Hunter College

The Ruth & Harold Newman Office of Prestigious Scholarships & Fellowships

2017–18 Annual Report

Hunter OPS+F
We may have a scholarship with your name on it...
We may have a scholarship with your name on it...
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The Ruth & Harold Newman Office of Prestigious Scholarships & Fellowships 2017–18

Executive Summary

• 2017–18 was a historic year for Hunter as Hunter students won more nationally competitive scholarships than ever before, increasing the total number of scholarship winners by 69% over the school’s previous high in 2013–14.

• Even though Hunter’s share of CUNY’s enrollment is just 11.5% of all students, Hunter students accounted for 30% of all prestigious scholarship winners last year.

• Among the US News Top Ten Public Schools in the North that published their total number of scholarship winners, Hunter surpassed the next highest-ranking winner by 65%.

• Particularly impressive was our first-ever Rhodes winner, Thamara Jean, coming on the heels of last year’s first-ever Marshall winner, Faiza Masood. In addition to the usual high yield of Fulbright winners, among them was a Fulbright Research recipient and Hunter notched its second-ever Truman and Luce Scholarships.

• Beneath these individual achievements is a foundation of first-rate mentoring by Hunter’s faculty and an increasingly interconnected advising network that supports the entire range of Hunter students.

• Building upon these fundamentals has been an unprecedented emphasis on multilayered “points of contact” between OPS&F and the students, who now benefit from longitudinal fellowship advising over the course of their undergraduate careers.

• Programming such as “Fortnight Research Dinners,” our immensely successful intensive personal essay-writing workshops, customized application mentoring, and interview preparation have created a thick, multi-layered fellowship application support system from Freshman year until well after a student graduates.

• Student outreach has increased dramatically over just one year, more than doubling the total number of students seen and expanding the number of fellowships awarded from 20 in 2015–16 to 49 in 2017–18.

• Goals over the next two years include working intensively with Education Abroad to increase the number of language-intensive scholarships we command; to work more closely with the Scholar Cohort directors; to coordinate efforts with the directors of pipeline programs for promising underrepresented minority students; and to become increasingly familiar with science faculty who employ the most talented of our undergraduate scientists.
Benchmark

The past year (2017–18) established a benchmark for Hunter students in nationally competitive fellowships. Thamara V. Jean (’18) won Hunter’s first-ever Rhodes Scholarship; Matthew LoCastro (’17) won our second-ever Luce Scholarship; and Safia Mahjebin (’19) won the second-ever Truman Scholarship in Hunter’s history. As in the past, Hunter students were well represented among all those awarded scholarships for intensive foreign language study, Fulbright Scholarships, Public Policy and International Affairs Summer Institute Fellowships, and Humanity-in-Action Fellowships. Hunter students also secured an unprecedented number (4) of Jeannette K. Watson Fellowships this year.

Spotlight

Thamara V. Jean
Rhodes Scholar, 2017–18

In November 2017, Macaulay Honors student Thamara V. Jean (’18) was named a Rhodes Scholar. She is the first Hunter student ever to receive this prestigious award. Jean, who was born in Brooklyn to Haitian immigrants and graduated from Edward R. Murrow High School, is one of only 32 Americans the Rhodes Foundation selected this past year. During her junior year, Thamara wrote a senior thesis on the Black Lives Matter movement, which was subsequently published in the Columbia University Journal of Politics and Society. During the summer between her
Junior and Senior years, Thamara worked as a researcher for Prof. Brandon Terry at Harvard University, who is writing a book on the intellectual history of the Black Power movement. Thamara was also a Thomas Hunter Honors Scholar, a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow, and an Eva Kaston Grove Fellow. Throughout college Thamara was active in community service, working for organizations like the activist civics curriculum program, Generation Citizen. As a “Democracy Coach,” she led a class of 12th graders in Bushwick, Brooklyn, to develop a community-based civic action plan that addressed issues such as affordable housing and gentrification. Reflecting on the significance of her achievement, Thamara commented that the Rhodes meant a great deal to her whole family as well as her fellow students: “Both my parents are immigrants from Haiti, and seeing their kids accomplish so much just reaffirms why they came to this country in the first place. Also, being the first Hunter student to win a Rhodes is meaningful because I can play an important part in establishing a path for students who, before now, may never even have considered pursuing an opportunity like this. At the same time, because so many students at my school come from such different backgrounds, we can bring unique perspectives and experiences to Oxford, continuing the good work Oxford has been doing recently to bring in students like me, who will be at the forefront of taking on the unprecedented challenges of our future.”

