

# DELMER DEWEY/JULIA MCCULLOCH SMITH OUTSTANDING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AWARD

## Cheyenne Bumgardner '22

*The Delmer Dewey/Julia McCulloch Smith Award, presented each year to outstanding students, is named for former Dean of Men Delmer Dewey, who died in 1953, and in memory of Julia McCulloch Smith, who died in 1930. The awards were first presented in 1954.*

CHEYANNE BUMGARDNER '22, is a graduate of the Honors Program with a major in American Sign Language/English Interpreting, minors in ASL and Psychology, and a Leadership Certificate.

Bumgardner, who hails from Grants Pass, Oregon, took her first ASL class during her junior year of high school. "I took it to fulfill my second language requirement," she recalls. "I had never even thought about interpreting as a career, but my instructor said, 'You're pretty good at this, you should consider becoming an interpreter.' So I did some research, found Western and it all just went from there."

With her area of study solidified, there was another aspect of college Bumgardner was curious about.

"Because I went to a non-traditional high school, I didn't have many opportunities to participate in student leadership. I knew that was something I wanted to do when I got to college," she says.

Bumgardner approached leadership with ambition, starting as a Hall Host leading tours of residence halls, then in the Discover Leadership program well as a variety of admissions and orientation groups. As a coordinator of the university's PLUS Team, Bumgardner helped facilitate new student orientation activities, including being part of the team that built the newest orientation program on campus, Destination Western. At one point, she was coordinator for PLUS Team, the Campus Ambassadors program, and Campus Visitation simultaneously.

"The skills I gained through leadership have benefited me academically, socially, and going into my career as an interpreter," says Bumgardner. "It's not just about being an

orientation leader or campus tour guide. It's about building a community and developing important soft skills that come from those out-of-the-classroom experiences."

She's already putting those skills to work in Southern Oregon, where she recently accepted a position as an educational sign language interpreter working with K-12 students. In the coming months, she plans to complete the rigorous certification requirements for different types of sign language interpreting, with a goal of someday working in mental health settings.

This goal correlates nicely with her honors thesis. After finding very little published research on the phenomenon of vicarious trauma within the profession, Bumgardner decided to tackle it herself.

"This concept has always been fascinating to me. Most current research talks about post-traumatic care. There is a significant lack of research on what we can do to educate, prepare, and prevent it, so I

decided to write the article I wish I had when I was first learning about vicarious trauma," she says with a smile. Her findings will soon be available to others on WOU's Digital Commons website.

As for her time at Western, especially as a first-generation college student, she's grateful to have landed at a small, community-oriented campus where it was easy to meet people and make an impact.

"The value of building relationships and connections with faculty, staff, and fellow students can't be underestimated," she says. "College is really all about what you're willing to put into it. I've loved being in a place where I truly did get to learn something new every day."



*Cheyenne Bumgardner*