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macaulay profile:

# Whitney Juliet Diaz Gochez ‘16

## Lehman College

**Whitney Juliet Diaz Gochez puts it very succinctly when describing her biggest accomplishment to date: graduating from college. She arrived in the U.S. with her family from El Salvador when she was 7.**

“During my Senior and Junior years of high school I was told I would not be able to attend college because I was undocumented and my family could not pay for tuition. I was named AP Scholar, I had stellar SAT scores, I had a competitive GPA, and I had stellar recommendations, but I was told I could not go to college. Graduation was a far off dream for my family and me.”

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) made Whitney’s dream possible. Choosing tuition-free Macaulay and having access to the Opportunities Fund and personal advisement played a huge part in her decision to attend the college.

“At Macaulay Honors College we didn’t just have one advisor; everyone at Macaulay is willing to give us advice or to help us out.

I’m constantly getting emails about new opportunities or about career development events.”

Whitney has a longtime interest in biology and the ethics of medicine. She was part of internship programs at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, Northwell School of Medicine at Hofstra University, and Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. Whitney also worked on research in pediatric cancer at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center for more than a year.

“I was involved in every aspect of the project from maintaining our model organisms to designing and running experiments. I was also lucky enough to

lead a group of international interns while I was there.”

While attending Macaulay, Whitney was named a Lisa Goldberg-Revson Scholar and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa. She hopes eventually to help others as she has been helped, and wants to serve people in underprivileged areas, particularly in New York.

“In the future, and more than anything, I want to make an impact on the health of immigrant populations. I hope that my story inspires other Latino students, especially those under Deferred Action, to follow their dreams.”