



THE GATTON
ACADEMY 
of Mathematics and Science



**2021 WKU Sisterhood Research Internship Grant:
*Providing Opportunities to Tomorrow's Women in Science***

**“What you do makes a difference, and you have to
decide what kind of difference you want to make.”**

— Jane Goodall





Women of the WKU Sisterhood,

Over summers 2017, 2018, and 2019, five young women's lives were changed because of your gift. Through this booklet, these young women's successes and achievements are profiled. We are proud of their stories, and we know you will be too.



The WKU Sisterhood Research Internship Grant (awarded in October 2016) has provided full-summer, immersive internships for young

women from underserved populations at The Gatton Academy. As our summer 2020 program was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are now gearing up for summer 2021 to be our final summer of grant distribution.

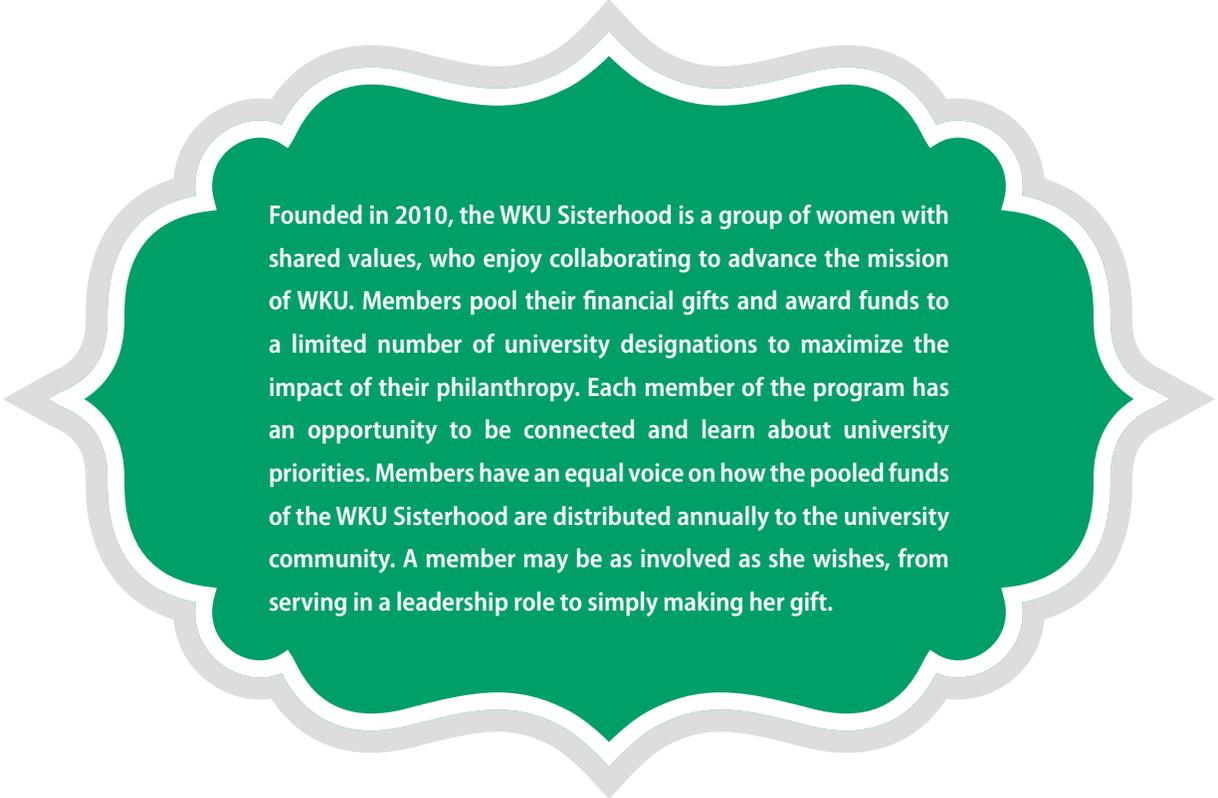
Featured here are our three most recent recipients. They are super stars! Resulting from their WKU Sisterhood Research Internship Grant, these students presented at national conferences. Camila Lozano was accepted to the Experimental Biology meeting; meanwhile, Jocelyn Martin was accepted to share her results

at the Cognitive Aging Conference. Amazingly, they were 17 years old when they submitted their research to be presented alongside professional peers from around the nation.

