



SUMMER 2025

Sophia Nicastro ChE '25

"After graduation, I will pursue a career in the pharmaceutical and life sciences industry, and I hope to use my knowledge to make products that help people live better lives."

**Blue White—Bridging the financial gap!**



# \$150,000 in Scholarship Monies Awarded for Academic Year 2025-26



**Executive Director's  
Message  
Kate Cellucci**

Summer is almost over and again we are awarding \$150,000 in scholarships for the '25-'26 school year. This is amazing news after such a challenging year. Luckily we had some new donors and our largest supporters came through again.

You may ask, why is this newsletter coming so late? The answer is this. This year we celebrate the 52nd year of the original foundation (The Wildcat Club) and the 25th year of the transition from a sports booster club to a scholarship foundation (The Blue White Scholarship Foundation).

To celebrate the 25th year of the Blue White Scholarship Foundation I have been compiling information on as many past Blue White Scholars as possible. This information is being printed into a book. Due to the cost of this publication we will not be making cookies and mailing them out for Christmas. Last year our costs went from 49 cents a package (2023) to mail to \$5 dollars (2024) because the US Post Office eliminated the category for Non-Profit Packages. This is a 1000% increase in cost. We had already made the cookies so we bit the bullet.

This year we will have the cost of the 25th anniversary book, but I think everyone will love the "Where Are They Now" updates on approximately 300 Blue White Scholars (if we found them on Linked-In or an internet search, we included them). Hopefully, the 25th anniversary book

will be a hit when everyone is entertained by the cartoons in the book representing all of Villanova's current majors listed below:

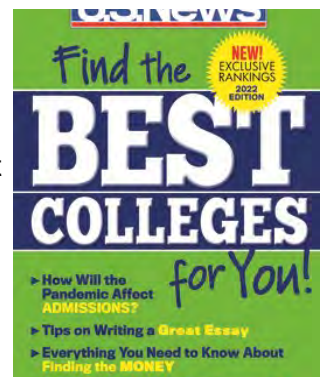
- Accounting (Accountancy)
- Astronomy & Astrophysics
- Art History
- Biology
- Business
- Bio Chemistry & Molecular Biology
- Chemistry
- Chemical Engineering
- Computer Hardware Engineering
- Computer Science
- Criminology
- Communications
- Civil Engineering
- English
- Economics
- Electrical Engineering
- Education
- Environmental Science
- Finance
- French Language & Literature
- Geography
- History
- Humanities
- International Business
- Liberal Arts & Humanities
- Italian language & Literature
- Information Science
- Information Technology
- Liberal Arts & Literature
- Latin & Ancient Greek Studies
- Marketing
- Mathematics
- Management Science
- Mechanical Engineering
- Managerial Economics
- Nursing
- Public Administration
- Physical Sciences
- Political Sciences & Government
- Philosophy
- Physics
- Psychology
- Physiological Psychology
- Quantitative Finance
- Real Estate
- Sociology
- Spanish Language & Literature
- Statistics
- Theology & Ministerial Studies
- Teaching
- Women's Studies

Each year the Financial Aid statistics can be found in the U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges Issue.

This year the stated VU tuition cost in the report was \$85,202 for 2024-2025, but the students reported that they were paying approximately \$91,000 in tuition annually. Here are the statistics reported:

- ◆ 55%- Applied for financial aid
- ◆ 15% - Need was fully Met  
**(95% of the students had a Gap)**
- ◆ 44%- Received—Need based financial aid ( Government Grants, Villanova Grants & Outside Scholarships like the Blue White Scholarship)
- ◆ 40%- Received Need based Self-Help aid ( Loans or Work Study—jobs provided at minimum wage on campus)
- ◆ 82%- Average percent of need met. **(The average gap is 18%)**

Our MISSION: "Bridge the Financial Aid Gap" is truly needed. It will be greater in the future as the school uses the CSS form to determine aid. This form asks for your financial details of your home's equity, amounts of cash in bank accounts, 401K, and other investments & real estate as well as your former spouse's income if you are divorced or remarried. More detail on this in the next newsletter.



