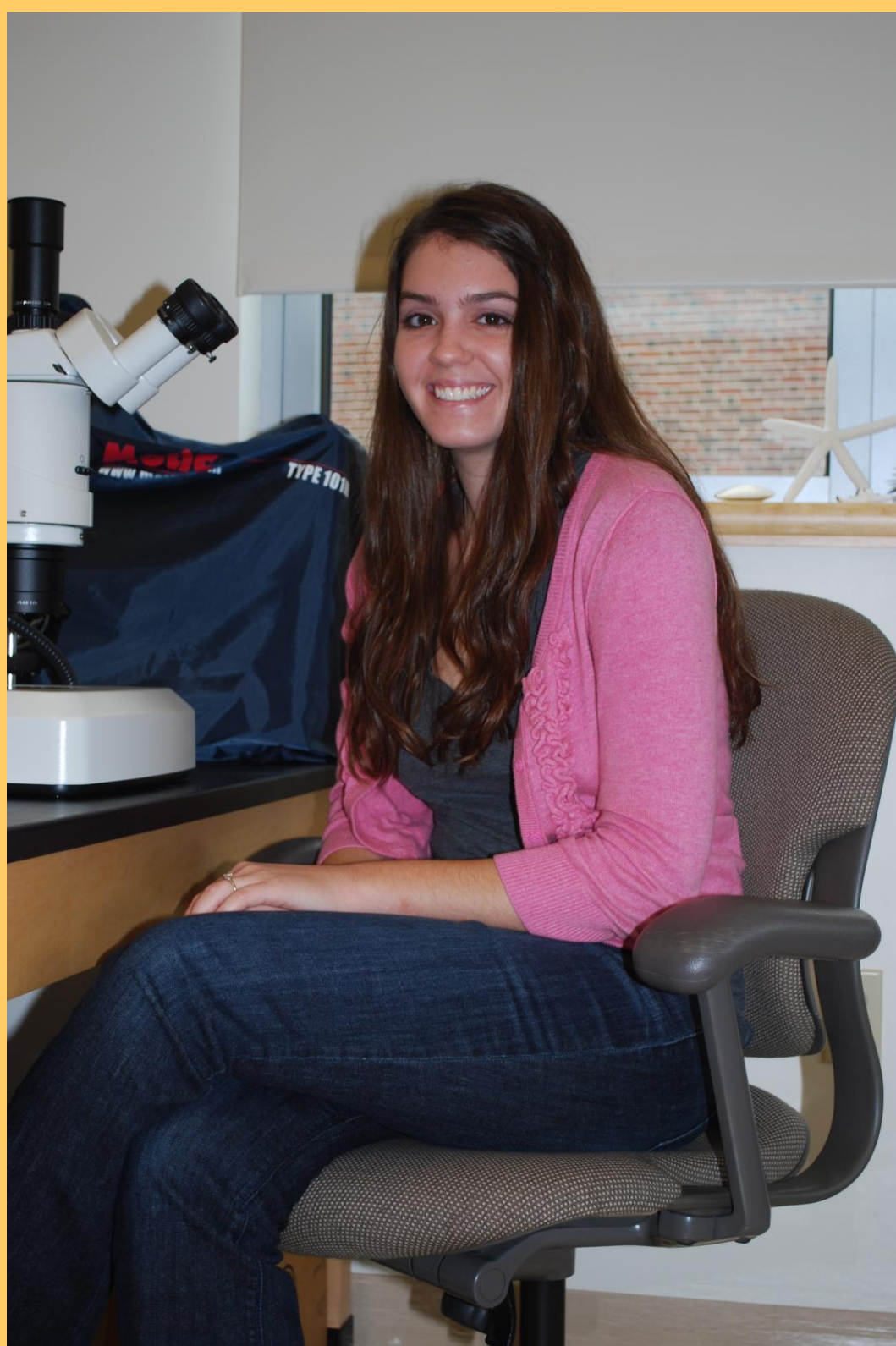


Senior Fellow Awards in the Department of Biology are based not only upon excellent academic performance and service to the department, but also the positive attitude and contributions brought to the classroom, research lab and the general environment of the major. The Biology Faculty view Senior Fellows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

## Emily Miller



I remember the day in 8<sup>th</sup> grade when I received a project to construct a cell from Jell-O, and I first learned about cells and the organelles they contain. As I later munched on my fruit roll up “golgi apparatus” and my gumdrop “centrosomes,” I was struck with the realization that every living organism is made up of those cells! Not only that, but every cell in my body contains microscopic structures like those organelles, all working together in perfect harmony to make me function. The thought of that beautifully complex, microscopic world blew my mind. It all seemed so magical, and my fascination with biology was officially sparked. I wanted to know more about how things work, from the smallest cells to the largest animals, and to continue learning more about the “magic” of life.

