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## UAB's 2009 Goldwater Representatives

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## student feature

# UAB's 2009 Goldwater Representatives

Shweta Patel

The national, prestigious Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, founded in 1986, awards research-driven undergraduate students across the United States one- and two-year scholarships of \$7,500 per year, covering tuition, fees, books, and room and board. Based on the students' academic accomplishments and their passion for scientific inquiry, 278 Goldwater Scholars were selected from a pool of 1,097 mathematics, science, and engineering students this year. Of these winners, two represented the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB): Aaron Neal (Goldwater Scholar) and Luke Stannard (Goldwater Honorable Mention).

Aaron Neal, a member of the Science and Technology Honors Program, is a senior pursuing a Biology major (Molecular concentration) and a Chemistry minor. Career-wise, Neal intends to specialize in infectious diseases, particularly tropical diseases and parasitology, with combined M.D./Ph.D. degrees. Conducting research at a top medical university, treating patients in endemic settings, and teaching at a graduate or medical student level all include Neal's aspirations.

Neal learned about the Goldwater Scholarship his freshman year from the Director of Graduate Fellowships Dr. Nelleke Bak and 2005 Goldwater Scholar Jessica Record.

Listening to their advice, he decided to apply his sophomore year. According to Neal, "though I did not advance beyond the UAB nomination round my sophomore year, the following year, I had bolstered my application enough to successfully win the scholarship," demonstrating the strength of perseverance and determination.

UAB's 2009 Goldwater Honorable Mention winner Luke Stannard is a senior pursuing a degree in Mathematics. He is also a member of the University Honors Program. Working with the interface of mathematics and biology, Stannard has modeled the population growth of both the mosquito fish and the arm movement of the Antarctic brittle star. His long-term career goal involves work in designing and applying biomedical techniques.

Research-oriented UAB has provided an outlet for competitive and qualified students to apply for the Goldwater Scholarship. In the past, eight UAB students have received this distinction; this year, Aaron Neal and Luke Stannard have added to this growing list of accomplished UAB students. Continuing in their footsteps, many qualified students will follow in the coming years to be Goldwater Scholars, as exemplified by Neal and Stannard.



*Luke Stannard*

*Aaron Neal*