Matthew LoCastro
Luce Scholar, 2017–18

Matthew LoCastro (Macaulay Honors College, ’17) won a Luce Scholarship for 2018–19. Sponsored by the Henry Luce Foundation, the Scholarship pays for a year of language study and professional work in an Asian country for the purpose of fostering a greater understanding of Asian societies. Choosing students from a select group of institutions across the US, the Luce Foundation identifies outstanding college graduates of unusual promise as future leaders who have, at the time of their selection, limited or no experience in Asia. This year, LoCastro is the only recipient of a Luce from a New York State public college. He is only the second student ever to win this award in Hunter’s history.

At Hunter, Matthew earned a B.A. majoring in Economics and Political Science and minoring in Public Policy. As an undergraduate he cofounded a chapter of the national civics education nonprofit, Generation Citizen, and was elected President of the Undergraduate Student Government; as President, Matthew launched Hunter’s first campaign against sexual assault. Throughout his college career he held a series of internships that helped him gain expertise in economic development, business grant and tax credit distribution, energy infrastructure development, and emergency response infrastructure and sustainability. During the summer after graduation Matthew volunteered on the island of Lesbos, Greece, working to rescue and resettle Middle Eastern refugees fleeing to Europe. Last fall Matthew returned to New York as a New York City Urban Fellow, and so joined 24 of America’s other finest college graduates in a program designed to introduce such graduates to local government and public service in the City of New York. Matthews leaves for Indonesia this summer. After he completes his year there as a Luce Scholar, he hopes to embark upon a career in public service.
Victoria DiTomasso
Fulbright Research Scholar, 2017–18

Victoria DiTomasso (’18), a Macaulay Honors graduate, won a Fulbright Research Scholarship to study the chemical make-up of stars at the Leibniz Institute for Astrophysics in Potsdam, Germany, in 2018–19. At Hunter, Victoria majored in Physics and Astronomy and minored in Anthropology. “In Germany,” she reports, “I’ll be looking at the smallest and dimmest stars in our galaxy, figuring out what they’re made of.” Aside from the knowledge this work will bring about the stars themselves, she remarked, “it’s cool in a broader sense, because stars are little time capsules. Some of the lowest-mass stars have existed since the galaxy was formed, and their composition will help us figure out the evolution of our galaxy.” DiTomasso has already been accepted into Harvard’s PhD program in Astronomy. She’ll begin her studies at Harvard upon returning from Germany. DiTomasso’s longer-term plans are more open-ended. She’s thinking of teaching and conducting research on a university campus but is also considering other possibilities: “I’m passionate about informal education beyond the classroom, in settings like museums,” she says. “I can see myself in a career that allows me to communicate science directly to the public.” As the recipient of a Fulbright Research Award, Victoria is all the more impressive because most of the awardees for research funding are candidates currently enrolled in PhD programs. It is much more common for recent college graduates to apply for and receive the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Awards. In the years ahead, we hope to increase the number of students applying for Fulbright Research fellowships, especially students from those departments that give students the opportunity to conduct advanced-level work in their academic field.

Michael Mazzeo
Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Scholar, 2017–18

Michael Mazzeo graduated this year, majoring in Biochemistry with a minor in Human Rights. Michael was born and raised in Brooklyn, the son of a city electrician and a school nurse. After attending Stuyvesant High School, he and his twin sister, Marie, chose to attend Hunter’s Macaulay Honors College. Deciding on a career in medicine, he joined the Peer Health Exchange, which trains undergrads to teach engaging, student-driven workshops on health-related topics like sexual health and decision-making. He found Peer Health to be one of best elements of his Hunter experience. “I’m in love with the program,” he says, noting that it helped him realize how much he loves teaching. He stayed with it throughout his four years at Hunter, and his decision to minor in Human Rights—unusual for a science major—also reflected his passionate interest in education as a force for justice, equality, and social progress. Mazzeo also tutored in the Department of Biological Sciences and peer-mentored other Macaulay students. Through Hunter’s Human Rights Program, he interned at the NYC Department of Health’s East Harlem Neighborhood Action Center, informing local residents of health-care programs and important legislation. His manifold teaching experiences prepared him well for his Fulbright experience, which places a premium on candidates with some form of teaching experience. Mazzeo’s Fulbright year in Spain begins in September. While he doesn’t know which medical specialty he’ll eventually pursue, he does know that once he’s completed his own training, he’ll devote a large part of his career to the training of young doctors and the health education of the general public.
In 2018, Junior Safia Mahjebin became Hunter’s second-ever Truman Scholar. A Philosophy major, in her sophomore year Mahjebin became a JFEW Scholar at Roosevelt House and was named a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow. Mahjebin was the only Truman Scholar in this year’s class from a public university in New York. She plans to pursue both a JD and PhD in Islamic Studies so that she can advocate for women throughout the world: “I want to make the world a better place for girls and women than the world I came into.” While at Hunter, by testifying before the New York State Assembly, Mahjebin has been instrumental in helping to pass legislation to raise the legal age of marriage for girls in New York State from 14 to age 17. Mahjebin was one of 59 students selected this year for a Truman Scholarship from among 756 candidates at 311 colleges and universities nationwide. Founded in 1975 to prepare future generations for careers in public service leadership, the Truman Scholarship is one of the most coveted of nationally competitive scholarships and supports two years of graduate study.

