

Senior earns scholar award

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Daily Evergreen staff

She has won three distinguished awards. She was granted a summer internship in Peru. Her research has the potential to become a medical breakthrough.

She is Lisa Cannon, a senior in biochemistry and the second Outstanding Undergraduate Research Scholar for 2002-03 in the WSU College of Sciences.

Four scholars are selected each year and each receives \$250 in book awards.

Cannon's research focuses on

revealing the biochemical properties of a new enzyme called LuxS that plays a crucial role in bacterial infection.

Cannon is researching the enzyme in the laboratory of chemistry professor Zhaohui "Sunny" Zhou.

"When Sunny first presented



the LuxS projects to our lab group, I got really excited because this enzyme has relevance in the healthcare field," Cannon said. "With antibiotic resistance becoming a problem, we're beginning to look at new methods to fight infection.

"There isn't much background information for our enzyme, so I feel like we are on the front line — anything we discover with our research will contribute to the (medical) field as a whole."

Cannon's work has included an essay about color change for easy detection for S-adenosyl-

methionine — a nutritional supplement sold as a treatment for arthritis and depression. She also has authored a paper about this work that was published in the Analytical Biochemistry Journal.

She then presented a poster about this supplement at the American Chemical Society Northwestern Regional Meeting.

Now Cannon is focusing on LuxS.

"She is studying mutants of this enzyme and screening for inhibitors — work that may lead to a new generation of anti-

infective agents," Zhou said. Cannon attributes her success to Zhou.

"I think this award reflects on Sunny and his work as much as it does on me," she said. "He is constantly encouraging me and the other undergraduates to stretch out our boundaries, see how far we can go."

This is Cannon's third award. Her previous awards include a Herbert L. Eastlick scholarship in premedicine and an Edward Meyer Science Opportunity Scholarship.

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Cannon also has been hired for research internships with the College of Sciences and Honors College.

Last summer, Cannon got the chance to go on a medical mission in Iquitos, Peru, on the Amazon with a group of University of Washington medical students, pre med students and doctors. Cannon said the group was there to distribute vitamins and other medical supplies to the community. She was surprised at what she saw when she got there.

"You see these depressing

programs on TV of sick children and you brace yourself," she said. "But it wasn't like that. Not at all. Their lives are so rich, almost everywhere I looked I saw a smile.

"Aside from the lack of vitamins, the people of Peru are perhaps the happiest I've seen. Their good spirits were contagious."

Peru wasn't all work and no play. Cannon said the group spent their evenings playing soccer with the village men — who won the games on a regular basis.

Cannon hopes to return this summer for a longer period, this time to do research.

Zhou said Cannon's research has been quite a suc-

cess. He attributes her success to her creative approach and ability to work on multiple problems simultaneously. Zhou also said Cannon has many strengths as a productive team member and teaching assistant.

Cannon will be graduating from WSU in May and plans to attend medical school—hopefully at either Oregon Health Sciences or the Mayo Clinic.

In the long run, she said she hopes to end up doing surgery somewhere on the outskirts of Portland, Ore., Minneapolis, Minn., or Alaska.

"I don't feel tied down anywhere, so who knows where I might end up," she said. "I don't want to limit myself."