

GRADUATE AG RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT



Pathmaker Awards

Purdue Agriculture's Pathmaker Awards, sponsored by the Purdue Agricultural Alumni Association, annually recognizes one master's student and one PhD candidate for outstanding mentorship. Morgan Garvey, a master's student in Animal Sciences, and Hazal Turasan, a doctoral student in Food Science, are recognized this year for investing in the success of undergraduate researchers-in-training and fellow graduate students.

MORGAN GARVEY

Garvey is a native Texan whose bachelor's degree in Animal Science from Tuskegee University reflects her interest in animal behavior and well-being. She is equally committed to mentoring and supporting the development and well-being of people in the Purdue academic community.

As an undergraduate, Garvey came to Purdue for a summer internship as part of the Summer Research Opportunities Program, which encourages talented students from underrepresented backgrounds to pursue research-based advanced degrees. It sparked her interest in returning to Purdue for graduate study in fall 2015, and she has since mentored others who followed her in that program.

In fall 2016, Garvey joined the lab of animal research physiologist Susan Eicher in the USDA-ARS Livestock Behavior Research Unit. "I'm focusing on the use of probiotics to reduce stress in weaning piglets," she says of her master's research.

Eicher has observed firsthand Garvey's "aptitude to change the lives of other as an effective mentor and peer coach." Garvey is on the Undergraduate Outreach Committee of the Black Graduate Student Association and further supports others through Purdue's Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) student organization. Garvey also has participated in a long list of community service projects on and off campus.

During an "eye-opening" study abroad experience in Colombia earlier this year, she worked to inspire students to pursue agriculture careers. "I was able to discuss the basics of animal welfare with the residents of the San Basilio de Palenque village, and to learn a lot about how animals are cared for within their culture" she says. "It definitely piqued my interest in gaining further international ag experiences."

After completing her master's degree in December 2017, Garvey would like to stay in the animal behavior and welfare field.

HAZAL TURASAN

Turasan is from Ankara, Turkey, where she earned bachelor's and master's degrees in food engineering at Middle East Technical University. During her master's program, she applied to U.S. graduate schools to strengthen her academic credentials, and a Fulbright Scholarship brought her to Purdue in August 2014.

With the guidance of her advisor, Professor of Food Science Jozef Kokini, she is researching corn protein as a platform to create biosensors, aiming for biodegradability in turning what is essentially a waste product into something useful.

When Morgan Meiser joined Kokini's lab as an undergraduate in fall 2014, Turasan was her assigned mentor. Meiser credits Turasan with influencing her decision to pursue an advanced degree. Her mentor not only encouraged Meiser to read scientific literature; Turasan read the articles as well so the two could discuss them weekly. "Over time, I could understand the fundamentals of research," Meiser says. "Hazal taught me how to use different equipment in the laboratory, took me to trainings, and helped me plan experiments as well as the analysis practices. She did all of this with respect and a positive attitude." In June 2016 Meiser transitioned into the Food Science master's program to continue her work with Dr. Kokini's group.

"While you're mentoring, you learn everything a lot better," Turasan says. "The person that you're teaching is hungry for information. You want to make sure you pass on the information correctly."

"Nobody mentored me when I was a new grad student, so it took a lot of time to learn everything," she adds. "I just want to help others."

Turasan will likely finish her PhD at the end of 2018 and would like to remain in academia, either in a post-doctoral or faculty position.