Denison has provided me with incredible opportunities for continuing and expanding this fascination. I have been able to experience a wide variety of subjects from herpetology and marine biology to genomics and genetics (which may have forever changed my perceptions of The Muppets and Dr. Seuss characters) that have broadened my interests and challenged me in new and exciting ways. Through these courses, I have gained an understanding of not only the microscopic cells that initially pulled me in, but also of the larger systems and organisms they comprise. My research experiences with sea urchin embryos sharpened my critical thinking skills, and further instilled in me a passion for discovering answers to the many exciting and unanswered questions that science presents to us. The more I learn and discover about the delicate yet simple intricacies of the biological world the more magical and fascinating it seems to me. I am excited to carry the passion and knowledge I have gained here into my future work as a veterinarian.

## Rachel Stevenson



Biology is not just an academic subject; it's a way of looking at the world. It has influenced the way I interpret what's around me and how I approach learning opportunities since I was in grade school. When I was 16, my biology background affected the lessons I took away from an Introduction to Psychology class and channeled my career interests into the field of neuroscience. When I was 17, this frame of reference led me to take on my first self-directed research project in a university lab, which directed my interests toward a concrete goal—to become a researcher and professor. Thinking biologically has never been something I could turn on and off. It was, and continues to be, a part of who I am.

When I enrolled at Denison, I found I wasn't alone in living and breathing biology. I found that Denison's liberal arts focus cultivates interdisciplinary thinking among all its students, and that biology majors are encouraged to bring their life-sciences worldview to the table even in non-science classes. Within the biology curriculum, we are asked to use our biological thinking to grapple with real-world issues and critically examine controversial topics like animal research, global warming, and gene therapy. In my time here, I've grown in my ability to think biologically. I've been supported in three summers of biology research, I've been offered intellectually engaging coursework and, most significantly, I've been provided with a network of critically thinking peers and mentors with whom to discuss ideas, try out skills and define my goals. Denison has not only sharpened the focus of the biological lens through which I view the world, it's also broadened my horizons. I'm excited to see where my biology degree will take me after graduation.

## Hallie Singer



I have always had a passion for learning and it was during a summer camp in fourth grade when I first fell in love with science. I remember the teacher mixing different chemicals together and staring at them as they changed colors or overflowed from their container and it was this experience that made me want to learn how things worked and why they behaved the way they did. When I first learned about biology, it was no different. I was immediately hooked and it has fascinated me ever since. The simple fact is that biology is relevant to everything, from microorganisms invisible to the naked eye to large, complex animals. What fuels my passion for biology is that although there is an incredible complexity to living cells and the tissues and organs they make up, for the most part, everything works harmoniously together each and every day. That is pretty impressive when you know the slightest little change can cause so much to go wrong!

My passion for biology has only grown since I have been at Denison. I have had multiple opportunities from TAing and tutoring other students to conducting summer research on V-ATPases and endangered iguanas. Furthermore, Denison has provided such a wide variety of classes from molecular biology and microbiology to evolution and ecology, which have provided me with a strong foundation for vet school. However, the learning I have gained at Denison was more than just in the classroom. The faculty of the biology department is also extremely passionate and is willing to make sure you know the material and answer any questions you may have. Some of my favorite memories are talking about biology with some of my professors just for fun! I am eager to continue studying biology and look forward to a career that embraces my passion for both learning and science.

## Jessica Wilson



I do not know when I first fell in love with Biology. Was it when my 5 year old self first learned about the wonders of our immune system from the red-haired Ms. Frizzle and the Magic School bus crew? Or was it when in third grade I looked through my first microscope at skin cells in all their beauty? Or was it when I was in fifth grade and learned about how all the information that made me was contained in the unimaginably tiny form of DNA? I cannot say if it was anyone of these moments or a gradual discovery of the wonders of the biological world. What I can say is that by the time I entered high school, I knew I would never learn enough about the world around me, always yearning to know more about the unseen microscopic world that affects every moment of my life and allows me to live.

At Denison, I have been able to truly embrace this desire and explore my curiosity. Professors not only encouraged my questions but also pushed me to never be satisfied with a simple answer because there is always more going on that can be explored. Only in this major have I gone from learning about the nesting habits of birds to dissecting a vast array of unique and beautiful flowers to creating histone mutations to studying HIV infectivity. As a curious first-year, I was able to embark on a directed study research experience which allowed me to truly practice the techniques and thinking processes I was taught in class. As a now-experienced sophomore, I assisted in passing on these experiences by TAing. As a junior, I was encouraged to develop my own lab experiments and now, as a senior, I have been allowed to truly embark on a research journey with all its success and failures waiting to undergo troubleshooting.

Truly, the plethora of lessons, skills and opportunities I have had within the Biology major has quenched my constant craving for biological knowledge and experiences. It has also allowed me to better appreciate the vast and lovely picture of the world around me, from the tiniest bacteriophage to the complexities of the human body to immense flow of genetic information from the primordial ancestors to the seemingly immeasurable number of species walking the earth now. I know that all of this will continue on with me after I move on to medical school. I will confront the rest of my life with the same curiosity I walked into Denison with, nurtured and honed by my four years here. I can only hope that I will be met with just as much support and opportunities as I received here.