Myrna Fader
Coordinator of Scholarships & Fellowships

This fall, long-time Coordinator of Grants and Scholarships, Myrna Fader, will oversee her last cycle of Fulbright Scholarship applications for Hunter. In 2011 Fader received the College’s Outstanding Student Advocate Award “for her exceptional skills and commitment to student success.” Under Fader’s guidance Hunter has garnered recognition as a Fulbright “Top Producer” every year but one (2013–14) since 2009, when the Fulbright first initiated this institutional honor. Over the course of Fader’s involvement with the scholarship, 38 students have achieved this distinction. Fader has also overseen the highly prestigious Beinecke Scholarship (last won by Hunter student, David Kanbergs in 2015–16), and until 2016–17 she coordinated the Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship. The Watson is particularly important as an early identifier of undergraduate talent and exposes a great many of our aspiring applicants to fellowship opportunities over the course of their undergraduate careers. Fader graduated from City College with a B.A. in sociology and an M. A. in Education and Counseling. She steps down after more than 35 very successful years at Hunter. Her work with fellowship programs will be sorely missed by Hunter’s students and faculty for years to come.
Our Philosophy

Whether a student is successful in her or his application for a nationally competitive scholarship or not, every student comes away from the experience having learned important things about themselves: what they care about, what they are good at, what good they can do in the world, what their goals are in the short, mid, and long range, how the different parts of their lives connect, and how to tell their story. They also learn that in order to be successful in college and after, they must “create” mentors by learning how to talk to faculty who can explore with them the excitement and possibilities of their disciplines and research. They also learn the importance of leadership and engagement in all its forms, the value of service to their communities, the utility of experiential learning in labs, internships, jobs, and extracurricular activities, the importance of creating a network of advisors and becoming global citizens through participation in some kind of study abroad experience. Finally, they learn that they are likely to fail many times before they succeed and that the key to success in applying for fellowships is practice, reflection, and reapplication. The world of fellowships is literally one in which success will breed success but initial failure is almost inevitable and reflection, critical to the long game and any success that is truly worth having. In the end, whatever “success” a student has in applying for fellowships, our goal is to meet each student at his or her “starting line” and help them go as far as they can go.

A Student Road Map

Students don’t win fellowships simply by being bright and ambitious. Intellectual curiosity, academic achievement, and a sense of personal mission are necessary but not sufficient. Students need dedicated teachers and mentors, which Hunter of course has in abundance. They need a variety of out-of-classroom experiences that demonstrate their ability both to collaborate and to exercise leadership. They need to be made aware of the opportunities that exist, and which are right for them. They need specialized guidance throughout the fellowship application process. This is why we make “ancillary” activities available to students from the moment they first arrive at Hunter; among these critical activities are, study breaks, The Ruth & Harold Newman “Fortnight” Research Dinners, our personal statement writing workshops, information sessions, and practice interviews. One-on-one advising is, of course, fundamental to individual student success, but drawing students into an intellectual/advising community creates a tide that “lifts all boats.” Word of mouth and student role models even at a large, urban, commuter college like Hunter creates peership among students who were previously strangers to one another. Knowing that someone at my school who “looks like me” just won a nationally competitive scholarship can be a source of inspiration that fuels a student’s desire and development throughout their time at Hunter and beyond.

The Horizon

The talent represented by the Hunter student body is undeniable. It encompasses students in all academic disciplines and at all levels. Our goal in the coming years will be to reach the broadest range of students, including students who are high-achieving but because of family and work demands, perhaps, spend little time on campus and are therefore unaware of their eligibility for the kinds of education-enhancing experiences that fellowships provide. Our emphasis on the next few years will be on outreach to more and more of these students, even as we continue to work with those in our impressive
honors programs and those who are specifically referred by the faculty. A specific goal for 2018–19: to coordinate our efforts better with those of science faculty to surface talented undergraduate scientists. Our undergraduate scientists at Hunter have performed especially well in applying for scholarships and fellowships in past years. With some effective cooperation with the faculty, we can provide the kind of assistance to students in science that will continue to make them not just competitive but highly successful in winning support for scientific research. Hunter’s students have done well, traditionally and consistently, in scholarships that support intensive-language training and international cultural immersion. With the arrival of a new Director of Education Abroad, we will have new opportunities to collaborate in raising the visibility of study abroad programming and scholarship support.¹

**Four Pillars of a Successful Fellowship Program**

The four pillars of a successful scholarship program consist of (1) AWARENESS: making students aware of the existence of education-enhancing opportunities; (2) ADVISING: meeting with students individually to discuss their future plans and relevant fellowship opportunities; (3) DEVELOPMENT: identifying students early in their time at Hunter and engaging them longitudinally in activities that give them practice writing, presenting their work and ideas, and building their social confidence; and (4) MENTORING: working with students on their writing and editing skills, their social skills, and preparation for interviews.

