



WSU News

February 24, 2023

WSU's College of Engineering names 10 Wallace scholars

By Strategic Communications

2023 WALLACE SCHOLARSHIP
WINNERS

 GEORGIA BACHER	 MIRANDA CORDOVA	 MAYA DOUGLAS	 CLIFF HOSEAH	 BREANNA LEACH
 LIZ MUETING	 XANDER NIBLACK	 VIVIAN SALAZAR	 JENNA VILKAS	 JACE WATSON

Wichita State University's College of Engineering has named the latest group of high school seniors to join the Wallace Scholar program.

- **Georgia Bacher:** Bishop Kelley High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma; undecided engineering
- **Miranda Cordova:** Maize South High School; mechanical engineering
- **Maya Douglas:** Sachse High School in Sachse, Texas; mechanical engineering
- **Cliff Hoseah:** Wichita Heights High School; mechanical engineering
- **Breanna Leach:** Union High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma; biomedical engineering
- **Liz Mueting:** Eudora High School, Eudora, Kansas; aerospace engineering
- **Xander Niblack:** Wichita High School East; aerospace engineering
- **Vivian Salazar:** Maize South High School in Wichita, Kansas; mechanical engineering
- **Jenna Vilkas:** homeschool in Wayne, Nebraska; biomedical engineering
- **Jace Watson:** Frederic Remington High School in Whitewater, Kansas; computer science

The 10 Wallace Scholarship recipients will receive \$28,500 each to attend Wichita State for four years.

Wallace scholars comprise a community of more than 45 College of Engineering students, representing every class and almost every major in the college. Wallace scholars are involved in the College of Engineering, across the Wichita State campus, and in the Wichita community.

Selection for the Wallace Scholarship is based on recipients' high school GPA, ACT scores and performance at the annual Wallace Invitational for Scholarships in Engineering (WISE), which was held in November and drew 175 students from 10 states.

The Wallace Scholarship is made possible through the Dwane and Velma Wallace Endowment, created in 1976, which supports scholarships for engineering and computing students and provides funds for the College of Engineering. Since 1980, the endowment has benefited more than 360 engineering and computing majors at Wichita State.

Georgia Bacher

Tulsa, Oklahoma
Bishop Kelley High School
Undecided engineering

Georgia has chosen to major in an engineering field due to her passion for math, science and problem solving. She is a member of the National Honor Society, a National Indigenous Scholar, and a National Merit Semifinalist. In addition to her academic pursuits, Georgia is a competitive athlete and has participated in both club and school volleyball. During her club volleyball career, she earned a spot on some of the most competitive teams in Oklahoma and was named team captain four years running. When she played for her high school, Georgia was named team captain her sophomore and junior year and was twice awarded All-Tournament Team honors during her sophomore year. Off the court, Georgia has a passion for reading and art. She has volunteered at the First Baptist Church of Tulsa clothing ministry for many years, as well as spending time as a cat socializer at the Tulsa SPCA to assist homeless cats acclimate to humans to facilitate adoption.

Miranda Cordova

Wichita, Kansas
Maize South High School
Mechanical engineering.

Miranda's grandparents inspired and encouraged her to go into engineering. She excels at math and physics and is involved in orchestra, debate, and is a member of the National Honor Society. While in orchestra she competed in both large and small ensemble competitions throughout her high school years and finished her senior year as first chair. Competing in the Sunflower District Debate tournament, Miranda and her partner medaled eighth overall. Outside of school, every Wednesday, she volunteers as a teacher for her church, preparing fifth- and sixth-graders for confirmation. In her free time, Miranda enjoys reading, martial arts, running and listening to music.

Maya Douglas

Sachse, Texas
Sachse High School
Mechanical engineering

Maya's choice of mechanical engineering came from seeing the inner workings of clocks. Maya is the secretary of Mu Alpha Theta at her school and has also been involved in the Beta Club and National Honor Society since her junior year. Maya is a member of Daughters of Our Living Lord and Savior since freshman year and is the current president. She is heavily involved in her church youth group and is a part of the youth leadership team. Her hobbies include watching movies and TV shows, hanging out with friends and family, and reading.

