



SIU School of Dental Medicine Recognizes Scholarship Recipients

by Kalli Collins
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EDWARDSVILLE – The Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine (SIU SDM) has announced the recipients of its annual Dean’s Scholarship, Dr. Larry A. Lowe Memorial Scholarship and its inaugural International Advanced Placement Program (IAPP) Scholarship Awards.

The IAPP Scholarship Award recognizes an outstanding student who has excelled throughout the first year of the program and has overcome significant challenges on their personal journey toward earning a Doctor of Dental Medicine. Salam Rajih of Damascus, Syria, is the first ever recipient of the award.

“We are very pleased to be able to start a new tradition this year by [awarding](#) the IAPP Scholarship Award,” said Dr. Saulius Drukteinis, dean of the SIU SDM. “Our IAPP students often overcome considerable hardships to be able to attend our program, and this award will certainly be beneficial. “

"As a foreign graduate and mother of two, I have faced numerous challenges in my journey through dental school, so knowing that my hard work is recognized has been very humbling,” said Rajih. “Attending SIU SDM has been a dream come true for me. SIU SDM is the combination of excellent clinical experience and the strong sense of community within our small-sized school. The hands-on training we receive as students is exceptional, preparing us for real-world practice.”

The Dean’s Scholarship was created to reward academic merit, assist with financial aid, and increase student diversity within the SIU SDM. This year’s Dean’s Scholarship recipients are Abby Pohlman, Julissa Quinonez, Stacey Robinson, Kaitlyn [Stanton](#) and Hannah Watson. Each has been awarded \$10,000 for the 2023-24 academic year.

“As a wife and mother of two young daughters, this scholarship eases some of the financial burden that dental school tuition puts on my family,” said Robinson in reaction to receiving the Dean’s Scholarship. “Being recognized for my accomplishments, despite the unconventional path I took to get here, gives me motivation to pursue other seemingly unattainable goals in life.”

The recipients of this year’s Dr. Larry A. Lowe Memorial Scholarship are Anna Chambers, Cole Duncan and Donald Thompson. Each recipient has been awarded \$2,500 for the 2023-24 academic year. The annual scholarship was established by Sherry Baker in memory of her late husband, an SIU SDM Class of 1977 [alumnus](#).

“Being selected out of such an outstanding group of students is an amazing feeling,” said Duncan. “The number of opportunities I have been provided with have allowed me to see into the procedures of so many specialties. I truly feel like SIU SDM doesn’t train

you to be a general dentist but more of a super general dentist with how much exposure we get to various fields.”

“Of course, it is an honor to be able to recognize all of these deserving dental students who have already achieved so much and will soon be outstanding dentists in the communities they serve,” Drukteinis added. “I am so grateful that to the alumni, faculty and friends of the School who have given generously through the years to make these scholarship awards possible.”

SIU School of Dental Medicine students manage approximately 35,000 patient visits each year at patient clinics in Alton and East St. Louis. In addition, students offer oral health treatment, [screenings](#) and education to more than [10,000 people](#) annually through a wide variety of off-campus community outreach events. These opportunities provide [students](#) the training they need to graduate and become highly skilled dentists. The School of Dental Medicine is a vital oral health care provider for residents of southern and central Illinois, and the St. Louis metropolitan region.