**venmo**

*Kate*

# Who? The Type of Students that receive a Blue White Scholarships



Meet Nick Watson

realized I could only move about 6 bricks at a time and would need to find, clean, and move 145 bricks per hour to make minimum wage. Looking back the real benefit was not the money but the opportunity to spend time and work with my father and brother.

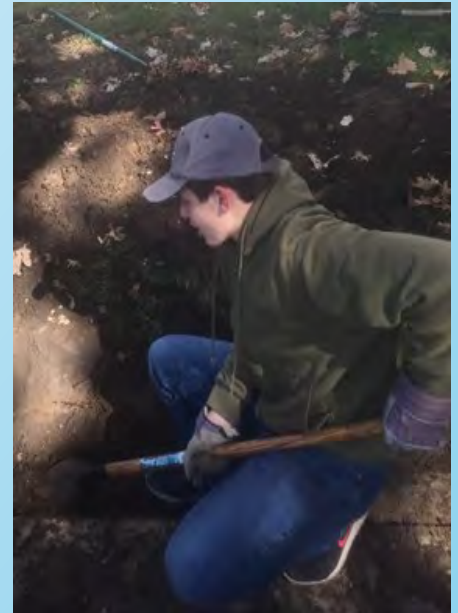
## My Transition from Iowa to the East Coast

I never truly toured the Villanova campus before accepting my offer letter, I already knew it had the exact type of accounting program I was looking for so I used Google Earth to check out the campus and saw how nice it all looked. From that point forward I accepted my offer and haven't looked back, since this was one of the best decisions I could have made both personally and professionally. I have made numerous lifelong friends and connections since moving to PA, but the path was not always too easily spelled out for me as I knew nothing about the area, much less the culture.

Back home in Iowa, life is, for better or worse, much simpler. The people are very family-oriented, and being hardworking has more value than simply being wealthy. The prevailing belief is that we enrich ourselves not financially, but through the bonds formed with friends, family, and faith. Along these lines, it was very important to my parents that my brother and I have an incorruptible work ethic. I started working for my dad recovering bricks from a demolition site around 11 years old. Back then he would pay me and my brother 5 cents for a brick we were able to find in good condition and move to the loading area. I later

From that point on I became more handy and started taking any odd job I could find around the neighborhood including painting, mowing lawns, and general landscaping. But turning 14 was a big deal back home because it's when you get your junior driving license. This meant you could drive with an adult in the car or if you completed some simple paperwork you could drive alone for school or work-related activities. This was also when I got my first true W-2 job at the local grocery store. To this day I still remember my mother coming home after work and immediately driving me to drop off my job application to the manager. I ended up working at that same grocery store throughout high school and once my brother turned 14 I made sure he got a job there too. Later in High School, I got a second job at a gas station because it allowed

me to work the night shift whereas the grocery store was only open during the day. This worked better for me as on most days I had swim practice and school which took a good portion of my time. Additionally in High school, I completed my Eagle Project where I led the construction of the largest non-government community garden in central Iowa. All in all, this required over 1100 total hours donated by myself and volunteers. Upon



completion, this garden was left in the hands of the Iowa State Master Gardeners of which I would later become a member. Having multiple jobs and external responsibilities meant I could go home, change, and go to work after practice while earning money to help pay for school. Ultimately, these experiences made me into the man I am today and helped prepare me for my future here in the Mid-Atlantic as a Big 4 accountant within the advisory space.

NOTE: To save money, Nick graduated in three years

Read more about Nick on Pages 5, 8, 9 and 15.







## Help Students & Be Good To Your Pets!

**Have your fur  
babies blessed on  
The Feast Day of  
St. Francis of Assisi  
- October 4.**

### How?

**1. Just email a picture of your pet to**

**KateCellucci@BlueWhiteClub.com**

**2. Include your Name & Pet's Name**

**3. If you are able please include a good will offering to BWSF on line, or VENMO or check.**

**DEADLINE: September 30**

**A collection of all the pictures will be taken to church where Father Anthony Albanese ( Blue White Scholar '08) will do a blessing**



**Cara Krien '25**

**Hometown**  
Waterford, WI

**Major**  
Biology

#### **School Activities:**

- Special Olympics (Volunteer Coordinator)
- Research Assistant in the Opulente Lab
- Honors Program Peer Mentor
- Pre-Med Club
- Intramural Sports (Volleyball, Soccer)

#### **Career Aspirations:**

To attend medical school with the ultimate goal of becoming a pediatrician.

