

UI students earn 2015 Goldwater honors

Undergraduates receive national recognition for their commitment to excellence in academics and research

Kasra Zarei, a University of Iowa sophomore from Coralville, IA has received a **2015 Goldwater Scholarship**, the premier undergraduate award for students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.



Kasra Zarei, 2015 Goldwater Scholar

Zarei, a **Grand Challenge Scholar** and an active member of the **UI's Honors Program**, is pursuing degrees in **biomedical engineering** and **biochemistry**.

Kasra is currently conducting research on genetic glaucoma models and other computational and medical imaging-based projects with a team led by **Dr. Michael Abramoff**, a professor in the Departments of Electrical, Computer and Biomedical Engineering in the **College of Engineering**, who is also a faculty member in **Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences** at Carver College of Medicine.

Dr. Abramoff agrees with the Goldwater Foundation's endorsement of Zarei's talent. "I hired Kasra as an intern out of high school, before he even started classes in Engineering, and he has shown himself to be exceptionally gifted and self-motivated. As a second year student, he has already turned a graduate level project into a globally accessible tool that will move vision science forward substantially. The Goldwater Foundation made the right choice in supporting this promising young scientist."

As a sophomore scholar, Zarei will receive up to \$7500 in funding for tuition, fees, books, room and board for both his junior and senior years of undergraduate study. He plans to pursue a doctoral degree and perform research in medical imaging, focusing on image-guided detection and treatment of eye diseases and neurological disorders.

The foundation also recognized UI junior Alexandra Bartlett with an honorable mention. The Clive, Iowa, native is pursuing degrees in **chemical engineering** and **finance**, and conducting research with **Allan Guymon**, professor of **chemical and biochemical engineering**, studying polymer scaffolds that may advance stem-cell treatments for age-related macular degeneration.

Bartlett will continue exploring the application of nanotechnology in her graduate studies with the goal of cultivating cross-disciplinary solutions to genetic diseases.

Zarei and Bartlett worked with UI **Honors Program Director of Scholar Development**, Kelly Thornburg, the university's Undergraduate Fellowships Committee, and a supportive community of faculty and research mentors to develop their ideas into proposals.

Congress established the Goldwater Scholarship in 1986 to honor Senator Barry M. Goldwater, and to challenge and support outstanding young scholar-researchers. **Find a full list of 2015 Goldwater Scholars on the Goldwater Foundation website.**



Alexandra Bartlett, Honorable Mention

Undergraduates conducting research in the STEM fields must apply for nomination to represent the University of Iowa and their home department in the 2016 Goldwater competition.

For more information about applying for the Goldwater Scholarship, visit the Honors Program **website** and contact Thornburg directly at kelly-thornburg@uiowa.edu.