OUWB Medical Student Awarded Position in the NIH Medical Research Scholars Program

In the midst of her third-year clerkships, OUWB medical student Rachel Hunt applied for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Medical Research Scholars Program (MRSP) and was accepted into the prestigious program that begins in July. Hunt competed against 100 other medical, dental and veterinary school students from across the county to fill one of 55 available slots.

The MRSP is a comprehensive, year-long, research enrichment program that assigns students mentored-basic, clinical or translational research projects relating to their interests.

The curriculum offers students a range of biomedical research (bench and bedside) including training in clinical protocol development and the conduct of human subjects research. Hunt will attend lectures on seminal basic translational and clinical research topics, issues in bioethics, science policy and emerging technologies. Additionally, academic leadership and drug development training will be part of her coursework.

Capstone Research Project prepared her for MRSP

Hunt is grateful for her Capstone experience where she worked in a neuroscience lab at Beaumont Hospital – Royal Oak to determine how radiation therapy impacted Alzheimer's disease. Here, she analyzed cellular markers looking for beta-amyloid accumulation on slides containing stains of Alzheimer's-diseased brain tissue.

"Capstone provided me with a good foundation for this internship," said Hunt. "The MRSP will teach me how to do research that I can apply in my career. I will have the skills and be more knowledgeable because of this training and then I can do the most good for others and be a scientist."

The 29-year-old former nurse discovered a new career path while caring for patients suffering from brain trauma. Her desire to do more than she could for them solidified her decision to pursue a medical degree at OUWB.

"Neurology is a field that I can be endlessly curious about," said Hunt, whose philosophy is to find fulfillment in a career that she loves.

Participating in the MRSP internship requires that Hunt take a one-year hiatus from her studies at OUWB. While she will miss her classmates, she realizes this is a rare opportunity that will be career defining.

For now, she will enjoy her final months at OUWB concentrating on her clerkships and especially looking forward to the one on neurology – the perfect experience for this future neurosurgeon.