#### **Favorite Quote:**

**"I want to be remembered as someone who used whatever talent she had to the very best of her ability." -unknown**

#### **How the Blue White Scholarship is helping me:**

The Blue White Scholarship is helping me reduce the amount of private loans I must take out to cover the cost of my Villanova education. This generous scholarship not only provides me with crucial financial assistance, but also provides me with an increased sense of financial security, allowing me to focus on excelling academically and personally during my time at Villanova.

#### **Jobs I have worked to help pay for school:**

- Full time Summer Nanny, Part-time Babysitter
- Bartender at the Runaway Micropub and Nanobrewery
- Villanova Undergraduate Research Fellow

#### **Extraordinary Circumstances :**

I have 3 siblings, and my parents felt strongly about providing all of us with a Catholic education. They have made many sacrifices over the years to ensure we all received the best education possible. They contribute as much as they can afford to our college tuition even after paying tuition for grade school and high school; however, what they are able to afford does not cover the gap left by the financial aid package. The rest of the cost of my Villanova education is my responsibility, and I have unfortunately had to take out significant loans to cover it.



**Sofia Nicastro '25**  
(Cover Picture)

**Hometown**  
Deptford, NJ

**Major**  
Chemical Engineering

### School Activities:

- American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE) Executive Board; President
- Society of Women Engineers (SWE) Co-Chair—Service and Outreach
- VU Dept. of CE—Office Assistant
- Co VP - Best Buddies
- Special Olympics
- Indoor Rock Climbing Club
- Art Club

### Deans Awards:

- Top 10% of Major
- Meritorious Service
- Robert D. Lynch Award

### Career Aspiration:

I want to work as an engineer in the pharmaceutical industry and develop life-changing medicines. I would love to work on cancer-related medicines, since just about everyone has been affected in some way by cancer.

### Favorite Quote:

**“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams” -Eleanor Roosevelt**

### How the Blue White Scholarship is helping:

I want to sincerely thank all the donors for their continued generosity and support! Your kind gift will help relieve stress and anxiety for my family and I and reduce the amount of loans that we will owe after I graduate college. This will have such a positive impact for my family and I in both the present moment and future. I cannot thank you enough!

### Jobs I have worked to help pay for school:

- Process Engineering Internships (12 weeks, full time)



**Nick Watson '25**

**Hometown**  
Des Moines, IA

**Major**  
Accounting

### School Activities:

- Blue Key
- Club Swimming
- VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance)

### Career Aspirations:

I plan to complete my CPA and work in public accounting, helping create innovative solutions to global problems through an advisory function.

### Favorite Quote:

**“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.” -Mahatma Gandhi**

### How the Blue White Scholarship is helping:

Due to very limited savings and a change in my parent's employment I am now largely responsible for my education and Blue White has helped reduce the amount of student loans I will have to take out and pay back upon graduation.

### Jobs I've worked to help pay for school:

- My first real W2 job was at Fareway Grocery Store as a bag boy helping people out to their car with their groceries, eventually I moved up into produce and dairy until leaving for QuikTrip as a Gas Station Clerk due to better pay and the ability to work the night shift in conjunction with school.
- Upon entering college I have been employed at Polk County as a central accounting technician handling matters such as invoicing and managing an Amazon ERP implementation, while working part time doing landscaping and manual labor jobs around town. This last year has been my most significant progression as I am now with KPMG as an Advisory/ Forensics Intern working in the defense space to assist the armed forces. After completing my Masters Degree in Accounting, I hope to turn this internship into a full time offer with the firm and a very rewarding career within public accounting.



