



Davidson Institute
Fellows Scholarship

For Immediate Release
August 25, 2022

Contact: Megan Bedera
775-997-5690
Megan@AmplifyRelations.com

**WENDELL TEEN AWARDED \$10,000 SCHOLARSHIP FOR
PALEONTOLOGY ANALYSIS OF DINOSAUR FACIAL ARMOR
Cirdan Kearns Named A 2022 Davidson Fellows Scholarship Winner**

Wendell, Mass. – The Davidson Fellows Scholarship Program has announced the 2022 scholarship winners. Among the honorees is 18-year-old Cirdan Kearns of Wendell. Kearns won a \$10,000 scholarship for his project, *Preliminary Investigation of the Facial Integument of Allosauroidea and the Evolution of Theropod Facial Armor*. He is one of only 21 students across the country to be recognized as a 2022 scholarship winner.

“I am incredibly honored and extremely grateful to have been awarded the scholarship and support of the Davidson Institute,” said Kearns. “Becoming a Davidson Fellow was a joyous surprise to me because it meant that my scientific research was important enough to be recognized at the national level. I am also excited to be included in an impressive cohort of dedicated and high-performing peers.”

For his project, Kearns examined bone textures from the skulls of several extinct theropod species to reconstruct the anatomy of the allosauroids’ facial skin. With this information, Kearns is able to make comparisons to the skin tissues of living animals to infer potential aspects of the extinct theropods’ appearance, behavior, ecology, and evolution. His findings indicate that some allosauroids independently evolved toughened, armor-like sheets of keratin on large areas of their faces, which was previously thought to only be found in the abelisaurids theropod group.

Kearns will attend Greenfield Community College in the fall where he plans to complete an Associate of Science in Earth Sciences before transferring to Amherst College to study biology or geology, with the eventual goal of attending graduate school to study paleontology.

“This year’s class of Davidson Fellows Scholarship recipients continue to find new and innovative ways to pursue their educational and research journeys while striving to solve some of the world’s most vexing problems,” said Bob Davidson, founder of the Davidson Institute. “These students have not just overcome the challenges of doing significant work during a pandemic; our Fellows have embraced the new opportunities that have come from creative, outside-the-box thinking to use technology to expand their networks of mentors and access new sources of information and data, resulting in a very diverse portfolio of projects.”

The 2022 Davidson Fellows will be honored during a reception at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and with a virtual project presentation ceremony in September 2022.

The Davidson Fellows Scholarship program offers \$50,000, \$25,000 and \$10,000 college scholarships to students 18 or younger, who have completed significant projects that have the

Cont.

potential to benefit society in the fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, literature and music. The Davidson Fellows Scholarship has provided more than \$9 million in scholarship funds to 407 students since its inception in 2001, and has been named one of the most prestigious undergraduate scholarships by [U.S. News & World Report](#). It is a program of the Davidson Institute, a national nonprofit organization headquartered in Reno, Nev. that supports profoundly gifted youth.

About the Davidson Institute

Founded by Bob Davidson in 1999, the Davidson Institute recognizes, nurtures and supports profoundly intelligent young people, and provides opportunities for them to develop their talents to make a positive difference. The Institute offers support through a number of programs and services, including the Davidson Fellows Scholarship and the [Davidson Academy of Nevada](#). For more information about the 2022 Davidson Fellows, please visit: [DavidsonFellows.org](#).

###

High-resolution photos are available at
[DavidsonFellows.org](#)