¹ See Appendix 1
While every year won’t yield a record number of fellowships and top prizes, students will become increasingly aware of the opportunities available to them; they will learn the satisfaction of sharpening their skills and have confidence that they and their peers at Hunter can take their place among the nation’s best and brightest.

Awareness

Information Sessions

During AY 2017–18, we conducted a total of 16 Information Sessions. Approximately half were arranged to host individual presentations by fellowship-granting foundations (Rhodes, Marshall, Soros, Knight-Hennessy, Schwarzman, Watson, Pickering, and Boren) in which a representative from each organization presented and answered questions. We held two open meetings in which we invited any student whose GPA was 3.5 or above. Invitations to the remaining sessions went out to targeted groups, such as the Mellon Mays Fellows, the McNulty Fellows, the Thomas Hunter Honors Program students, the Mellon Arts Program Fellows, Pre–Health advisees, and the Macaulay Honors College students. In total, we reached about 250 students in these small-to-medium sized gatherings. Our introductory presentation to fellowship applications, which is designed for students who know nothing about the world of fellowships, is called “What It Takes to Compete for Nationally Competitive Fellowships.” In it we explore with students why they should apply for fellowships; we discuss the extrinsic and intrinsic rewards of applying. We break down the essential attributes of successful applicants and spell out what aspiring applicants need to accomplish in their applications to be successful. We also discuss what they will learn from the process by reflecting on its components and walk them through the kinds of fellowships available to them as they progress through Hunter.
Publicity

Over the course of the year we have worked on outreach and promoting awareness of the Office of Prestigious Scholarships & Fellowships. By increasing our presence on social media, we have aimed to make Hunter students aware of everything the Office has to offer. In addition to our website we now have Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts students can follow to keep up to date with Office news. We also have begun uploading slides to the Office’s flat screens, providing the students with information regarding workshops and other opportunities, upcoming deadlines, and award-winners.

Office of Communications

Hunter’s Office of Communications has made optimal use of the college’s interior vertical public spaces by mounting eye-catching flat screens across the campus to publicize student success. The faces of students who have won prestigious fellowships each year are familiar to anyone who spends time on our campus, thanks to the timely, visually-appealing summary of their achievements.
This year’s crop of Fulbright Scholars: not pictured are Maria Malizia, M. Ed., and Lindsay Griffiths, who declined her award to accept a fellowship to enter the PhD program in English at Princeton University.

President Raab takes enormous pride in the accomplishments of Hunter’s students and supports them in innumerable ways. The Communications Office also coordinates with CUNY Central to recognize the achievements of Hunter students throughout the CUNY system.

**Advising**

In information sessions, students learn about the extrinsic and intrinsic rewards of applying for fellowships. The extrinsic rewards of winning a fellowship are well known: students who win fellowships make more competitive applicants for graduate and professional school and for jobs. Winners are more likely to win other fellowships and it’s more likely that their scholarly work will be accepted for publication. Winning fosters their participation in an international community. The intrinsic rewards are less well-known and quite unlike the extrinsic rewards, which students can only benefit from if they win. The intrinsic rewards, the most important feature of the process of applying for a fellowship, derive from simply having made the effort. Applying for a fellowship forces an applicant to think about who they are and what they care about; it helps them discover and articulate their purpose. It also makes them contemplate the consistencies among their various interests and to explain how they fit together. Students are forced to create a plausible narrative about their goals and tell a story about the course of their intellectual, social, and personal development. The international experience provided by most prestigious scholarships imparts an invaluable perspective on other cultures, peoples, and ways of thinking.

In individual meetings students learn which fellowships they are best suited for and at what point in their undergraduate careers they should be prepared to apply for various fellowships. Students learn that successful applicants demonstrate intellectual curiosity, create and maintain mentors, and have research,
internship, job, or volunteer experiences. Students learn to seek out leadership experiences and get experience applying for fellowships, which gives them practice in successfully applying for future fellowships.

The Efficacy of Student Advising:

598 Appointments

89 Application Essays

50 Fellowships Awarded

Student Appointments

Between July 1st and June 30th of the 2017–18 school year, I had 598 student appointments, a 112% increase over the previous cycle, during which I had 282 student appointments.

Application Essays

Over the course of the year past, 89 students came into the Office to work on drafts of application essays. On average, each of these students submitted 1.6 essay drafts for review.

Fellowships

In 2017–18 Hunter students won 50 prestigious fellowships; 50% of these students worked closely with me on their applications. The total number of scholarship winners this year represents a 20% increase in winners from the previous cycle (2016–17), when 41 students won fellowships.