# SPOTLIGHT: Cara Krien-Why Pediatrics?



When I was three days old, the pediatrician at the hospital I was born in told my parents that she could hear a murmur when she listened to my heart and referred us to a pediatric cardiologist. A few weeks later, at the Herma Heart Center in the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, I was diagnosed with a ventricular septal defect (VSD), commonly referred to as a hole in the heart. The following years were marked by an annual trip to the Herma Heart Center where my heart was monitored via echocardiogram and EKG to ensure that my heart was still healthy and functioning properly. While 90% of VSDs close before age 6, mine just happened to be located in a spot that the doctors predicted would prevent it from closing on its own. As the years went on, my appointments were gradually reduced to bi-annually, and eventually down to every three years. As the doctors originally predicted, however, it never closed. I was, and am, lucky. My defect is extremely small, and has minimal effects on my health and cardiovascular fitness. While my experience growing up with a congenital heart defect was thankfully not detrimental to my

physical health, it did kickstart my desire to become a doctor.



**Me at age 4 at one of my cardiology appointments.**

I was drawn to working with kids from a young age. In middle school, my best friend and I would use our free period to see if the kindergarten, first, or second grade teachers needed any help in their classrooms. I loved helping the kids work on their reading skills or complete a project, and even just



**Me and one of the kids from my first mission trip in 2018**

helping to keep an eye on them during recess was one of my favorite parts of the day. In high school, I again used my study hall to volunteer in local grade school classrooms and

continued to find the experience truly rewarding. I also went on two week-long mission trips, where I was able to volunteer at a summer day program for kids in underprivileged communities. I began babysitting at age 12, and started nannying full-time during the summers when I was 16. My years of babysitting experience taught me more than I could have ever imagined about kids, and solidified my desire to find a career that allowed me to work with them in a full-time, professional setting.

As my passion for science grew in high school, it became clear to me that



**The two boys I nannied, the summer I was 16 years old.**

I wanted to be a pediatrician. Pediatrics combined my interest in science and the human body with my passion for working with kids. I want nothing more than to provide the care and support that helps kids grow up happy and healthy, the kind of exceptional care I was fortunate enough to receive at the Herma Heart Center over the years. Kids deserve the best possible care possible, and especially with the rising shortage of general practitioners. I want to be one of the doctors to provide care to kids.

# 4 Things You May Not Know About Me

1

I played volleyball from age 10 all the way up through senior year of high school! Despite breaking my ankle and missing my first two high school seasons, I decided to play again my junior year of high school because I loved the sport so much. I'm pretty tall, so I was a middle blocker for my high school varsity team. My junior year, we were state runners-up, and my senior year, we were state champions! I don't play for a team anymore, but I love playing intramurals or games for fun with my friends on the sand courts on campus.



2



I have three siblings! I have two older sisters, Jana (27), and Krista (23), and a younger brother, Evan (19). I am really close with my siblings, and I love the bond we have. My oldest sister, Jana, recently got married, and her husband, Sam, is a great addition to the sibling pack.

3

I bartend at a microbrewery! I am from Wisconsin, and there are tons of breweries across the state, including a lot of small businesses like the Runaway, where I work. I absolutely love working at the Runaway, and I have learned so much about beer since I started working there. Since they brew in small batches, there are new beers on tap each week. My favorite beer we've ever had on tap is called Fair Trade, and it was a coffee blonde ale!



4



My family fosters puppies! We found a local rescue about 6 years ago on Facebook, and decided to give fostering a try. We have fostered 8 puppies since, and it is always so much fun. It's tough to give them up for adoption, but it's always so rewarding to see them united with their forever family. We only take a foster every once in a while as it is a big commitment, but I've loved our time with each puppy we've had. My favorite puppy we fostered was named Finley, and we had him for 3 weeks in June of 2020.



# SPOTLIGHT: Nick Watson - My Academic Journey



Hi I am Nicholas Watson, a junior at Villanova University majoring in Accounting and graduating a year early with my undergrad. From my very first day here, my love for numbers and dedication to my studies have set me on an incredible academic journey.

