

March 14, 2021

Dear Members of the Carnegie Mellon Women's Association,

On behalf of the Mellon College of Science (MCS), it is with great pleasure that I nominate Ms. Grace Wolczanski for the 2021 CMWA Student Award Scholarship. I have known Grace since her arrival on campus in the fall of 2017—I've served as her academic advisor for nearly her entire undergraduate career and have had MANY conversations with her since that time about her CMU experience. She embodies all that a student receiving this type of award should—she is a strong advocate for women in science, she empowers others to reach their fullest potential, and she is passionate about Carnegie Mellon and the MCS. I am incredibly proud that she is a member of our community!

Grace is very involved in many activities on campus and off campus that support and encourage other women, as well as in activities that show her love of science. Grace will graduate in May with a BS in Biological Sciences (concentration in cell biology) and a minor in Biomedical Engineering with a near perfect academic record. She will also earn University and MCS College Honors. She has held several formal and informal leadership positions that support her peers. Most recently, Grace has served her home department as an undergraduate networking event planner—here she helped to coordinate events to bring the undergraduate biology-related majors together with faculty and staff. She was also instrumental in transitioning these events into a remote format after March of 2020. Grace made significant contributions to initiating weekly "Friday Lunch" events where students can connect with each other for an hour a week. These events regularly draw 6-12 students each week and continue to build and maintain important social connections in a COVID-19 world. Additionally, as the only undergraduate member of the MCS College Council, Grace reviews important proposed college programs and new course proposals. She has shared important feedback representing her peers to college leadership in monthly meetings throughout her senior year.

Grace has made important impacts on women with her leadership of the CMU Delta Delta Delta sorority. She has been a member since 2017 and in that time has held 3 leadership positions within the CMU chapter, including Chapter President. Her leadership of (then) 78 members ensured policies, recruitment, and communication all happened with minimal risks and maximum benefits to the community at large. She also inspired her peers as an Orientation Leader for 3 years, including a remote orientation in the fall 2020 semester. She was able to impact hundreds of students working with a team of 5 orientation counselors and 1 head orientation counselor to develop and implement high impact experiences to welcome new students to the Carnegie Mellon environment.

Grace's leadership extends to the research realm. She has participated in two REU programs (at the University of Michigan and Rockefeller University), one of which led to co-authorship on a publication. Since the summer of 2018, Grace spent the academic year working with the laboratory of Dr. Veronica Hinman in the department of biological sciences at CMU. Here, Grace has been an integral team player to advance our understanding of tissue regeneration using molecular biology techniques in starfish. Dr.

Hinman speaks very highly of Grace's contributions to the group. She is currently summarizing her years of work by preparing an honors thesis that she will defend before the department in May.

In summary, Grace is an incredibly passionate and engaged member of our campus community. Grace herself has said that she tried to "seize every opportunity" she was given to grow personally and professionally at CMU and shares that advice with prospective and current students. Given her experiences in the classroom and laboratory, Grace is planning a career in academic research and recently committed to attend MIT beginning in fall 2021 for doctoral training in biological sciences. I am confident that she will be successful in her personal and professional pursuits and look forward to the positive impacts she will undoubtedly have on the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. Braun". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Maggie Braun, Ph.D.  
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Affairs, Mellon College of Science  
Teaching Professor, Department of Biological Sciences  
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