Development

The Ruth & Harold Newman Fortnight Research Dinners at Brookdale

“Fortnight” is a catered, semiformal dinner that Margaret Sabin and I host in Brookdale every two weeks each Spring for Seniors and Juniors interested in presenting their research-in-progress. All Hunter students are invited (both to present and attend) through our email list and through each of the honors program heads. Typically, between 15 and 20 guests participate each time, and presenters may invite their advisors and parents. The idea for this gathering came from my experience at other, primarily residential colleges, which used this forum to create and sustain cross-disciplinary intellectual communities. Unlike the model from which
this format draws, however, ours includes students of all class ranks (not exclusively juniors or seniors), so the forum provides a wonderful opportunity for students to practice presenting their intellectual and professional work and for them to “model” their performance for their younger peers in attendance.

This year we hosted 6 Fortnight Research Dinners, featuring 12 speakers, primarily seniors presenting their senior theses. The dinners are catered and attire is business casual. This year’s presentations included a talk by Thamara Jean, Hunter’s first Rhodes Scholar, and Matthew LoCastro (’17), Hunter’s second—ever Luce Scholar. The topics of the talks ranged from math—our undergraduate mathematician speaker engaged participants in an illustrative game of spacio-statistical reasoning—to exoplanets and brown dwarf stars, discussed in a lecture by Fulbright Scholar, Victoria DiTomasso (’18).

Writing-Intensive Personal Essay Workshops
Twice each year, Margaret Sabin and I offer a week-long workshop (5 hours per day, for 4 consecutive days) to teach aspiring fellowship applicants how to write personal statements. The workshop is designed for students who have never written a personal statement before and examines everything from common grammatical errors to what fellowship-granting agencies are looking for in successful candidates and how to write the most effective personal statements.

Of the 48 students who completed our 4-day intensive writing workshop between January 2017 and January 2018, 88% won a significant fellowship, graduate/professional school admission, or job. Scholarships ranged from intensive language fellowships, such as a Critical Language Scholarship, to the most prestigious of national fellowships, like the Fulbright and the Truman. The one graduate school applicant who took the workshop got into the medical school of her choice, and the one applicant who sought a post-graduation job is currently working at Goldman Sachs as an analyst. We have an ongoing mentoring relationship with the majority of our writing students, with the result that they return, even after they have graduated, to consult with the Office of Prestigious Scholarships & Fellowships about post-graduate fellowship opportunities.

In December 2017, we hosted a fellowship application writing workshop for any student applying for the Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship (open to first and second year students). Each year, the Watson Fellowship chooses between 12 and 15 students from across CUNY and a small group of other metro-area institutions to partake in a curated series of 3 exclusive internships in successive summers. Each CUNY College and a handful of other New York-area colleges may nominate 4 candidates each and, on average, each school wins 1–2 fellowships per year.
This year, 4 of the 15 fellowships awarded by the Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship went to Hunter nominees, an unprecedented achievement. All 24 Hunter students completing the Watson Fellowship application were invited to the day-long writing workshop and 20 attended. Three of the 4 Watson winners participated in the workshop. The Watson Foundation showcased our writing workshop as a decisive and innovative experience for Watson applicants and a model for other Watson-eligible schools to emulate. Regardless of our success in nominating winners each year, this event will become an annual offering because it provides an opportunity to work with students in a substantive way from early on in their time at Hunter and is critical to building a "talent pipeline" for future winners of nationally competitive scholarships.

By the end of AY 2017–18, 88 students will have completed either the 4-day writing workshop, or the 1-day workshop for Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship applicants.

Mentoring

One-on-One Tutoring

My one-on-one work with students optimizes their understanding of what scholarship-granting agencies are looking for in successful applicants. By the time students apply for nationally competitive fellowships, they have already distinguished themselves through their coursework, by research and writing in their primary fields of study, and through extracurriculars.
Applicants tend to be strong writers before I begin working with them but may lack a broader view of the significance of their work or not know how to convey to a reader unfamiliar with their area of expertise what their work means or why it matters. Often, students whose parents come from Asia, Africa, Central or South America—parents who may have escaped their countries of origin under duress or because of severe discrimination—such students take for granted that their families need their support to survive and eventually flourish in the United States. The modest circumstances of their upbringing and family ties often constrains their sense of what lies beyond their adopted city. They don’t realize that their talents and education may enable them to live a much larger life—but this is something they learn through one-on-one advising. One of the joys of working with students at Hunter is that many lack the self-awareness or perspective to appreciate what makes their own biographies such a special feature of their applications. In my one-on-one sessions we explore the uniqueness of each student’s path to Hunter and take an inventory of all the experiences they’ve had that combine to prepare them to make compelling applications for awards. Ideally, the most promising students come to my attention early on in their time at Hunter, so that I can help them identify and apply for the scholarships most suited to their skill level and ambition.

