Educational Highlights: My experiences at the College of Charleston have afforded me the unique opportunity to blend my interests in Psychology and Environmental Studies. In my sophomore year, my time serving as a Community Liaison with the Charleston YOUTH Count sparked my passion for community building. For over two years, I brought that passion into my role as Treasurer for Prism, CofC’s LGBTQ+ Alliance. As a component of my Honors curriculum, I participated in an interdisciplinary class exploring sustainability and religion and was able to visit Earthaven Ecovillage. This immersive experience taught me that sustainable solutions are possible with ingenuity and hard work. In my senior year, I received the HSS Travel Award and an URCA Research Presentation Grant, allowing me to present my work at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology’s national conference in New Orleans.

Research Focus or Project: My research has been focused on the numerous predictors of different attitudes toward climate change. More specifically, my studies have explored the role of place attachment and message framing in predicting individuals’ perceived risk of climate change and engagement in personal mitigation and adaptation strategies. Place attachment refers to the emotional and cognitive bonds we develop to particular places, and message framing refers to the way certain messages can be crafted in order to inspire particular meanings or emotions in an individual. These variables have been shown to influence people’s perceptions of the threat of climate change, as well as their perceptions that they can work toward solving the issue. My bachelor’s essay examines the combined effect of these variables on climate change engagement in college students, a population that will prove critical in combatting the emerging climate crisis.

Future Plans: I plan to take a gap year after I graduate, and work as a research assistant at MUSC while preparing my personal research projects for publication. After my gap year, I plan to pursue a Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology beginning in Fall 2021.

This award is presented by Gibbs Knotts, interim dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Department of Psychology at the College of Charleston, at the end of the spring 2020 semester.