



2017 Department of Biology Awards

JOSEPH E. GREAVES ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Sammy Cowell, Master's Candidate

My name is Sammy Cowell, and I'm a second-year Master's student here in the Biology Department at Utah State University. My research interests are focused on avian ecology and behavior (I love birds!). Here at USU, I work with Dr. Kim Sullivan and several undergraduates using video footage to study the behavior of nesting woodpecker, their nest competitors, and their nest predators. I am the recipient of the 2017 National Science Foundation Pre-doctoral Fellowship which I intend to take to UCLA in the Fall 2017 semester to pursuing my Ph.D. studying the urban ecology of songbirds.

My ultimate career goal is to become a professor at a teaching-focused university. The professors at my undergraduate institution had a profound impact on me both professionally and personally, and I want to be able to be that same professor to a new generation. In order to prepare for my future career plans, I have taken several pedagogy classes here at USU focused on more actively engaging students in the learning process. I've worked extensively with undergraduates in my research, introducing them to the process of original scientific research. We are in the midst of publishing a paper with several of them as co-authors.

Beyond my research, I think one of the most important aspects of life are the people you meet, and I've tried to use my time here at USU to connect with the people around me. My mother came to the United States from Colombia when she was five-years-old. She worked hard to achieve a college education, and my success today is predicated on her. And so, I've become involved with USU's SACNAS chapter to encourage those in situations like my mother's to keep pushing forward.

Outside of school, I am pretty easy-going and interested in a variety of things. I love baseball. The Los Angeles Dodgers are the best team in all of baseball. Super Smash Bros is my all-time favorite video game. I love to do 3000 piece puzzles, play board games, and dance. I don't know if I am any good, but I like it. I have two super-friendly cats, a hamster, snail, fish, and I'm in the process of getting a chameleon. My wife Jess is the loveliest woman in the world and my best friend.