Recipients from previous years are standouts too. Lea Mitchell stayed on as a Hilltopper, is now a WKU junior double-majoring in Environmental Science and Emergency Management Disaster Science, and of course continues research still. Wendy Cecil graduated The Gatton Academy, chose to be a Hilltopper too, and is now a WKU senior double-majoring in Molecular Biotechnology and Biochemistry. Naturally, she's accelerated her work as a researcher since her Sisterhood internship. Meanwhile, Meghan Perez now attends the Ivy-league University of Pennsylvania, studying biology with a minor in Hispanic studies. She also works in a lab studying Merkel cell polyomavirus (linked to Merkel cell carcinoma, a type of skin cancer) and plans to attend med school.

Your gift is creating these opportunities. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Cheryl Kirby-Stokes
Derick B. Strode, Ed.D.



Founded in 2010, the WKU Sisterhood is a group of women with shared values, who enjoy collaborating to advance the mission of WKU. Members pool their financial gifts and award funds to a limited number of university designations to maximize the impact of their philanthropy. Each member of the program has an opportunity to be connected and learn about university priorities. Members have an equal voice on how the pooled funds of the WKU Sisterhood are distributed annually to the university community. A member may be as involved as she wishes, from serving in a leadership role to simply making her gift.

A young woman with long dark hair, wearing glasses and a white t-shirt with colorful horizontal stripes, stands in a laboratory. She is smiling and holding a white tray filled with small, clear bottles with yellow caps. The tray is positioned in front of a whiteboard. To her left, a laboratory refrigerator is open, revealing shelves with more bottles and a blue container. The background shows laboratory shelves with various items. A green vertical bar is on the right side of the image.

Camila

Lozano

Dear WKU Sisterhood,

I was initially interested in The Gatton Academy because I felt like it was a place where I would be challenged academically and be allowed to explore my interests. Both of these have definitely proven to be true. I am challenged every day in so many ways, and, throughout my Gatton Academy experience, I have found what truly interests me. I am now certain I want to pursue a career in biology and/or engineering.

Furthermore, the ability to get involved in research at The Gatton Academy has provided a way for me to take part in a project that stems from my interests. This summer I participated in research that studied the mis-expression of a gene present in the wing imaginal disks of fruit flies, all of which is tied to learning how the protein encoded by this gene contributes to the growth and movement of cancer cells. I would never have imagined that I would be taking part in something like cancer-related research as a high school student. I am especially grateful and want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to do research over the summer. I will definitely be making the most out of my experience!

Thanks again,
Camila Lozano

“I realized STEM was my passion when I was about 12 years old. In science class we were learning about basic circuits, and I just loved learning about how they worked and building the circuits themselves.”

“This research experience fits into my educational and professional goals because I will be conducting research in the biology field, and biology is one of my biggest academic interests. More specifically, I will be doing research that involves genetics which, in the future, is what I hope to be able to work on through a career in biomedical engineering.”

“The biggest change that I have experienced in my first year at The Gattton Academy has been having to live away from home. This experience has definitely helped me become a more independent and responsible person.”



CAMILA LOZANO

HOME HIGH SCHOOL

Thomas Nelson High School

RESEARCH AREA

Biology

CAREER GOAL

Biomedical Engineer

RESEARCH MENTOR

Dr. Ajay Srivastava,
WKU Department of Biology

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Gatton Academy Leaders in Education

Friendly
politeness
excellence

dreadful
enjoyment
guilty
disappoint

soothe
ashamed
pain

Sadness
worried

enjoyment



Jocelyn

Martin

Dear WKU Sisterhood,

I am an African-American girl from Eastern Kentucky, which is an oddity in itself, but on top of that, I was kind of nerdy. It was very hard to be who I wanted to be in a predominantly Caucasian neighborhood, because the other kids expected me to be the stereotypical black girl. I had such a passion to learn, but no one around me would let me express that side of myself. The outside pressure put me into a very tight box, and I did not know how to get out of it.

