



2025 Boston University American Heart Association Supporting Undergraduate Research Experiences Scholars

Headshot	Name	Mentor(s)	Undergrad	Email	Biography
	Abdulraqueeb Oguntade	Sherral A. Devine, PhD & Rhoda Au, PhD	Stetson University	aoguntade@stetson.edu	Abdulraqueeb is a rising junior at Stetson University majoring in Biochemistry with a Public Health minor on the pre-med track. As an international student from Nigeria, his passion for healthcare and medical research is deeply personal. He has had firsthand experiences with limited access to medical care and research opportunities. These experiences have set him on the path to becoming a physician and pursuing changes in global healthcare. On campus, he is a Bonner Scholar and actively engages in community service, particularly through my volunteer work at a local HIV Testing Center. In this role, his passion for public health and community engagement come to life. He firmly believes in the principle that we must be the change we want to see, which motivates him to pursue both clinical medicine and impactful research. He is also involved with the African Students' Union on campus, where he serves as Vice President. As he continues his journey toward medical school, he sees the AHA SURE research program as a pivotal opportunity to deepen his understanding of cardiovascular science and biomedical research. As with every other journey he embarks on, he hopes to make the best of this opportunity, and bring himself a step closer to his goal of accessible healthcare.
	Dania Zein	Nathanael Fillmore, PhD	Tougaloo College	dzein@student.tougaloo.edu	Dania is a junior Math and Computer Science major at Tougaloo College with a strong focus on biomedical data science. She has been an undergraduate scholar in the Jackson Heart Study program since her freshman year, where she gained various exposure to cardiovascular health research, data analysis, and public health. This experience has shown her the real-world impact of health disparities, and the ways in which healthcare access and disease prevention efforts can be influenced by the community and culture. Over the past two years, she has worked as an undergraduate research assistant, gaining valuable experience in areas such as machine learning and single-cell RNA sequencing analysis. These experiences have deepened her understanding of how mathematical concepts can be applied to biological research, particularly in the context of health disparities. She hopes to pursue graduate studies in biostatistics or a related field, with the aim of becoming a researcher who applies data science to real-world health problems. A first-generation Sudanese American, Dania is deeply motivated by personal experiences and the health challenges faced by communities in Mississippi and Sudan. Her long-term goal is to use her skills in data science and research to improve health outcomes and address healthcare inequities, both locally and globally. With strong technical skills and ongoing work to enhance her proficiency in Python and R, Dania is eager to continue learning and contributing to innovative solutions in biomedical research.

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	Erick Pinzon	Naomi M. Hamburg, MD, MS	Miami Dade Honors College	erick.pinzon01@mymdc.net	Erick is a dedicated biology, pre-med student at Miami Dade Honors College, aspiring to become a pediatric thoracic surgeon. With a passion for medicine, research, and leadership, he has amassed extensive experience in cardiac surgery shadowing, emergency medicine, and preventive cardio-oncology research. Erick was selected as one of only 20 scholars nationwide for the prestigious Phi Theta Kappa 2025 All-USA Academic Team, recognizing his academic excellence, leadership, and service. Beyond academics, Erick is an avid long-distance runner, completing the Miami Marathon, and a former state champion volleyball player. His commitment to service extends to mentoring, tutoring, and leading STEM outreach programs, including Math4U, which provides math education to underserved communities, including female inmates. Fluent in English, Spanish, and conversational French, he values global perspectives, further enriched by his study abroad experience in Austria and participation in the Aspen Young Leaders Fellowship. Driven by curiosity and a relentless pursuit of excellence, Erick aspires to make a lasting impact in pediatric cardiothoracic surgery and global healthcare innovation.
	Kristen Watts	Mara E. Murray Horwitz, MD, MPH	Spelman College	kristenwatts@spelman.edu	Kristen is a sophomore and junior classified honors scholar majoring in health science at Spelman College. She is passionate about maternal health and reducing healthcare disparities among Black women. Kristen is a Health Careers Opportunity Pipeline Preparation Program Scholar at Spelman College and a Spelman College Pre-Health Summer Program scholar; in which she had the opportunity to begin her journey at Spelman College during the summer. Kristen has researched nutritional insecurities among African American Cancer Survivors at Morehouse School of Medicine, studied abroad in South Africa, and obtained her national phlebotomy certification after her first year at Spelman College. In addition to health-related activities and opportunities, Kristen is a Spelman UNCF Ambassador, New Student Orientation Leader, and Resident Advisor at Spelman College and a part of the Youth Adult Leadership Council Committee with the National Center for Learning Disabilities. She plans to pursue a Master's in Public Health and attend medical school to become an obstetrician-gynecologist (OB-GYN) focused on equitable maternal healthcare.