

# Students present Mayo Scholars experiential research project findings

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Academics

## Student reflections on Mayo research

By Michael Hemmesch

Four students at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University recently concluded their work in the Mayo Innovation Scholars Program (MISP).

CSB senior nutrition and communication double major Grace Johnson (Andover, Minnesota), SJU junior biochemistry and economics double major Bradley Koskie (Medina, Minnesota), SJU senior nutrition major Jason Matz (Clearwater, Minnesota) and CSB senior mathematics major Dacoda Speidel (Rogers, Minnesota) represented the team from CSB and SJU.

The interdisciplinary program provides research opportunities to teams of undergraduates from Minnesota private colleges, under the guidance of select master's-level business students. Students in this collaborative program work at the interface of science, medicine and business. Through teamwork, they learn the practical aspects involved in bringing an idea to the marketplace.

The CSB and SJU students worked as a team on the project on campus throughout the 2021-22 academic year. They presented their findings virtually, due to COVID protocols, to campus mentors and leaders from Mayo Clinic Ventures in March and in a written report. Normally, the presentations occur at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota with the innovator/project manager and other students in the room listening to the assessment of the research and recommendations. On average, each student put in roughly 175 hours of work during the program.



## Support and praise from advisors

**Grace Johnson:**

"I am so thankful to have had the opportunity to work alongside the Mayo Clinic through the Mayo Innovation Scholars Program. This experience has shown me the true meaning of innovation in medicine and provided me with experience that will be beneficial in future endeavors."

**Bradley Koskie:**

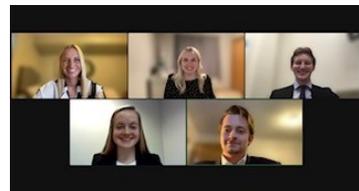
"MISP was a great experience where I gained valuable research and communication skills that apply to any field of work."

**Jason Matz:**

"To me the most rewarding part of this project was being able to collaborate with fellow Bennies and Johnnies with differing academic interests. I truly believe we learned just as much from each other as we did from our own research."

**Dacoda Speidel:**

"The Mayo Innovation Scholars Program was a great opportunity to gain experience working and collaborating with a multidisciplinary team. This program also allowed me to gain exposure to the technical processes involved in successfully getting a medical idea to market. In my future, I hope to be involved in researching and innovating orthopedic and rehabilitation devices, and this program was a great way to introduce myself to this field."



Pictured top row: Grace Johnson, Hannah Mertens (Graduate Student Team Leader from St. Thomas), Jason Matz

Bottom row: Dacoda Speidel, Bradley Koskie

The students were supported by Hannah Mertens, a graduate student team leader from the University of St. Thomas. CSB and SJU faculty members Jennifer Schaefer, professor of biology and department chair; and Margrette Newhouse, John and Elizabeth Myers Chair in Management and director of the Donald McNeely Center for Entrepreneurship, served as project advisors. Lindsey Gunnerson Gutsch, director of undergraduate research and scholars at CSB and SJU, provided administrative support.

"The Mayo Innovation Scholars Program is the best of undergraduate liberal arts education," Schaefer said.

"Students are given a real-life innovation proposed by a Mayo researcher or clinician. Science and business students then work together, "learning each-others' languages", to evaluate the proposal and to make recommendations about how and whether to bring the innovation to market.

"This year's team evaluated an interesting medical intervention device. It was a challenging task because there is no instruction manual – students must navigate a lot of ambiguity. This year's team did a great job," Schaefer added.

"The Mayo Innovation Scholars Program is an exemplary experiential learning opportunity to showcase the interdisciplinary nature of innovation and market opportunities for both students as well as the collaboration of faculty members across disciplines," Newhouse said. "Through conversation and mentoring, we identify elements such as the scientific process and strategic design process have very similar facets.

"Students are required to stretch outside their comfort zone both in terms of the subject matter but also to frame a team and project independently to address an opportunity, a skill they will draw upon throughout their professional careers no matter the industries they engage," Newhouse added.

Now in its 16th year, MISP aims to assist high-achieving students from private colleges in Minnesota gain real-life experience of innovation and commercialization under the auspices of Mayo Clinic Ventures. The students help in the assessment of innovative technologies submitted by Mayo researchers.

The program was designed in 2006 by John Meslow, a retired Medtronic executive. Together with Mayo Clinic Ventures and the Minnesota Private College Council, Meslow created an innovative model for student experiential learning.