

Katherine Welsh, Winner of the Lois Jean Durham Scholarship

By Sarbjeet Kaur, Director of Student Awards



The Lois Jean Durham Scholarship is given to junior woman/non-binary chemistry student beginning her/their junior year as of the fall semester following the announcement at an accredited college or university. The 2025 winner is Katherine Welsh of Smith College. She was nominated by Prof. Maren E. Buck, Ph.D. Katherine is a junior at Smith College, majoring in Chemistry with a minor in Education and Child Study. She is particularly passionate about food chemistry and food science, with an emphasis on sustainability. Katherine spent two summers conducting research at the University of Minnesota in Dr. George Annor's lab. Her independent project explored the impact of cold atmospheric plasma on the germination of intermediate wheatgrass (Kernza®)—a sustainable wheat alternative that offers higher protein and fiber content than traditional wheat. She also collaborated on studies investigating the effects of temperature, germination time, puffing moisture, and pressure on Kernza's properties. At Smith College, Katherine is actively involved in the chemistry department, serving as a lab teaching assistant for organic chemistry. She is also a dedicated member of the Smith diving team, earning Scholar All-American honors for the 2023–2024 season, Second Team All-Conference for 2024–2025, and recognition as the first alternate for nationals.