



The Royal Society of Western Australia

RSWA Awards

Student Medallists 2015 (presented 2017)

The Royal Society of Western Australia Student Medal is awarded annually to graduating science students with an outstanding academic record from the universities in Western Australia. The students are nominated by their institutions.

The 2015 RSWA Student Medallists were awarded by RSWA President Associate Professor Kate Trinajstic at the RSWA Annual General Meeting at the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority Administration Building, Kings Park, Perth, on 17 August 2017.

Congratulations to the Medallists as follows:-

Mr Asif Lewis Howard - Curtin University

Ms Shannon Roberts - Edith Cowan University

Mr Geoffrey Zhang - Murdoch University

Ms Sophie Locke - The University of Notre Dame Australia

Mr Callum McElhinney - The University of Western Australia

Further information on the Medallists, in their own words, is on the following pages.



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Mr Asif Lewis Howard - Curtin University

I started my physics degree in 2012 - unsure of my final direction after completing university. However, like many students studying Physics, the allure of gaining a greater insight into the workings of nature led me to decide on a Physics PhD after my undergraduate and Honours year. Hence presently, I am living in Brisbane, completing a PhD in a quantum optics group led by Andrew White.

In reaching this point, I would like to thank all the staff from Curtin who supported and guided me during my studies there, and give particular thanks to Professor Igor Bray and Associate Professor Alisher Kadyrov. I would also like to thank Professor Jingbo Wang from UWA who supervised me during my Honours year and provided many hours of help discussing and teaching me the principles of Quantum Computation. I hope my future research can repay the time they have all put into my education.

Besides Physics I enjoy going to the gym, learning languages, reading fantasy and science fiction and spending time with my wife.





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Ms Shannon Roberts - Edith Cowan University

The biological science degree at ECU offered a wide variety of units from plants, animals, genetics, evolution, ecology and molecular biology and this is the main reason I chose to study this degree. I found the units engaging, challenging and fascinating. The teaching staff were particularly helpful and encouraging. A highlight of the course was the international study trip to Thailand. A few achievements along the way to keep up motivation included making the Dean's list and being in the top 100 students at ECU.

In addition to the degree, I enjoyed being involved in some community programs run by the university such as the peer mentoring and peer tutoring at a local high school.

I am currently a domestic manager (aka stay at home mum) and enjoying being able to spend this time with my children. I am looking forward to returning to work and study when they are in school. I would also like to complete a Master's degree, followed by a PhD in the future. I was hoping that a particular topic or area in the undergraduate degree would stand out as an avenue to pursue, alas I found almost all of them interesting! Therefore I will wait to see what opportunities are available when I head back into the world of science.





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Mr Geoffrey Zhang - Murdoch University

My undergraduate study experience at Murdoch University has truly exceeded my original expectations. My major was Biomedical Science with Applied Statistics and Molecular Biology as minors. With English as my second language, and having left school for a number of years, the course work of tertiary education was quite challenging for me at the beginning. I can still vividly remember myself agonising for hours on my first writing assignment, and the terrifying moment of my first in-class presentation. In hindsight, those seemingly laborious occasions in my academic life have served me well. Because they have offered me golden opportunities to develop some necessary skills such as research, academic writing, teamwork and public speaking.

As I became better at what I was doing, I was rewarded handsomely. Not only did I manage to achieve high distinction in all of the study units, I also became the lucky recipient of a number of awards including the Vice Chancellor's Commendation for Academic Excellence in 2010 and 2015, the award in Biomedical Science for achieving the highest average mark in the part 2 units of the major, and one of the ten 2015 University Medals. On top of that, I have also delivered a student address during the Vice Chancellor's Commendation ceremony in 2016 and the valedictory address during my graduation.

I am currently studying Medicine at the University of Western Australia. It has been indeed demanding but very interesting. The skills and experience I have accumulated are continuing to serve me well and I am enjoying every minute of my postgraduate study. I know from the bottom of my heart that I have found what I want to do in life. In the not too distant future, I would like to serve the community in a very caring profession.





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Ms Sophie Locke - The University of Notre Dame Australia

Sophie graduated from Notre Dame in December 2015 with a Bachelor of Science, majoring in Environmental Science and Biology. During her degree Sophie achieved 3 high distinction and 14 distinction grades. Sophie was a passionate, dedicated and driven undergraduate student with a love of the natural environment. She took up many opportunities to expand her experience and add to her skills.

During her degree she worked in the Office of the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and the CBH Group, Australia's largest exporter of grain, to mention a few. Her experience with both organisations gave Sophie insight into the reality of how difficult working as an environmental scientist can be and how fulfilling and rewarding work in the field is.

To complete her degree Sophie undertook a supervised project investigating the commercial and environmental viability of the future of an agricultural development in Western Australia. This research was based on a real case study which she had been involved in during her internship and work experience.

Since graduating Sophie has moved to London where she worked as a sustainability coordinator for a tech start-up, focussed on material science and corporate sustainability strategies. She has recently commenced her MSc in Climate Change: Environment Science and Policy at Kings College London. Sophie is very interested in coral reef systems, fisheries and climate change in developing, low-lying island communities, and as such is moving towards a thesis topic in one of these areas. She has just applied for two internships with a consultancy group, Waterman IE, and a research and policy organisation, the International Institute for Environment and Development.





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Mr Callum McElhinney - The University of Western Australia

Callum studied a double degree in Science and Commerce at UWA, completing with First Class Geology Honours in 2015.

His Honours and Awards have included:-

- Apache Energy (now Quadrant Energy) Scholarship
- Convocation, UWA Graduates Association Prize for Achievement
- Davis AIG Honours Bursary
- Edward Sydney Simpson Prize & Rex T Prider Medal for First class honours student in Geology who achieved the highest thesis mark
- PESA Scholarship
- Rio Tinto Scholarship in Geoscience
- Study Abroad Scholarship
- Talbot Medal for Best B.Sc Honours or Masters thesis at UWA, as determined by an independent industry voting panel
- Westernex Prize in Field Geology for student with the highest mark in Field Geology

Since graduating Callum has worked in the petroleum industry, travelled South America, and most recently commenced work in the finance industry, focusing on the global Resource sector.

