

MTSU's Experiential Learning Scholars Program honors two Outstanding EXL Students for the 2016-2017 academic year.

Araceli Alvarez was nominated by Dr. John DiVincenzo for being “an excellent leader in the general chemistry and organic chemistry labs as an EXL intern.” She communicates well with students and is confident in the lab setting. She has immense content knowledge and is able to share it with students. He attested that, “Her lab techniques and intelligence have been extremely helpful to the chemistry students and graduate teaching assistants. She is also Dependable, works well with others, and thinks quickly on her feet.”

Araceli credits the EXL Scholars Program for strengthening her communication, teamwork, and public speaking skills, as well as her personal growth as an individual. Araceli said in a personal reflection, “The hands on learning approach from Experiential Learning courses exceeded the expectations of what a college class should offer.”

Brianne Knight was nominated by Dr. Cornelia Wills who said that, “Both her personal qualities and academic abilities were an asset to the class.” Her commitment, work ethic, and resilience really stood out to Dr. Wills and Sr. Wills also noted her interpersonal skills and dependability.

Brianne stated, “One effective means of enhancing the pedagogy of the curriculum in the classroom is experiential learning.” From her studies in the nursing program, to her medical mission trips, she strongly attests that, “in addition to the abstract textbook, one gains awareness of a connection in the real-world through virtual hands-on experience.”

Both students submitted a record of all the EXL courses they had completed and were enrolled in at the time, a reflective essay explaining the value of experiential/service learning including demonstrated vision and leadership in EXL projects/activities and the impact of their EXL projects/activities on the community, and two samples of completed coursework from Experiential Learning Projects to support their nomination. They were presented with a certificate and a monetary award for their accomplishments at awards ceremonies.