Luckily, the summer of my freshman year, during VAMPY (a three-week summer camp held on WKU's campus), we had an information session about Gatton. I learned about the rigorous curriculum and the welcoming social setting and knew that it was my ticket out. As soon as I got home from the camp, I raved about it to my mom and started the journey that would lead me to this wonderful academy.

The plethora of opportunities at the Academy allowed me to discover my interest in neuropsychology, a subject area I plan to study further in college. I was also able to participate in the WKU Sisterhood Research Internship Grant, where I studied developmental changes in emotional processing. My mentor, Dr. Mienaltowski, was amazing and taught me so much about the field I now love so dearly.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to continue my research into the summer. It means the world to know that someone believes in my talent and intelligence so much that they give me the money and means to accomplish some really great things. This was an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and I am so glad I got to experience it. Thank you so very much.

Sincerely,
Jocelyn Martin

“I realized STEM was my passion when my friends first told me to stop psychoanalyzing them.”

“This internship fits into my professional goals by showing me how proper psychology research is done and allowing me to be a part of that. I am most looking forward to getting closer to my peers and getting the work experience necessary to gauge whether this specific path is the right fit for me.”

“As a young person in STEM, research to me means a potential foot in the door in a field that I am strongly interested in.”



JOCELYN MARTIN

HOME HIGH SCHOOL

Russell High School

RESEARCH AREA

Psychological Sciences

CAREER GOAL

Biopsychology

RESEARCH MENTOR

Dr. Andrew Mienaltowski,
WKU Department of Psychological Sciences

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Beta Club, Academic Team, Science
Olympiad, Orchestra, and Cheerleading



Lea

Mitchell

Dear WKU Sisterhood,

This summer I have been researching water quality in Bowling Green. Throughout my project there have been many obstacles and issues to overcome. Deciding on a research project was actually quite difficult when so many ideas were possible. After deciding the path I would take, adventures from kayaking to volunteering took place. I battled mosquitoes, got eaten alive by chiggers, and had a couple near death experiences, but I finished every day with a smile. The research I am doing has been full of challenges, but it has given me goals for myself and my future. I never would have had these goals if it were not for The Gatton Academy, STEM+, and the WKU Sisterhood Research Internship Grant.

The Gatton Academy has given me the chance to figure out who I am. Through STEM+ I am learning Chinese with the Department of Modern Languages, and the summer research internship grant has allowed me to cement my love for geochemistry and hydrogeology. I now know that I would like to continue my ecology research through the rest of my time at WKU, and I hope to do something similar later in life. When I am finished with my education, I hope to conduct research on water quality in China, as well as other places.

Thanks to you, the opportunity I had this summer has shown me what I really enjoy and the future I would like to have. I sincerely thank you for the chance you gave me this summer and the difference you have made in my life. I was able to both grow as a person and a scientist due to your generosity.

Thank you,
Lea Mitchell

“My research fits into my educational and professional goals because it is helping me decide what my goals are. Creating my research proposal gave me an idea of what I want to do in the future.”

“My favorite memory while attending The Gatton Academy was my trip to China. I am a STEM+ Chinese student and being able to experience the culture was extraordinary. I was able to improve my Chinese speaking and make unforgettable memories.”

“On my first day at Gatton, I felt nervous and excited. At the time, I didn’t know what I was going to be able to do or achieve. From the second day onward, I have been thankful and excited. My journey has been lots of fun, and I can’t wait to see what else is going to happen.”



LEA MITCHELL

HOME HIGH SCHOOL

Conner High School

RESEARCH AREA

Environmental Science

CAREER GOAL

Most likely in a lab or fieldwork
on water quality

RESEARCH MENTOR

Dr. Jason Polk,
WKU Department of Geography and Geology

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Gay-Straight Alliance, Gatton Academy
Leaders in Education, Envirothon, Girl Scouts,
4H, and WKU Queer Student Union

“Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood.”

— Marie Curie



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