



December 3, 2020, photo attached

## **Springstead High School Graduate Selected for Scholarship for Future Teachers**

*Saint Leo University junior on her way to become a science teacher*

**ST. LEO** – Laela Ouellette, a 2018 graduate of Springstead High School, has been named the first ACES (Awarding Career Educators in STEM) Scholar at Saint Leo University. Ouellette, now 20, is a junior at Saint Leo, majoring in biology with a minor in secondary education.

The award carries with it a scholarship of more than \$18,000 per year for each of the final two years of college for qualified students willing to teach a STEM (science, technology, engineering or mathematics) topic in a public secondary school. Saint Leo was able to offer Ouellette the scholarship after obtaining a \$1.2 million grant from the National Science Foundation for the purpose of developing more teachers in STEM areas.

Ouellette said the mid-college award an important boost. “I’ve always wanted to be a teacher,” she said, noting that she worked as a teacher’s assistant for several subjects during her own public school years. And, as a strong student in high school science subjects, she had been advised that schools typically need science educators, and she chose her college major accordingly.

Ouellette was already in her sophomore year at Saint Leo, working her way to becoming a secondary-level science teacher, when she learned the university was starting its ACES Scholar program in time for her junior year. At Saint Leo, biology or mathematics majors interested in education may apply.

Saint Leo Associate Professor Laura Altfeld, a biology faculty member, got to know Ouellette and suggested to the Springstead graduate that she apply for the new award program. The resulting aid helps Ouellette cover her tuition and has allowed her to reduce her working hours

at a part-time job off campus and increase her study hours.

Saint Leo will be recruiting more ACES Scholar applicants with the intention of awarding additional scholarships for the last two years of college to qualified students. When the students graduate, they must agree to teach for a designated time in a school district that needs math or science teachers, or the award must be repaid.

In addition to the financial award, ACES Scholar recipients will have access to special mentoring, conferences, networking and peer development that will last beyond college graduation. For more information, visit this page: [www.saintleo.edu/stem-teaching](http://www.saintleo.edu/stem-teaching).

### **About Saint Leo University**

Saint Leo University is one of the largest Catholic universities in the nation, offering 57 undergraduate and graduate-level degree programs to more than 18,200 students each year. Founded in 1889 by Benedictine monks, the private, nonprofit university is known for providing a values-based education to learners of all backgrounds and ages in the liberal arts tradition. Saint Leo is regionally accredited and offers a residential campus in the Tampa Bay region of Florida, 16 education centers in five states, and an online program for students anywhere. The university is home to more than 98,000 alumni. Learn more at [saintleo.edu](http://saintleo.edu).

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