

10 MTSU HONORS STUDENTS AWARDED URECA GRANTS FOR SPRING 2024

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs administers University funds to directly support mentored undergraduate research through Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity (URECA) grants. Awards range from \$500 for beginners to \$3,500 for experienced MTSU student researchers.

Applicants are divided into three different categories: Assistant (beginner), Scholar (silver, gold, or platinum), or Team. Recipients get paid to conduct research or work on a creative project while gaining valuable experience in a high impact practice.

Scholar Gold winners:

- **Rand Hasan** – “Synthesis and Evaluation of Polyaspartate Peptoid Polymers”
- **Allison Thom** – “Interplay Between Pain, Age, and Cognition: Visual Search and N-Back Tasks”

Scholar Silver winner:

- **Rose Mary Gutierrez** – “Electromagnetics Ionization and Radiation Creation for Neuroblastoma Cancer Cells”

Assistant winners:

- **Jocelyn Bransford** – “Accelerating Discovery through Automation: High-Throughput Data Pipelines for Drosophila Activity Assays”
- **Sierra Cruz** – “Spectroscopy and Fluorescence Analysis of neuroblastoma Cells in a Laser Trap with Magnetic Beads”
- **Andrew England** – “Assessment of fetal liver-derived alveolar-like macrophages (FLAMs) as a model or the study of C. neoformans respiratory infections”
- **Sevinch Kamaridinova** – “Targeted RNA Interference Screen to Identify Novel Modifiers of Huntington’s Disease impact on adult viability in Drosophila”
- **Isaac Puckett** – “Exploration of Sensitivity of Amides and Amines to Polarity and Protic Character in Fluorescence”

Team award winners:

- **Emily Olson** – “Revolutionizing Energy Harvesting: Creating Artificial Stars from Livestock Blood for Clean Energy”
- **Malak Abdelrahman** – “Examining the Interaction Effects of Oxytocin and Antibiotics on Social Behavior in Mice”



Top:
Rand Hasan

Middle left:
Isaac Puckett

Middle right:
Malak Abdelrahman

Bottom:
Rose Mary Gutierrez