



AX members
Kaylee Vitale (L)
Audrey Sparks (R)

Waldorf students receive local grants for research

FOREST CITY, IOWA | Two Alpha Chi Grants for Undergraduate Research grants were awarded to Waldorf College students to assist them in academic research and professional growth.

Kaylee Vitale, of Las Vegas, NV, and Karissa Vilks, of Maplewood, Minn., received the grant to help fund their project “Identifying Possible Iron-Dependent Enzymes that Positively Regulate Canonical Wnt Signaling,” and Audrey Sparks, of Mason City, Iowa, was awarded the grant to fund her attendance at the Associated Collegiate Press Convention in Minneapolis this February.

Students can apply for the Alpha Chi Grants for Undergraduate Research each fall by submitting a grant proposal to the Waldorf College Alpha Chi chapter executive officers, who then select two entrants to award the \$500 grant. “This is a great experience for students, especially those in the sciences and other fields where they are likely to need grant-writing skills for their future careers,” Dr. Suzanne Falck-Yi, Waldorf College Alpha Chi faculty sponsor, said.

Vitale and Vilks will utilize this opportunity to continue and develop further their educational research in a higher level of biology experimental work over a longer period of time than they might have during a single-semester class. Sparks hopes to return from the Associate Collegiate Press Convention with insights about online journalism, design and other aspects that will be helpful to the Communications department and The Lobbyist, the campus newspaper.

Students work with mentors and advisors while planning their research projects and formulating grant proposals. Vitale and Vilks are working with Waldorf College assistant professor of biology, Dr. Gary Coombs. Sparks utilized the direction of Waldorf College professor of Communications, David Damm.

It is not common to have a group of students apply for the grant together. “It’s exciting to have a pair of students working on a biology project this year,” Falck-Yi said. “Since lab projects are quite often done by groups of researchers rather than a single individual, the process of working together on a proposal and on the experiment is good preparation for the students’ future careers in biology.”

Grant winners can use these funds on a project that takes place through the end of the following summer.

About Waldorf College

Located in Forest City, Iowa, Waldorf is a four-year, residential, liberal arts college that has been educating students for over a century. Waldorf delivers engaging experiences through innovative classroom instruction and offers bachelor degree programs in business, communications, psychology, education, fire science administration, criminal justice administration and more. Courses are offered at the Forest City, Iowa, campus and online.