Clark Hofstrand, a sophomore in the College of Arts and Sciences, has won the 2022 Biotech Explorers Pathway elevator pitch competition for his mock innovation Un/Less, which aims to combat the increasingly devastating Oriental Fruit Fly that is causing billions of dollars in damages annually, mostly throughout Asia. However, if the fruit flies make it through customs, they have demonstrated their ability to wreck farms in the US.

Fruit flies lay their eggs underneath the skin of ripening fruit, and the larvae will spend 6 days eating away at the flesh of the produce. This contaminates the fruit and ruins potential produce. Fruit flies are very fertile and may reproduce very quickly, which makes them especially dangerous. A single female fly may lay up to a thousand eggs in its lifespan.

Un/Less is a dual pronged product to remove fruit fly reproduction from farms. Its goal is to disrupt the laying of eggs in fruit, while also collecting and destroying the eggs. Un/Less looks to solve fruit fly infestation without the use of carcinogenic pesticides.

Having won the pitch competition, Clark will expand his research team to develop the proposal further. Their proposal will address creating effective prototypes and patents as well as forming connections overseas to determine the efficacy of Un/Less.