Cliff Hoseah

Wichita, Kansas
Heights High School
Mechanical engineering.

Cliff chose his major because he has always loved building things. He was in Lego robotics in elementary school and enjoyed helping others learn how to program and build the robots. Later in high school, Cliff was able to take Principles of Engineering, which further sparked his interest in the field. He is involved in choir and was president of his high school's National Honor Society. Cliff is also member of a community group called Peer Leaders. He enjoys playing games and hanging out with his friends whenever he can and is always willing to try new activities.

Breanna Leach

Tulsa, Oklahoma
Union High School
Biomedical engineering

Breanna was inspired to choose her major by her participation in Medical Detectives in eighth grade. She is the captain of her high school soccer, a member of National Honor Society, and participates in Sustainable U. Breanna was also awarded the African American Recognition Award from College Board. In her free time, Breanna enjoys playing video games, completing puzzles and watching sports.

Liz Mueting

Eudora, Kansas
Eudora High School
Aerospace engineering

Liz has been active in cross country, soccer, basketball and Cardinal Clays. Currently, Liz is the co-president of her science Olympiad team and competes in engineering-related events. She is also president of her local 4-H chapter and an officer for her school's National Honors Society. In her free time, Liz enjoys hanging out with her sisters, playing cards and building things.

Xander Niblack

Wichita, Kansas
Wichita East High School
Aerospace engineering.

Xander is a curious and driven individual, who was inspired to pursue an education in engineering after beginning an internship at Wichita State's National Institute for Aviation Research before his senior year of high school. At NIAR, Xander gained experience using CAD programs and working in an engineering environment. Xander is also involved in debate and forensics and competed at the national level. He is an International Baccalaureate student at his high school, and he has completed numerous STEM-related projects, even writing an extensive research paper on basic quantum physics. In his free time, Xander likes to watch movies and TV, spend time with his friends, and listen to music.

Vivian Salazar

Wichita, Kansas
Maize South High School
Mechanical engineering.

Vivian was inspired to major in mechanical engineering by her love of hands-on work involving math and science. She enjoys taking things apart and figuring out their different uses and components. She is a member of the Art Club, Coding Club, Mu Alpha Theta Club, National Honor Society, soccer team and Pep Club. Vivian is fluent in Spanish and has also been a Spanish Club officer since her junior year of high

school. Recently, she pioneered her school's Vote Ready team, in which she and her friends encouraged more than 200 people to register to vote in the 2022 general election. She was also a Distinguished Scholarship Invitational semifinalist. In her free time, you can find her volunteering at the Lord's Diner, reading books, or playing club soccer. She also enjoys spending time with her family and traveling in the summer.

Jenna Vilkas

Wayne, Nebraska
Homeschool
Biomedical engineering.

Inspired by the concept of 3D organ printing and prosthetic design, Jenna is eager to begin a career in biomedical engineering. Jenna demonstrated leadership during her high school experience through speech and debate, Mock Trial, and as president of her 4-H club. She enjoys lifeguarding, working at a local restaurant, babysitting, volunteering at her church, and playing violin in a string ensemble and her church worship team. Moving across the country, from urban Arizona to rural Nebraska stirred a passion to seek unique opportunities through travel. This has resulted in visits to all 50 states and a study abroad course in Italy. In her free time, Jenna enjoys writing creative novels, drawing and swimming.

Jace Watson

Wichita, Kansas
Frederic Remington High School (Whitewater, Kansas)
Computer science

Jace became determined to pursue computer science after seeing his little sister struggle with math, and he decided to build a program on her computer that enabled her. He is passionate about constructing technology that will improve people's lives and our world. In the future, Jace intends to use the skills he acquires at WSU in the energy sector to improve the use and efficiency of current renewable energy resources and explore new ones. Jace participated in the National Honor Society and Scholar's Bowl in high school and was a member of his student council, debate, basketball and golf team. He enjoys playing volleyball and basketball with his family and discovering new music in his free time.