Mock Interviewing
The most desirable fellowships entail one or even two interviews. The Rhodes, Marshall, Truman, Schwarzman, Knight-Hennessy, Luce, and Soros Foundations all invite finalists to interviews that last one or two days in which those candidates judged best qualified to be considered for funding are asked to meet with a committee. It is a rare student at a public institution who has had any kind of experience that would prepare them for the kinds of questions they will encounter in these meetings. Few have been put under this kind of pressure, intellectually or socially. However, it is possible to make up a lot of ground by giving a student practice during the weeks between first learning about a final-round interview and the day of reckoning. Fortunately, each time we have had applicants for prestigious awards, we have had candidates selected for final-round interviews. Hunter’s faculty and administrative staff have pitched in enthusiastically to provide experiences that mimic the final-round interviews for the Marshall, Rhodes, Truman, and Luce Scholarship competitions. This year, Thamara Jean benefitted from the network of former Rhodes Scholars gathered by Lev Sviridov, Director of the Macaulay Honors College at Hunter, to put her through her paces before her interview weekend last November. Sviridov was himself a Rhodes Scholar in 2003, representing City College, where he earned a B.S. in Chemistry, before going on to earn his doctorate in Chemistry.

Picture with Rhodes winner, Thamara V. Jean (center, right) and Pravin Ragan (left), Marianna Dlouhy (center, left), and Lev Sviridov, who were among the former Rhodes Scholars who participated in
Thank You’s

We are deeply grateful for the generosity of long-time Hunter supporters, Ruth Newman and Harold Newman, who created an endowment in 2016 to fund the Directorship of this Office. Ruth Newman (Hunter, ‘54) has been a Trustee of the Hunter College Foundation since 2008 and is a vital member of Hunter’s student Mentoring Program. She and Hal also endowed the Ruth & Harold Newman Dean of Arts and Sciences and fund a postgraduate fellowship in the President’s Office. They have also supported student civic engagement and the renovation of the Hunter College Library. The Newmans’ sponsorship of OPS&F and their ongoing commitment to student development have been critical to Hunter’s recent success in winning nationally competitive scholarships.

We would also like to thank the following “Friends of OPS&F,” chief among them, President Jennifer J. Raab, who recognized the importance of establishing an office to cultivate Hunter’s well of talented students so that they could share in the rewarding experience of competing for and winning national and international fellowship opportunities. Vice-President for Campus Affairs and Dean of Students, Eija Ayraveinen, has been unflagging in her support of my efforts both at the main campus and at Brookdale, where some of our most important developmental work with students occurs. Prof. Judith Friedlander, my immediate predecessor in this role, has been indispensable as an advisor ever since I arrived on an acting basis during the summer of 2016 and has been extremely generous with her time and perspective. Provost Lon Kaufman has been a supportive and important advisor since I first began working with Hunter’s students, and of course, Lev Sviridov, Hunter’s Director of Macaulay Honors College at Hunter, has been a steadfast ally and constant source of wisdom.

Below is a list of the many individuals who have contributed in various ways to the success of our students this past year, by referring students to the Office, providing critical administrative support, writing letters of recommendation, participating in mock interviews or selection committees, or simply by providing the benefit of their knowledge and experience. My thanks to each and every one of them.

Friends of OPS&F

A
Christa Acampora
Sharmeen Ahmed
Judith Alpert
Linda Alcott
Rebekah Alexander
Ronnie Ancona
Vasilly Arkanov

B
William Bardel
Jill Bargenetti
Laura Baecher
Linda Beller
Rick Belski
Manu Bhagavan
Jose D. Blanco
Helbert Bolanos
Derrick Brazil
Jennifer Bright
Neil Brown
Robert J. Buckley
Brian Buckwald

C
Elizabeth Butterworth
Dan Byers
Matthew Caballero
Devin Callahan
Anabela Carrera
Marcia Cantarella
Der-Isun Chao
Yvonne Chow
Leslie Clark
Robert Cowan
Kelle Cruz
Christine Curella

D
Betsy DeNuccio
Nelson R. Duque

E
Sarah Farsad
Latifa Fletcher

G
Julie Gafney
Kevin German

H
Charlotte Glasser
Cris Gleicher
Nancy Greenbaum
Steven Greenbaum
Ivy Hackett-Evans
Marlene Hennessy
Tadd Heuer
Harold Holzer
Joy-An Dian Hopkins
Bing Ying Hu

I
Nico Israel

J
Kemie Jackson
Elise Jaffe
Joshua Jelly-Schapiro
Joel Jimenez

K
Farjana Kabir
Sean Kenealy
President Jennifer J. Raab (right), Truman Scholar, Safia Mahjebin, and V-P of Campus Life, Eija Ayraveinen (left)
Appendix 1