Maintaining an excellent GPA and making the Dean's List each semester, I'm proud to consistently rank at the top of my class. My professors have commended me for my analytical skills, meticulous attention to detail, and unwavering commitment to learning. I've always believed that my success stems not

only from hard work but also from a genuine passion for learning.

Beyond the classroom, I'm actively involved in several extracurricular activities. Such as in the Villanova Accounting Society, I get to help organize events, guest lectures, and networking opportunities for my peers. I'm also a member of Blue Key, an honorary organization for students to help tour prospective students. Additionally I swim for the club team here on campus which has enabled me to meet some of my best friends to this day. These experiences have provided me with invaluable connections and insights into the world around me.

My commitment to excellence extends to my professional development as well. I've completed internships with prestigious firms, including a summer position at KPMG, where I gained hands-on experience in consulting and tax services. The supervisors there consistently highlighted my work

ethic, problem-solving abilities, and eagerness to learn.

Despite my busy schedule, I always find time to give back to the community. I volunteer with the university's VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program, offering free tax help to low-income individuals and families. This experience has not only enhanced my practical accounting skills but also taught me the importance of using my talents for the greater good.

In the future, I aspire to become a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and hope to secure a role in government consulting or forensic accounting. With dedication, passion, and the support of Villanova, I am confident in achieving my goals, and making my family, friends, and university proud of my achievements.





# 3 Things You May Not Know About Me

1

I earned my Eagle Scout at 16 after almost a decade in the scouting program. My final project was focused on solving food shortages in the poorest zip code in Iowa. I built (with some help from other scouts) a 75-raised bed community garden with a watering system.



2



My family has grown fruit trees for the past 15 years. Eventually, I took over the trees' maintenance and took great pride in their outcome. I won a second-place ribbon at the Iowa State Fair for my apples also enjoy growing vegetables. I find it incredible that I can grow tens of pounds of tomatoes from just a couple of seeds with water and sun. This is why in high school, I studied to become a certified Master Gardener at Iowa State University

3

I grew up eating a lot of casserole dishes and stews because they were easy to make and held well on the stove. This started because everyone in my family is on a different schedule and would end up eating dinner independently. This is when I discovered a love to cook. My favorite type of cuisine is Cajun.



4

I am the older of two sons. My brother and I have been raised exactly the same, but we couldn't be more different in demeanor and personal goals. I have chosen to pursue business and my younger brother is joining the Army.



I enjoy gardening, as it has been a hobby for most of my life. I was always interested in nature. Additionally, I find it incredible that I could grow tens of pounds of tomatoes from just a couple of seeds with water and sun. This is why in high school I studied to become a certified Master Gardener at Iowa State University



5

# Sofia Nicastro is sending you a S.M.I.L.E

Student SMILE's were created as a way to stay in touch in between the quarterly Newsletters. Sometimes we will send out an email about an upcoming event. At Christmas a students CHEER message is sent and we have an end of the year ( fiscal & calendar) where we ask for donations. If you are not receiving a SMILE, please email [KateCellucci@BlueWhiteClub.com](mailto:KateCellucci@BlueWhiteClub.com) and request to be put on the e-mail list.

## S- Student Update

This past summer I worked as a Melting and Forming Process Engineer at Corning Inc. in Vineland, NJ. Our plant makes glass tubes that are used in the pharmaceutical industry. This internship has been a fantastic opportunity to get an insight into what it is like to work as an engineer in industry and work at a plant where so much is always going on.



## M- My Favorite

My favorite season of the year is one that is hot as glass (the slogan that Corning used for the interns!): summer. I have always loved when the sun shines all day long and baking in the sun. I enjoy going to the beach with my mom or friends and spending time on the boardwalk.



## I- Interesting Trivia

Did you know that brown glass reflects UV light? The reason why beer bottles are made of brown glass is so that the beer does not absorb light and get spoiled. At my work, we make glass tubes that are brown because certain pharmaceutical products will decompose when they are exposed to light.



