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Johnson Named Founders Scholar

*Founders Scholars explore questions and ideas that increase knowledge of the campus mission.*

**Associate Professor of Biology Rachel Johnson** has been named the 9th University of Minnesota Morris Founders Scholar. Founders Scholars explore questions and ideas that increase knowledge of the campus mission.

**Founders Scholars and Projects**
Since its establishment in 1960, UMN Morris has fostered a spirit of self discovery and thoughtful inquiry. Today that spirit is celebrated through the campus’s Founders’ Fund, which supports research that increases knowledge of the campus mission.

Johnson will complete a Founders Scholar project titled “Systemic Racism in American Healthcare: Making UMN Morris Part of the Solution.” She will explore issues core to UMN Morris and the national landscape, “advocating for liberal arts colleges, and specifically UMN Morris, to be recognized as an ideal educational setting to train future healthcare professionals.”

“I am passionate about ensuring the success of all pre-health students, especially students whose identities are under-represented in healthcare professions,” says Johnson. “There are many connections between what health professional schools value in applicants and what our pre-health students experience during their time at UMN Morris. With this project I am excited to make those connections more tangible for our pre-health students so that they can clearly represent their experiences and qualifications when applying to health professional schools.”

Johnson plans to build an advising tool that will better define healthcare pathways and opportunities for pre-health students. She also will look for areas of opportunity in supporting pre-health students at UMN Morris.

“The proposal fits the moment especially well and seems likely to have enduring, long-term benefits for our students and our campus,” says Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Dean Janet Schrunk Ericksen.

**Education and Expertise**
Johnson is an associate professor of biology and a member of the UMN Masonic Cancer Center. She holds a PhD in immunology from the Mayo Graduate School and a BA in biochemistry and molecular biology from Boston University. Her areas of expertise include immunology, cancer biology, and molecular biology. She is the **2020 recipient of the UMN Morris Alumni Association Teaching Award**.

**About the Founders Fund**
The Founders Fund was established with gifts from a private donor in honor of the founding faculty of the University of Minnesota Morris on the occasion of the campus’s 40th birthday.