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## **MEQUON TEEN AWARDED \$50,000 FOR DEVELOPING A NEW APPROACH TO PHARMACEUTICAL DRUG DEVELOPMENT USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE Jacob Yasonik to be Named a 2020 Davidson Fellow Scholarship Winner**

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Mequon, Wis. – The Davidson Fellows Scholarship Program has announced the 2020 scholarship winners. Among the honorees is 18-year-old Jacob Yasonik of Mequon. Yasonik won a \$50,000 scholarship for his project, *Multiobjective De Novo Drug Design with Recurrent Neural Networks and Nondominated Sorting*. He is one of only 20 students across the country to be recognized as a scholarship winner.

“I am beyond grateful for my selection as a 2020 Davidson Fellow Laureate,” said Yasonik. “I look forward to meeting like-minded peers from the Davidson community.”

Working from home, Yasonik developed an artificial intelligence-based approach to pharmaceutical drug development that generates drug-like molecules from scratch and is uniquely able to optimize many molecular properties collectively. Yasonik’s new artificial intelligence-based approach could significantly improve drug discovery by reducing the reliance on trial and error and pre-made molecular databases through a generative approach due to its unique ability to optimize for many molecular characteristics at once, which could result in far better success rates further along the pharmaceutical pipeline.

Yasonik will be attending Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the fall where he plans to continue his education in artificial intelligence and its applications in medicine, which inspired his recent work in computational biology.

“We are proud to announce the 2020 Davidson Fellows Scholarship recipients and applaud them for their hard work and achievement in their fields of study,” said Bob Davidson, founder of the Davidson Institute. “By being awarded this recognition, these students have shown immense skill and work ethic, and they should be commended as they continue their educational and research journeys while continuing to work to solve some of the world’s most vexing problems.”

The 2020 Davidson Fellows will be honored during a digital reception on September 30, 2020.

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 potential to benefit society in the fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, literature and music. The Davidson Fellows Scholarship has provided more than \$8.2 million in scholarship funds to 366 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 for Talent Development, 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 for Talent Development 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 2020 Davidson Fellows, please visit [www.DavidsonGifted.org/Fellows-Scholarship](http://www.DavidsonGifted.org/Fellows-Scholarship).

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*High-resolution photos are available at [www.DavidsonGifted.org/Fellows-Scholarship](http://www.DavidsonGifted.org/Fellows-Scholarship).*