

2017 Department of Biology Awards

BIOLOGY SCHOLARSHIP

Karina Hernández, Public Health



My name is Karina Hernández, and I am majoring in Public Health with an emphasis in Industrial Hygiene. I have been on the Dean's List for nearly all of my semesters at Utah State University. Previously, I was awarded a scholarship from the Biology Department and my former workplace, Sam's Club. In addition, I was recognized as the Greek Scholar of the Month in February 2017 by the Panhellenic Council at USU. This year, I am also a finalist for the Bill E. Robins awards.

I am involved with several different service activities on campus and within the community. A year ago, I joined Theta Nu Xi Multicultural Sorority, Inc. and the service chair within our chapter coordinates many different activities for our members to help with. This semester alone we have volunteered with The Family Place, Planned Parenthood, USU's Latinx Student Union and USU's Annual Powwow. In addition, I am a mentor for the Aggies for Aggies program that was just implemented this school year through the Retention Office. I mentor two, first-generation students and hold weekly meetings with them to facilitate personal growth and academic skills. Off campus, I am heavily involved with the Latino community. Recently, I was invited to be a part of Cache Valley's Latino Advisory Board; we have monthly meetings where we plan events targeting the Latin community such as Hispanic Heritage Festival, *Hora de Cuenta*, Game Nights, and International Day of Reading. I also regularly volunteer at the Spanish Club for Thomas Edison Charter School where I prepare Spanish lessons for the students in the club. In addition, I volunteer at my church as a Spanish lecture reader. Previously, I served as a hospitality volunteer at the Logan Regional Hospital for six months where I interacted with patients and disinfected rooms after patients were discharged.

This summer I was selected to participate in Columbia University's Summer Public Health Scholars Program. Over 1700 applicants were received and 42 participants were selected to be in the all-expense paid program. I will be paired with a mentor who is working on a public health-related project, and I will work closely with them to help with their ongoing project. I will also be receiving MCAT and GRE prep courses as well as introductory public health lectures.

Currently, my academic goals include maintaining a high GPA and enriching my education with more involvement within the College of Science and/or Department of Biology before I graduate. My long-term goals include studying epidemiology and working to lessen the gap of health disparities found in immigrant and minority populations. I hope to pursue a dual M.D. and Ph.D. program that can help me attain these goals.

In my free-time, I like to study Spanish and read Spanish novels. I also love to dance, cook and spend time with my friends and family.