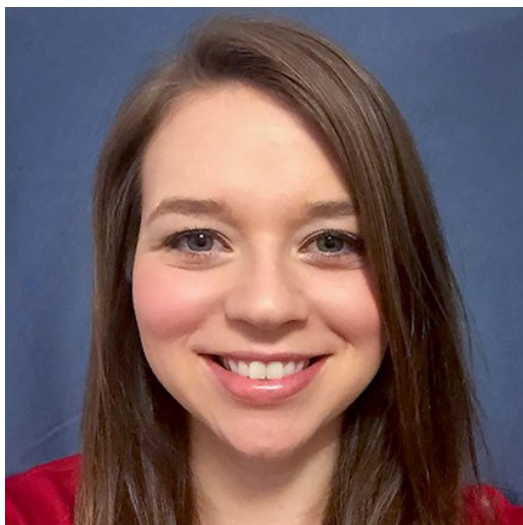


## Henderson biology major attends Vanderbilt biomedical program

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A recent tour of Henderson State University's Simonson Biological Field Station this spring by two distinguished alumni turned into a unique opportunity for biology major Hannah Deputy.

Deputy was accepted into the Aspirnaut Summer Research Program at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. The program provides hands-on and mentored laboratory experiences for undergraduate students interested in a career in biomedical research.

The program was co-founded by Dr. Billy Hudson, a 1962 graduate, and his wife, Dr. Julie Hudson, in partnership with his siblings Johnny Hudson and Ann Kincl. As an intern, Deputy will perform lab work with a scientific team for 10 weeks as they research diabetic neuropathy, kidney disease, and diabetics. The team includes mentors, other undergraduate and graduate students, post doctorate fellows and primary investigators.

"It's a great immersion experience where the interns are embedded in a team working on a scientific question to which we don't know the answer," Julie Hudson said.

Deputy was surprised by the invitation. "I was elated when I learned I had been invited," she said. "This experience will allow me to walk away with new skills and knowledge in the research of biomedical sciences. I believe it will ultimately play a role in deciding the career path I choose for my future."

Deputy's acceptance began in March when Billy Hudson and his brother Johnny Hudson, a Henderson trustee, visited the Henderson campus and requested a tour of the Simonson Biological Field Station on DeGray Lake.

"Our drive out to the station and back gave us time to talk about a number of things, and the conversation turned toward ways to involve more students in STEM education," said James Engman, professor of Biology. "We discussed several programs we have in the biology department and at the field station to involve students in STEM experiences."

"Dr. Hudson and his wife Julie have the Aspirnaut STEM summer research program at Vanderbilt, and even though it was late in the process, he offered to find additional money to make a spot for a Henderson student this summer." Engman said Deputy, a sophomore biology major from Kirby, immediately came to mind.

"Hannah is a very strong student, is already conducting research in the biology department, and is shadowing in our introduction to biology laboratory in preparation to teach a course in our Undergraduate Teaching Program next fall," Engman said.

Julie Hudson said Deputy is an "excellent candidate who seems very hard working and motivated. I think she will do a great job." Hudson said she hopes to bring more Henderson students into the program next summer. Billy Hudson envisions more cooperation between Vanderbilt and Henderson.

The Hudsons want to partner with Teachers College, Henderson and extend the "discovery pipeline" into secondary schools. "We need to reach students much earlier in their careers about the excitement of discovery," Julie Hudson said.

Deputy said she has been impressed by the professionalism and caring nature exhibited by the Hudsons. "They have been wonderful throughout the whole application process," she said. "They have encouraged me to ask any questions and have been so kind to answer them.

"Their program is very goal-oriented and presents an outstanding research opportunity for undergraduate students like myself. Without them, this type of experience would be unattainable, and I am so thankful to them for allowing me to participate."

Deputy plans to attend graduate school in the medical/biological field. She is considering medical school and other medical related programs. She will participate in a research experience valued at \$10,000, which includes an educational stipend, room and board and other costs. In addition to the 40-hour work weeks, Deputy will take part in other activities.

"We pack in a lot of other programming," said Julie Hudson. "Their mentorship starts here with their mentors in the lab, but we also spend a one-on-one session with them in career mapping and doing an individual career development plan.

"They have access to GRE prep if they're interested in applying to graduate school, access to science seminars, weekly luncheons with distinguished speakers, and are exposed to a number of career options. We want to arm them with a set of three-dimensional skills, not just skills in the lab. They grow so much through the experience."

The program began eight years ago and is supported by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases of the National Institutes of Health and donations.

Julie Hudson, program director and co-founder, is vice president for medical center relations at Vanderbilt University Medical Center and clinical associate professor of anesthesiology and pediatrics. Billy Hudson, co-founder, is the Elliot V. Newman Professor of Medicine at VUMC; professor of biochemistry; professor of pathology, immunology, microbiology; and professor of cell and developmental biology; and director of the Center for Matrix Biology.