



## Wang Lab Student Named a 2015 Senior of the Year

From the laboratory of McGowan Institute for Regenerative Medicine affiliated faculty member [James H-C. Wang, PhD](#), director of the MechanoBiology Laboratory within the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and professor in the Departments of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Bioengineering, and Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science, Dhanalakshmi Thiyagarajan was one of two students to receive the 2015 Omicron Delta Kappa Senior of the Year award, which is given to students who possess and exhibit outstanding leadership qualities in service to the University. Ms. Thiyagarajan's name will be engraved in a walkway between the Cathedral of Learning and Heinz Memorial Chapel alongside the names of previous recipients of the award.



Dhanalakshmi Thiyagaraja from Bethlehem, PA, graduated with a bachelor's degree in bioengineering from the Swanson School and a minor in chemistry from the Dietrich School. She also earned a Certificate in Conceptual Foundations of Medicine from the Department of History and Philosophy of Science. She has been accepted into Temple University's School of Medicine and will begin her medical studies in the fall.

Ms. Thiyagarajan is the founder and president of the Gluten Free Awareness League on campus, and she has been promoting gluten-free awareness in the United States and India, working with national organizations, companies, and restaurants. For her efforts, she was profiled in the Fall 2013 edition of *Allergic Living* magazine.

Ms. Thiyagarajan has also demonstrated leadership on campus as president of the Society of Women Engineers chapter at Pitt, after serving the organization since 2011 as historian, membership chair, and secretary. She has served as an ambassador of the University Honors College, vice president of the Outside the Classroom Honorary Society, member of the Biomedical Engineering Society and of CHAARG (Changing Health, Attitudes, and Actions to Recreate Girls), and a tutor for students enrolled in courses based in science, technology, engineering, and math.

In 2014, Ms. Thiyagarajan won the Swanson School's Sustainability Design Expo for Product Realization for a new dental implant mesh she developed. She also was selected by Pitt's Innovation Institute to represent the University in the national "1000 Pitches" competition in the health category for her idea of a gluten-free sleeve to prevent cross-contamination of foods.



Ms. Thiyagarajan also won the Swanson School's 2015 George Washington Prize, was named the outstanding sophomore student leader through Blue Stars Red Carpet in April 2013, and won the president's award through Blue Stars Red Carpet in April 2014.

Congratulations, Ms. Thiyagarajan!

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