

2016 Gladys Anderson Emerson Scholarship

**Megan Wancura
Smith College**



Megan Wancura has embraced a variety of research opportunities in diverse areas and plans on an advanced degree in chemistry. She is an exceptionally driven and dedicated student who is not deterred by failures. Megan has a cheerful attitude, and she is always ready to learn about the next topic or concept. She has a deep grasp of the fundamental principles of organic chemistry and can readily apply them to new challenges. Her command of the material is very impressive as is her ability to help others improve their own learning. Megan has an impressive amount of research experience. First, Megan joined a research project using molecular tools to assess the temporal pattern of ciliate diversity in a pond on campus. Her sophomore year, Megan learned the basics of light and fluorescence microscopy before shifting to a project looking at the unusual genome structure of the ciliate *Blepharisma americanum*. Last summer, she was awarded a competitive DAAD RISE Scholarship for a 12-week chemistry research internship position in Germany. Megan worked on natural product isolation and structural analysis at the Institute for Plant Biochemistry in Halle. This year, she has started working with synthetic polymer hydrogels towards the goal of implementing biomimetics and topographical features for their eventual use in tissue scaffolding. This is outstanding for a student who has yet to complete her junior year and speaks to Megan's commitment to her development as a research scientist during her time at Smith and beyond. Megan shows a great deal of promise and potential to make contributions to the field of chemistry.