Fellowship Winners, 2017-18

Boren Scholarship
Anthony Edwards (China) ('20)
Chennai Marcus (China) ('21)

Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA)
Fatoumata Bah ('20)
Hajara Masood ('16)

Critical Language Scholarship
Fatoumata Bah ('20)
Eliot Hetterly (Grd) (India)
Saim Siddiqui ('18)

Foreign Language & Area Studies Scholarship
Fatima Tariq ('20)

Freeman-Asia
Rauful Hossain ('20)
Alejandro Quintero ('20)

Fulbright Scholarship
Victoria DiTomasso (Germany) ('18)
Lindsay Griffiths (Colombia) ('18)
Eleni Katechis (Taiwan) ('18)
Maria Malizia, (Italy) M. Ed.
Ardit Marku (South Korea) ('18)
Michael Mazzeo (Spain) ('18)
Marielle Ray (Argentina) ('18)

Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship
Omar Albert (China '19)
Eric Almonte (France) ('18)
Natasha Daneilian (Grd)
Mrinali Dhembla (Taiwan) ('20)
Rauful Hossain (Taiwan) ('20)
Mehrinsa Khaydarova ('19)
Kelly Liang (China '19)
Cait McDonough (Costa Rica) ('19)
Audrey Moore (Taiwan) ('19)
Claudia Paguay (South Korea) ('19)
Libby Pollak (Brazil) ('19)
Alejandro Quintero (Taiwan) ('19)

Humanity in Action
Kevin Tang ('18)
Marharyta Labkovich ('17)
Dariann Rickerson ('18)

Luce Scholarship
Matthew LoCastro ('17)

National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship
Emily Lau ('18)

NYC Urban Fellows
Nicole Krishut ('18)
Maria Ledesma ('18)

Pulitzer Center Student Fellowship
Kadia Goba ('18)

Public Policy & International Affairs Junior Summer Institute
Mariama Badjie ('19)
Christopher Sperrazza ('19)
Jessica Sun ('19)

Rhodes Scholarship
Thamara V. Jean ('18)

Jonas E. Salk Award
Elizabeth Gorodetsky ('17)
Jack Jnani ('17)
Marharyta Labkovich ('17)
Daniela Mikhaylov ('16)

Truman Scholarship
Safia Mahjebin ('19)
Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship
Isabel Gouse (’20)
Shakila Khan (’21)
Melissa Lent (’20)

Appendix 2
Short-Term to Long-Term Plan of Action for the Office of Prestigious Scholarships & Fellowships

Now/This Fall/This Year

1. Meet with and begin to connect all of the different offices that touch talented students: Macaulay Honors College; Presidential Student Engagement Initiatives Program; Scholar Cohort Program; Thomas Hunter Honors Program; Education Abroad; Chinese Flagship Program; internal scholarships; internships; advising.

2. Faculty Engagement:
   Reconnect with faculty who have recently served on selection committees
   Meet with all Council of Honors members
   Meet with Macaulay Honors faculty members
   Recruit faculty to serve on selection committees
   Work closely with faculty and advisers in Roosevelt House

3. Ensure that we continue to cull and properly prepare viable candidates for the major prestigious scholarships.
   Send out a cover letter with an information/personal profile form to prospective applicants that asks them to detail their qualifications and interests
   Send out an email to all Juniors with a 3.7+ GPA inviting them to apply and to write to me for information about the application process.

4. Spring Fellowships Fair: Afternoon-long fair at which students can visit tables staffed by a scholarship/fellowship winner to talk about its content and eligibility requirements

5. In October begin working with rising Juniors for Truman, Goldwater, and other scholarships with spring application deadlines (which fall after winter break)
6. Establish weekly table with OPS banner to publicize OPS to passersby outside the Hunter cafeteria on the third floor of the West building.

7. Meet with and begin to connect all of the different offices that touch talented students: Macaulay Honors College; Presidential Student Engagement Initiatives Program; Scholar Cohort Program; Thomas Hunter Honors Program; Education Abroad; Chinese Flagship Program; internal scholarships; internships; advising

8. Faculty Engagement:
   Reconnect with faculty who have recently served on selection committees
   Meet with all Council of Honors members
   Meet with Macaulay Honors faculty members
   Recruit faculty to serve on selection committees
   Work closely with faculty and advisers in Roosevelt House

9. Ensure that we continue to cull and properly prepare viable candidates for the major prestigious scholarships.
   Send out a cover letter with an information/personal profile form to prospective applicants that asks them to detail their qualifications and interests
   Meet and interview (in June and early July) prospective applicants for Schwarzman, Rhodes, Marshall, Mitchell, and Knight-Hennessy
   Send out an email to all Juniors with a 3.7+ GPA inviting them to apply and to write to me for information about the application process.