## L- Laugh a Little

Sticking with the glass/heat theme, here is a video of clumsy people running into glass doors: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebdZiH0U4Os>

## E- Educational Tip

Heat stroke and heat exhaustion are both serious heat-related illnesses that could potentially be fatal. They both have some similar symptoms, such as dizziness and nausea. Heat exhaustion, however, is much more extreme and can cause a person to faint, potentially leading to death if untreated. A person experiencing heat stroke will be sweating excessively and have a rapid but weak pulse, and the person should be given something cold to drink and moved to a cooler place. A person experiencing heat exhaustion will not be sweating and will have a strong rapid pulse; the person should be moved to a cooler place but not given anything to drink. If ever in doubt about a person's condition, do not be afraid to call 911!





# 3 Things You May Not Know About Me

1

I ran track and played field hockey in high school. While I have not continued these sports into college, they were both so much fun to play in high school and I had many memorable moment with my teams. I was also Class Valedictorian  
Photo: Al Amrhein for NJ Advance Media



2

My Favorite action movie is Avengers Endgame! This movie is one that I find myself watching over and over again no matter how many times I've seen it. I find that each time I watch it, I notice something new that adds to my enjoyment



3

My favorite color is purple, particularly lavender! I have so many things that are purple from my phone to my Hydro flask to my bedding at school

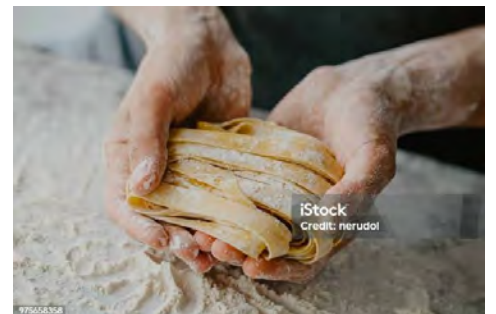
4

I love soft pretzels! It is such a random thing for me to love, but I will always be down to have one. Throughout the summer, I've found myself randomly stopping at Wawa just to grab a 99cent pretzel!

5

My favorite food is homemade pasta! My family has passed down a pasta recipe over the generations and making pasta is always an activity that I enjoy because of the quality time and delicious dinner!

Ingredients: 6 servings: 2 cups all-purpose flour; 1 teaspoon salt; 2 eggs beaten; 4 tablespoons of water. Step 1 Combine flour and salt in a medium bowl. Make a well in the center and add beaten eggs. Mix well until a stiff dough forms, add the water. Step 2 Knead dough on a lightly floured surface until smooth, 3 to 4 minutes. Wrap dough and let rest for 30 minutes to 1 hour. Step 3 Roll dough by hand or with a pasta machine to desired thickness, then cut into strips of desired width and length





# News You Can Use-Babysitting Tips by Cara Krein

**Patience** – Working with kids, no matter what age, requires a truly unique amount of patience. Kids can be stubborn and headstrong, but it is so important to keep your cool and be patient with them. Remember —

“Patience is not the ability to wait, but how you act while you’re waiting.”



**Flexibility** – I love a good, solid plan, but I have learned that when it comes to babysitting, plans often change. Kids change their minds, or accidents happen, or sometimes the day just isn’t going to plan. I have learned over the years that changes in the plan are totally okay, and going with the flow is often the best way to approach babysitting.

**Communication skills** – Babysitting is impossible without a strong rapport between the **parents and the Babysitter**, and that is built through communication. The job is so much easier when the parents communicate clearly with the babysitter and vice versa. **Communication with the kids** is also extremely important, especially

because it cannot be approached in the same manner as communication with adults. Every kid is different, and finding the best ways to effectively communicate is key. Kids have thoughts and feelings just like adults, and it is so beneficial to let them express themselves. If a kid is behaving poorly, chances are they are upset about something, and getting them to talk about it can often help resolve the



situation. Every kid is different, so adapt your communication to something that makes sense for their cognitive development and personality

**Bring water and snacks with you *everywhere*.** Kids are constantly hungry and thirsty, and it is so much easier to keep stuff on hand than to try to acquire it while you’re out. The first summer I



had my license, I nannied 3 days a week for two boys aged 5 and 2 ½. I learned so much over those 3 months. I was fortunate enough to be able to take the boys on outings to the pool, the library, or just for ice cream. I quickly realized the importance of being prepared for these outings; by the second week, we

never left the house without the diaper bag, stocked with snacks, water bottles, a blanket for the younger boy, and at least 3 small toys. I had so much fun with the boys, and I still babysit occasionally for the family, 4 years later.

