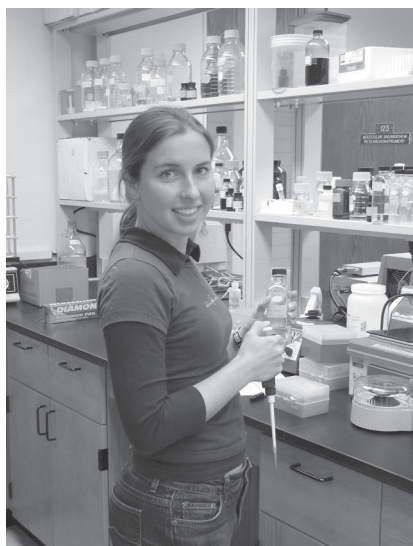


A CAMPAIGN FOR A NEW SCIENCE CENTER AT STETSON UNIVERSITY

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Biochemistry major accepted to three medical schools in Florida



Christina Schafer uses a micropipettor as she prepares to centrifuge samples in the Molecular Biology/Biochemistry Lab.

Christina Schafer was in line at a college fair to get information about another university when the Stetson University Admissions representative at the next table over struck up a conversation.

Liking what she heard, Schafer ultimately applied for and received the prestigious Edmunds Scholarship, then fell in love with Stetson during her campus visit.

It was fate.

As Schafer prepares to graduate next May, she's already been accepted at three medical schools. This past summer, she participated in a medical mission trip to Honduras. And she was selected as the only student speaker at this fall's ceremonial groundbreaking for the new Science Center.

The 21-year-old senior from New Port Richey is majoring in Biochemistry and minoring in Healthcare Issues. Fittingly, her favorite class was Biochemistry with Assistant Professor of Chemistry Harry Price.

"He's very special. He used to work at Johns Hopkins, and he's just brilliant," she said. "He's a great teacher. He's really concerned that you're 'getting it.'"

Schafer is doing her senior research now, a study of singlet oxygen induced oxidation of tRNA (transfer ribonucleic acid). The research deals with cellular metabolism and has applications within medicine related to protein synthesis and disease prevention. She can't actually see singlet oxygen; she uses a sophisticated instrument (a fluorometer) to detect the damage it causes to the tRNA.

Based on what she hears from students at other colleges, Schafer believes Stetson science students have more access to equipment and instrumentation than their peers. And they have many opportunities to work on independent research, she said.

Schafer enjoys Stetson's small class sizes because students get more individual attention from their professors. Her Biochemistry II course had six people in it. In her Molecular Biology class with Assistant Professor of Biology Alicia Schultheis, Schafer learned a new technique for DNA microarray – a way scientists can visualize across a whole genome whether a gene is turned on or off.

"The labs are so small, it allows close supervision for improving techniques," Schafer said.

This past August, Schafer and four other students in Stetson's MedEX Club participated in a medical mission trip to Honduras, where they assisted the doctors and nurses who set up a clinic in a community center. The team treated patients for parasites, extracted teeth and distributed vitamins.

The experience opened her eyes to international medical service opportunities – something she'd like to remain involved with in the future. For now, Schafer is leaning toward primary care and may eventually pursue a master's degree in Public Health and possibly work in international health policy.

She's also looking forward to returning to Stetson as an alumna.

"I cannot wait to come back and hear the stories of new research being conducted, of new classes being taught, of new young minds being fostered in this state-of-the-art facility," Schafer said at the groundbreaking ceremony.

"It has been my privilege to study here, and you can only imagine the impact your gifts are going to have on the future of Stetson science," she told the Board of Trustees, who joined to commit about \$7 million for the project. "Your generosity is like a concave up function from Physics...that means it's always increasing."