

# Meet Sienna



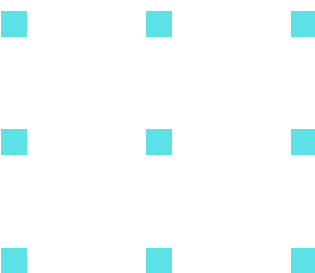
**Interviewer:**

**Hi Sienna! Let's start by having you introduce yourself. Who are you, where are you from, and where are you currently attending college? What year are you in, and what's your major?**



**Sienna:**

**Hello! My name is Sienna. I am from Boonville, NY, and after graduating from Adirondack High School as Valedictorian in June 2024, I'm now a freshman at Clarkson University in Potsdam, NY. I'm double majoring in Biochemistry and Chemistry in the Honors Program, and currently maintaining a 4.0 GPA.**



**That's impressive! What are some of your favorite classes so far? Have any of them connected back to what you learned at the STEAM Leadership Conference?**

**In the fall, I really enjoyed my first-year Biology course, which tied directly to what I learned at the 2023 STEAM Leadership Conference about Climate Change. This semester, I'm taking an Ethics course for the Honors Program that focuses heavily on the ethics of AI use, which relates back to the 2024 Conference I attended. I've also really enjoyed my Calculus and Chemistry classes so far.**

**What motivated you to attend the STEAM Leadership Conference, and what did you take away from the experience?**

**In 2023, my high school principal approached me about attending the conference. After doing some research, I decided to apply—and I'm so glad I did! I met so many incredible people and made meaningful connections. I had such a positive experience that I returned the following year. Although I've now aged out of the program, I hope to return as a facilitator to help inspire younger minds.**



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- **How did the conference influence your decision to pursue your major and career goals? Were there any specific moments that stood out?**

**The conference helped me see how the technology and science I was interested in were used in real-world applications. Before attending, I was passionate about climate change and genetics. At the conference, I was able to learn more about climate change solutions and even had the chance to speak one-on-one with Ginger Zee, Chief Meteorologist at ABC News. That conversation made me realize how widespread the issue of climate change is.**

**Later, learning about AI and its use in warfare made me think critically about how technology should be used responsibly. The conference opened my eyes to the broader impact of STEAM on society.**





**Have you worked on any STEAM projects in college so far?  
How did the conference help prepare you?**

**Yes! I've already worked on two research projects at Clarkson. Last summer, I worked with Palladium Nanoparticles (PdNPs), analyzing how their shapes changed based on chemical conditions. I gained a lot of presentation and communication skills through that project—skills I first built at the STEAM conference.**

**In November, I started working with Gold Nanoparticles in a project that aims to help differentiate stem cells. I'm working closely with a partner and using the teamwork and leadership skills I developed at the conferences. That experience really gave me a head start.**



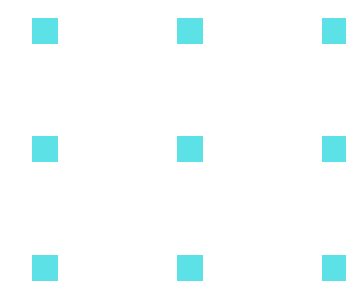



**Do you feel that attending the conference helped you transition from high school to college?**

**Absolutely. Moving from high school to college can be difficult, especially if you've never been pushed outside your comfort zone. Attending the conference taught me how to interact with new people, take on leadership roles, and present professionally. Those skills prepared me for college life, and now I'm preparing for my fourth college poster and attending my second academic conference. The leadership skills I gained at the conference are skills I continue to use.**

**What are your future career goals? Do you see yourself continuing in a STEAM-related field?**

**After I graduate, I plan to attend graduate school to earn a Ph.D. in Chemistry. My goal is to work in drug manufacturing at a company like Regeneron. But one of the great things about my field is that there are so many possibilities—I originally planned to focus on genetics, but now I've discovered a passion for nanoparticles and green chemistry. The horizon is wide open.**



■ ■ **As a woman in STEAM, do you think gender will present challenges for you? How do you plan to overcome them?**

■ ■ **Yes, I definitely expect challenges. STEAM fields are still male-dominated, and I've already encountered obstacles at Clarkson. But I won't let that stop me. If I want to get a Ph.D., I'll get one. If I want to start a company, I'll do that. I refuse to let outdated ideas limit me. My determination and passion will carry me forward—even when I hit roadblocks, I'll keep going. Because if I don't, I'm letting the people who told women they couldn't succeed win.**

**What advice would you give to students thinking about attending the Project Fibonacci STEAM Leadership Conference?**

**This experience is like no other. You'll be part of a team, working on something bigger than yourself. If you feel stuck in the routine of high school, this is your chance to challenge yourself and grow. I needed that challenge, and the conference gave me that—and so much more. The people, workshops, and presentations were all amazing. I encourage every student to give themselves the chance to grow and change their life.**





**Lastly, what hobbies or activities do you enjoy outside of school and work? Do any of them connect to your passion for STEAM?**

**I love reading, crocheting, and playing music. They may not seem directly related to STEAM, but they connect in small ways. I read electronically to help the environment, use leftover yarn scraps to reduce waste in my crochet projects (which is a nod to the "A" in STEAM: Arts!), and music helps me unwind and recharge**

**Thank you, Sienna! Your dedication and drive are truly inspiring. We can't wait to see all the amazing things you'll accomplish in your STEAM journey! 🌟**