**Bedtime Preparation-** If you are going to have to put the kids to bed, try to help them burn off as much energy as possible before bedtime. I babysat for years for a pair of boys who were difficult to put to sleep. I discovered that the more they ran around before bed, the easier bedtime was, so I used to take them outside and race them or play 2 verses 1 soccer just to get them to burn off some steam. Helping the kids burn some energy before bed makes bedtime more pleasant for everyone..



Lastly, try to have fun! Most of the time, all the kids want to do is to play with you. Run the race, play the board game, or plan some fun outings if the parents allow. Babysitting can be as fun as you make it, so make the most of it. Not only does it make it more enjoyable for you, but for the kids as well.

One day, I hope to take all that I have learned about kids and apply it to my professional career as a pediatrician. I have truly loved my time as a babysitter, and I am so excited to continue working with kids in the future.—Cara.





# Sofia Nicastro '25 ChE Shares Her Perspective

## The World of Synthetic Biology



**Sofia Nicastro '25 ChE and Visiting Assistant Teaching Professor Justin Vento, PhD, successfully identified engineered bacteria by visually assessing the fluorescence levels of the bacteria grown on an agar plate**

Every student knows the dreaded feeling of course registration—the uncertainty surrounding figuring out what courses are required, determining what electives to take, and seeing what times classes are offered. When I was preparing for registration last spring, a new Chemical Engineering elective caught my eye: Synthetic Biology, taught by Visiting Assistant Teaching Professor Justin Vento, PhD. I decided to enroll.

This course was special in that it had both lecture and laboratory components, was project-focused, and even included a podcast. During the lectures, we learned about synthetic biology principles, which we then applied during lab time to a semester-long project.

Our goal was to genetically engineer yeast to produce beta-carotene, a vitamin A precursor and one of the

chemicals that makes foods like carrots orange. This is a more sustainable method of producing important compounds than chemically synthesizing them.

We investigated multiple strategies for yeast engineering, including using CRISPR (or clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats) to modify the yeast's DNA to produce beta-carotene inside the cell. I am proud to report that our efforts were successful: The yeast cells turned orange!

This class took place in the Gary A. Gabriele Classroom, a brand-new lab and lecture space in Drosdick Hall named for the dean of the College of Engineering from 2006 to 2018. This unique space can facilitate both lectures and labs in the same room, allowing for a seamless transition between experiments and notetaking. This

enabled us to make the best use of our class time: We could perform experiments on both class days and switch to lecture while in the experiments' waiting periods.

Synthetic biology is something I previously did not know much about, but I now have a much greater understanding of its use and the types of careers in this field. Since this class had a lab portion, I learned valuable skills that can only be acquired through lab work.

Outside of the classroom, I am co-vice president for Best Buddies, co-chair for the Society of Women Engineers' Service and Outreach Committee, and president of

Villanova's chapter of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, my favorite of the roles. I have served on the AIChE executive board for the past three years—one of my most rewarding college experiences. One hugely beneficial part of AIChE was learning from the upperclassmen. Now that I am a senior, I love helping the underclassmen with all things related to our major and Villanova in general.

After graduation, I will pursue a career in the pharmaceutical and life sciences industry, and I hope to use my knowledge to make products that help people live better lives.

**COPY OF ARTICLE WRITTEN  
BY SOFIA NICASTRO FOR  
VILLANOVA THE DEPARTMENT  
OF ENGINEERING DEPT-  
BIOLOGY**

# 2025 Post Graduation



## Andrew Abrahams '24

Andrew graduated a semester early in Dec 2024. He is currently a Franklin Templeton Futures Associate. He brings experience from previous roles at T. Rowe Price as an Associate Analyst. Andrew holds Bachelor's degrees in Accounting and Finance.

