

University of Pittsburgh TRIO McNair Scholars Program Senior Class 2023 Profiles

**Indicates Frederick Honors College student*

Cassie Elizabeth Anderson*



Cassie is a first-generation student majoring in Communications Science and Disorders with minors in French and Irish. Cassie shared that “being first-generation is incredibly meaningful to me. Though it is certainly a challenge, it is also one of the most formative experiences of my life. Every day is a new opportunity to learn something about myself and those around me. During my time at Pitt, I have had so many diverse and fulfilling experiences and being first generation has only made those moments more impactful. The experience can sometimes feel overwhelming, especially as someone who is out-of-state and interested in graduate study, but I am fortunate to have a strong support system here at Pitt to cheer me on.”

Cassie’s research interests include French-English bilingualism, second-language acquisition, speech perceptions, acoustics and features of French phonemes, Francophone North America, and motor speech disorders.

Cassie’s favorite inspirational quote is: “Find out who you are and do it on purpose.” - Dolly Parton

Helen Bovi*



Helen is a student majoring in Chinese and Philosophy.

Helen’s research interests include Chinese literature, existentialism, Heidegger, and Nietzsche.

Helen’s favorite inspirational quote is: “You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You’re on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the one who’ll decide where to go.” - Dr. Seuss

Nicholas Demjan



Nicholas is a first-generation student majoring in History and Political Science. Nicholas shared that being a first-generation student “is an incredible accomplishment that many first-generation students themselves don’t even realize how powerful it is. Give yourself and your support system a pat on the back for this achievement.”

Nicholas’ research interests include twentieth-century United States, with a focus on queer history and activism post-Stonewall.

Nicholas’ favorite inspirational quote is: “No pride for some of us without liberation for all of us.” - Marsha P. Johnson

Khawla Fentis*



Khawla is a first-generation student majoring in Neuroscience with minors in Chemistry and Applied Fitness and certificates in Arabic Language and Linguistics. Khawla shared that being first-generation means “that my parents have sacrificed everything that is familiar to them in order to provide me with greater opportunities and the ability to dream big for my future.”

Khawla’s research interests include exercise physiology and human metabolism. She has past research experience in behavioral neuroscience and clinical psychology.

Khawla’s favorite inspirational quote is: “You do not do evil to those who do evil to you, but you deal with them with forgiveness and kindness.” - Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him)

Tea Flynn



Tea is a first-generation student majoring in Legal Studies with minors in Secondary Education and Spanish Language. Tea shared that being first generation student “is the highest achievement I think that I have accomplished so far. It is something that I take a lot of pride in. I hope that my accomplishments, goals, and dreams will help my siblings, younger and older, to pursue things that they want in life even if there is a lot of uncertainty of how to obtain them. Attending college was certainly not the easiest experience that I have had, however, it has taught me so much more than I could have ever learned or experienced simply living in my hometown.”

Tea’s research interests include human rights violations, the DACA process, DACA recipients, and international higher education students.

Tea’s favorite inspirational quote is: “The best way to predict your future is to create it.” - Abraham Lincoln

Gabriela Hutter



Gabriela is a student majoring in Psychology and Art.

Gabriela's research interests include social relationships, support seeking, parent-child relationships, learning, socio-emotional development, attachment styles, and communication.

Gabriela's favorite inspirational quote is: "A person who has good thoughts cannot ever be ugly. You can have a wonky nose and a crooked mouth and a double chin and stick-out teeth, but if you have good thoughts they will shine out of your face like sunbeams, and you will always look lovely." - Roald Dahl

Grace Kim (December grad)



Grace is a student majoring in Biological Sciences with a minor in Chemistry.

Grace's research interests include molecular mechanisms underlying autoimmunity and cellular cross talk. She currently conducts research at the Xiao Lab at UMPC Children's Hospital, focusing on understanding diabetes pathogenesis.

Grace's favorite inspirational quote is: "If you aim at nothing, you hit nothing." - Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings

Gwyneth Lloyd



Gwyneth is a first-generation student majoring in Psychology and Sociology with a minor in Studio Arts. Gwyneth shared that "being a first-generation student has meant I have faced a lot of challenges that I found my peers would never have to. At first this was something that angered me, but now it has driven me to want more, to do more and be more. I do have to put in more work than some of my peers, but it has made me value my efforts and work so much more. Being a first-generation student has meant that I have to be a self-starter and I am proud of that."

Gwyneth's research interests are in the field of industrial-organizational psychology, specifically to meld together her passions and help develop and implement research with a focus on issues pertaining to work stress, behavior in the workplace, job insecurity, and the impact of factors in the workforce and the toll they can take on an individual's well-being and stress levels. A more specific interest is how stress and stressors in reference to the workplace affect productivity and outcomes with a possible consideration of how intersecting identities such as race, gender, and sexuality can play into these events.

Gwyneth's favorite inspirational quote is: "Success is liking yourself, liking what you do, and liking how you do it." - Maya Angelou

Amarachi Onwuka*



Amarachi is a student majoring in Molecular Biology with minors in Chemistry and Studio Arts.

Amarachi's research interests include biochemistry and structural biology.

Amarachi's favorite inspirational quote is: "Don't be a hard rock when you really are a gem." - Lauryn Hill

Isabella Peterson

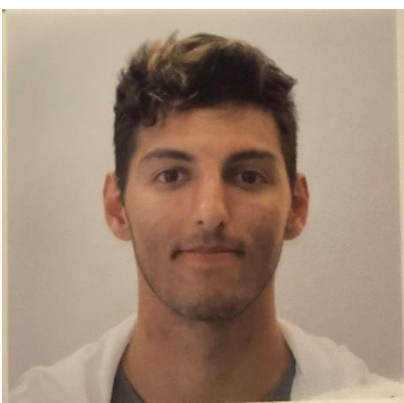


Isabella is a first-generation student majoring in Psychology. Isabella shared that being a first-generation student means "that I am trying to build on what my mother could do with her education. What her work allowed me to do and accomplish."

Isabella's research interests include health and social psychology.

Isabella's favorite inspirational quote is: "Nevertheless, she persisted."

Carlos Rodriguez



Carlos is a first-generation student majoring in Microbiology, Communications, and Chemistry. Carlos shared that being a first-generation student means "proving I'm capable of breaking the mold and disproving stereotypes."

Carlos' research interests include microbiology, microbial pathogenesis, and bacterial immunity and defense mechanisms.

Carlos' favorite inspirational quote is: "Normal is just an illusion. What's normal for the spider is chaos to the fly." - Morticia Addams