

## 2020-21 Presidential Scholars

Emma Barrett  
Margaret Deahn  
David Cameron Keeley

Emma Mandella  
Meenu Mundackal  
Drew O'Neil

Katherine Peter  
Sophia Piazza  
Noelle Staso

Jillian Todd  
Gavin Vaughan  
Laura Williams

**Emma Barrett** is a geography major with a minor in urban studies. She has presented her scholarly research at the 2019 GIS/SIG Conference, the COPLAC Northeast Regional Undergraduate Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity Conference, and GREAT Day 2019. She is a member of Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society and Gamma Theta Upsilon International Geography Honor Society. On campus, Emma serves on the executive board of Voices for Planned Parenthood and Geography/GIS Club. She has worked as a teaching assistant in the Geography Department since sophomore year, and last summer she interned at the Orange County Planning Department. In her free time, Emma enjoys hiking, reading, and riding her bike. After graduation, Emma hopes to attend graduate school to pursue a master's degree in geography.

**Margaret Deahn** is a geological sciences major with a double minor in mathematics and geography. Last summer she was awarded a Research Experience for Undergraduates at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, where she used a drone to monitor marsh restoration progress. She recently completed a directed study under Dr. Nicholas Warner where she created a geologic map of the InSight landing area on Mars, which earned her co-authorship on Dr. Warner's most recent publication in the *Journal of Geophysical Research Planets*, and a (remote) summer internship for NASA at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory studying Mars. On campus, she is the newly-elected president of Geology Club, and co-leader of Sigma Gamma Epsilon Geology Honor Society. She is also a teaching assistant for the geology department, has earned the Geneseo Geology Alumni Award, GEO-Scholar Program scholarship, and is a member of Gamma Theta Upsilon Geography Honor Society, Golden Key International Honor Society and Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society. In her free time she volunteers for the Humanitarian Open Street Map organization, and she loves playing cello with the Geneseo String Band.

**David Cameron Keeley** is a Biochemistry major preparing for a career in medicine. He had previously done undergraduate research in Dr. Robert Torregrossa's lab, before he departed from Geneseo, on novel methods in organic catalysis. He currently researches with Dr. Eric Helms doing Green Chemistry. Cameron is an active member of Geneseo's Supplemental Instruction Program (SI), serving as the Organic Chemistry SI for three semesters and one semester of General Chemistry. Additionally, he is a tutor for summer Organic Chemistry students at Geneseo and volunteers at the Geneseo Parish Outreach Center Clinic. Cameron also gives suicide awareness/mental health talks at high schools in Rochester and is involved in Stop the Stigma Rochester. This organization promotes suicide prevention and seeks to raise mental health awareness.

**Emma Mandella** is an English literature and Philosophy major and concentrates on Black studies in particular. Outside of class, she tries to stay involved with local politics, often working with political clubs on campus. Most of all, she works with the campus radio station, 89.3 WGSU, as the head studio engineer and a freelance correspondent (sometimes, even as the mascot). She primarily focuses on tech work, but also loves interviews with students and faculty! She truly values staying connected with the Geneseo community on and off campus, and looks forward to working with other Scholars to do so.

**Meenu Mundackal** is a biology major with a human development minor. Over the past year, she participated in virtual GREAT Day, working with the Biomathematics Innovation Group (BIG) under Dr. Gregg Hartvigsen and Dr. Christopher Leary, where she constructed a differential equations model and a realistically structured model to study the effectiveness of the MMR vaccination within Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods. As an EMT-B, she serves as a member of Geneseo's First Response agency to respond to all medical emergencies on campus. She is also Vice President of Programming for Phi Delta Epsilon, the pre-med fraternity, to help fundraise for Golisano Children's Hospital. Additionally, she is involved in the cultural organizations on campus. She has been one of the captains for Gajjda Bhangra, a competitive Indian dance team, since Spring 2019. She was also head choreographer for Shakti, the South Asian student association, her sophomore year and then held a position as co-president for her junior year. Lastly, she is a member of Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society.

**Drew O'Neil** is a sociomedical sciences major with minors in environmental studies and public administration. She serves as the President of Geneseo's Partners in Health Engage. Drew is also a member of Geneseo Healthguards and Sigma Delta Tau, national service and social sorority, where she serves as the Health and Wellness Advocate Chair; a position she established for her chapter. At GREAT Day 2019, Drew presented an independent research project investigating the presence of waterborne diseases before and after the introduction of a safe public water system in Rochester during the 19th century. Drew is interested in global health, environmental health, and public health policy. Currently, Drew is working as a Research Assistant on a study that is examining the mental health impact of COVID-19 on providers who are on the front lines of the pandemic. This fall, she will be the teaching assistant for a women's health class and completing her senior capstone. After graduation, Drew hopes to attend graduate school and earn a Master's in Public Health.