**Fun Fact:** Andrew learned to cut hair and started a barbering business while at VU.



## Gianna Altamura '24

Gianna graduated a semester early with a BBA in Accounting. She is now preparing for the CPA examination and working towards her CPA certification. After participating this past winter as an intern, Gianna has accepted an offer and will begin employment at Ernst & Young full time as an Assurance Staff in January 2026.



## Margaret Mary (Maggie) Boyle '25

Maggie is a Statistics Graduate, She is seeking an opportunity in Sports Analytics, Player Development & Data Science.

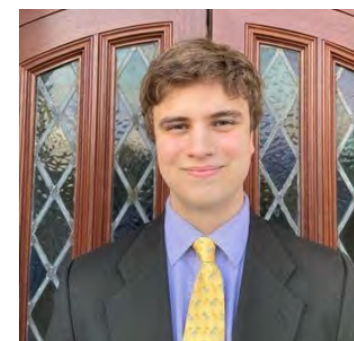
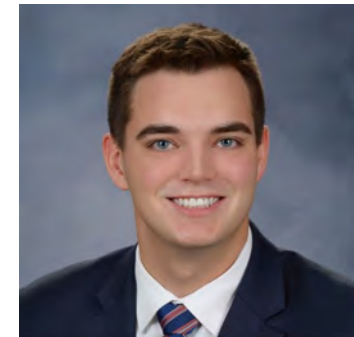
## Michael Ferry '25

Mike Graduated with a degree in Electrical Engineering and is now employed by the Naval Surface Warfare Center Philadelphia Division of Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA). NAVSEA provides the Navy's primary technical expertise and facilities for US Navy machinery research and development, as well as life cycle engineering support for all Navy sea systems. His employment at NAVSEA follows a successful summer internship.



## Nicholas Gross '25

Nick graduated with a dual degree in Environmental Studies and Economics, with a focus on policy and management. He recently contributed to ABI Associates as a Political Consulting Intern, delivering tailored policy analyses on topics: cryptocurrency, veteran affairs and renewable energy initiatives. Previous experience at Tellurian involved market research for a \$1B LNG export facility.



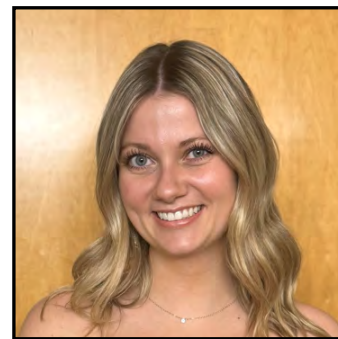


# Post Graduation



## Cara Krien '25

Cara graduated in Biology with a concentration in Medical Humanities and minors in French and Humanities. While attending school Cara conducted research in the field of yeast ecology in the Opulente Lab in the Department of Biology. As part of the Villanova Match Research Program, she worked on a novel yeast species description, and as part of the Villanova Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program, she explored the possibility of trade-offs within carbon metabolism in *Saccharomycotina* yeasts. She is taking a gap year before entering medical school.



## Sofia Nicastro '25

Sofia graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering and minors in Math, Biochemical Engineering and Business, and is now an Engineering Leadership Development Program Trainee at Clemens Food Group. Her program consists of three rotations: She is working in the first one now which is Corporate Maintenance and Reliability. As part of this rotation she is writing SOP's on a packaging machine, reviewing the SOP's with Operations, filing these SOP's and training new and existing Operators. She is also developing a revamped power chain lubrication system. This involves working with contractors and performing calibration tests.



## Ashleigh Reen '25

Ashleigh graduated with a Bachelor of Arts, Honors in Humanities and Philosophy, as well as a minor in Laboratory Science. She received the Karol Wojtyla Medallion for Excellence in Humanities. She will begin studying for her Masters of Arts in Philosophy at Boston College while continuing her work in the Practical Wisdom Project at the Abigail Adams Institute in Boston.



## Nicholas Watson '25

Nick, after working for KPMG and studying for his CPA exam, is continuing his education at Villanova University pursuing a Master degree in Accounting and Data analytics.





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