**Katherine Peter** is a dual major in American Studies and History with minors in Political Science and the Edgar Fellows program. On campus, she is president of the advocacy group Voices for Planned Parenthood and the Memories Campaign, which preserves oral histories from the Geneseo community. She also works as a tutor in the Writing Learning Center and as a teaching assistant in the History Department. Katherine is a member of Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society and Phi Beta Kappa. She has received awards including the James K. Sommerville History Sophomore Endowed Scholarship, and this past spring her paper about the musical *1776* won a prize from Phi Alpha Theta's Central/Western New York Conference. She has also presented research at the past three GREAT Days. In her senior year, Katherine will be completing her honors capstone project about the history of blizzards in Buffalo.

**Sophia Piazza** is a communication major with a personal and professional concentration, and has a secondary major in French and a minor in mathematics. On campus, Sophia is a member of Phi Lambda Chi, along with the French National Honor Society, Pi Delta Phi. She has focused heavily on the importance of intercultural communication, cultural intelligence, and inclusivity. She has had the opportunity to share and teach these concepts as a Teaching Assistant under Dr. Emi Kanemoto, along with her knowledge of the French language as a Teaching Assistant for Dr. Elizabeth McManus. She recently travelled to Senegal in West Africa as a Student Ambassador with the Gérard Gouvernet Ambassadorship for French Languages and Cultures. Her research was focused on Senegalese nonverbal communication patterns and how they benefit or hinder effective cross-cultural communication. After such a rewarding experience, Sophia is planning to pursue her master's degree abroad in West Africa and teach English, while continuing to follow her passion for intercultural studies.

**Noelle Staso** is a mathematics major with a biology minor. She is a member of the Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society, as well as the Tri-Beta Biological Honor Society. During her sophomore and junior years, she conducted ecology research studying the reassociation of non-native plant species under Dr. Suann Yang, and presented at GREAT Day during her sophomore year. She also studied abroad in Prague, Czech Republic, for four weeks during the summer of 2019. Outside of the classroom, Noelle is a member of the women's varsity swim team, and competes in the breaststroke and sprint freestyle events. She has qualified for the NCAA Championships three times, has earned All-America Honors three times, and was named a SUNYAC Winter Scholar Athlete of the Year for the 2019-2020 season. She is the SUNYAC record holder in one individual event and two relays, and overall has been a part of the winning conference championship team for the past three years.

**Jillian Todd** is a Women's & Gender Studies major and Native American Studies minor. In the spring of 2019 she was awarded the Frank Vafier Student Ambassadorship in Leadership and traveled to Iceland the following January to conduct independent research on gender in early education. Jillian was excited to return to Iceland for her Ambassadorship after she participated in a study abroad trip there for the summer of 2018. She also spent the fall semester of her junior year abroad at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. Outside academics, she is an intern in the Geneseo Study Abroad Office, a member of the Geneseo First Response Team, and a co-president of the college's Green Environmental Organization. Jillian enjoys exploring her passion for performing arts as a dancer in the Geneseo Dance Ensemble. After graduation, Jillian hopes to become a Fulbright scholar and return to the United States to earn her PhD and eventually work as a professor.

**Gavin Vaughan** is a Psychology major with a minor in Cognitive Science. He conducts research in Behavioral Neuroscience under Professor of Psychology & Neuroscience Allison Bechard. His research interests are early trauma and drug addiction using a mouse model. On top of conducting research throughout the academic year, he has received both an Undergraduate Summer Fellowship and a Kyrwood Fellowship to fund his research full-time during the summer. He has also served as a teaching assistant for both Introductory Psychology under Professor of Psychology Steven Kirsh as well as Behavioral Statistics under Professor of

Psychology Claire Gravelin. He is a member of the Psi-Chi and Golden Key academic honor societies. Outside of the classroom, Gavin is an active member of both College Republicans, where he has served as treasurer for two years, and College Democrats. After graduation, he plans to continue his research and pursue a Ph.D. in Behavioral Neuroscience.

**Laura Williams** is a Biochemistry major with minors in Spanish and the Edgar Fellows Program. She is avidly involved on campus; she acts as the secretary of Programming Club and as a Crew Chief for SUNY Geneseo First Response. She enjoys working as a Teaching Assistant for students in General Chemistry Laboratory and is passionately involved in conducting research on *T. brucei* under guidance of Dr. Militello. In her free time, Laura enjoys volunteering at the ambulance agency in her hometown of Honeoye Falls, as well as at Livonia EMS. She is passionate about science, the study of language, and making a positive impact on campus. After Geneseo, Laura aspires to earn her MD/PhD and work as a medical scientist and physician at a research hospital.