10. Spring Fellowships Fair: Afternoon-long fair at which students can visit tables staffed by a scholarship/fellowship winner to talk about its content and eligibility requirements

11. In October begin working with rising Juniors for Truman, Goldwater, and other scholarships with spring application deadlines (which fall after winter break)

12. Establish weekly table with OPS banner to publicize OPS to passersby outside the Hunter cafeteria on the third floor of the West building

MID-TERM PLAN (second half of 2018–19 into Years 2–3)

1. Refine work with high-quality candidates; continue to deepen and broaden faculty relationships (see #3 above)

2. Pivot to intensive early identification of promising candidates for prestigious scholarships awarded before Senior year: Beinecke, Truman, etc.

3. Meet with First Year and Sophomore students in the Chinese Flagship Program and students participating in early Hunter/CUNY-only opportunities such as RISE students, BP-ENDURE, COR-National Institute of Mental Health, Jeanette K. Watson Fellowship, MARC/MBRS Minority Access to Research Careers, McNair Scholars Program, Mellon-Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program, Public Service Scholar Program, SEEK

4. Create a peer-advising network for scholarship application
LONG-TERM PLAN (beginning Year 2018–19 & Beyond)

1. PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION
   Ask First Year Seminar Program staff to work with First Year Seminar instructors to compile a “master list” of high-achieving First Years at end of each year (not just those students with a high GPA but those who have distinguished themselves in their seminars in other ways as well)

2. ENHANCEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE
   Work with majors to organize forum to have winners of Student-Faculty Initiative Research Awards present an overview of their research project from the previous semester

3. Cultivate participation of promising students in noncredit-bearing co-curricular activities (e.g., P-cubed Student Engagement; Model UN and other student clubs that have some curricular relevance/application)

4. Work with Departmental Honors advisors to create forum for their senior thesis students; this will capture some “late-bloomers” who weren’t in a position to apply for Rhodes/Marshall/Schwarzman/Fulbright/Luce at end of Junior year but would be just after graduation

5. Teach seminar (in History or Education Department) for sophomores and juniors in which the final paper is a proposal for a prestigious scholarship
Appendix 3
Criteria for inclusion on the list of prestigious scholarships recognized by CUNY

Students listed in the annual report (and past winners recorded by the Office of Prestigious Scholarships) have won distinctions recognized by the City University of New York system website dedicated to prestigious scholarships. We have removed scholarships that do not apply to Hunter students (e.g., scholarships awarded exclusively to community college students). We have also removed fellowships that were once prominent but no longer exist (e.g., the Jacob Javits Fellowship) and added fellowships that are newly prominent in area or intensive language study such as the Foreign Language Area Studies Scholarship sponsored by the US Department of Education and the Center for Arabic Study Abroad at Harvard.

http://www2.cuny.edu/financial-aid/scholarships/prestigious-scholarships/prestigious-scholarships-recipients/#1450469073023-b4c86fee-4e12

These are the criteria used by the CUNY system to determine inclusion on its official list:
“The agency, foundation or organization awarding the grant, prize or honor should be international or national in its scope or orientation and should be generally recognized as a singular honor. Certain New York State and New York City grants will be recognized, but the awarding agency must be at the highest level of government and the honor must be nationally recognized.”

American Association of University Women Fellowships & Grants
American Chemical Society Scholars Program
American Political Science Association Minority Fellows Program
Beinecke Scholarship
NSEP/David L. Boren Awards for International Study
Clarendon Fund Scholarship of the University of Oxford
Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA)
Coro Fellows Program in Public Affairs
Critical Languages Scholarship
Environmental Protection Agency Star Fellowship
Ford Foundation Pre-Doctoral Fellowship
Foreign Language and Area Studies Scholarship
Freeman Awards for Study in Asia (Freeman-Asia)
Fulbright U.S. Student Program
Gates-Cambridge Fellowship
Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship
Goldwater Scholarship
Ernest F. Hollings Scholarship
The Humanity in Action Fellowship
Math for America Fellowship
Merage American Dream Fellows Program
George J. Mitchell Scholarship
National Consortium for Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Engineering and Science (GEM)
National Institutes of Health (NIH) Undergraduate Scholarship
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship
New York City Service Fellowship
New York City Urban Fellows Program
NY Women in Communications Foundation Award
The Point Foundation LGBT Scholars
Presidential Management Fellows Program Finalists
Public Policy and International Affairs Fellowship
Thomas R. Pickering Graduate Foreign Affairs Fellowship
Thomas R. Pickering Undergraduate Foreign Affairs Fellowship
Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellowship
Rhodes Scholarship
Jonas E. Salk Scholarship
Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans
Thomas Tam Scholarship
Truman Scholarship
W. Burghardt Turner Fellowship
Morris K. Udall Undergraduate Scholarship
UNCF-Merck Undergraduate Science Research Award
Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship
Women’s Forum Of New York Education Fund Awards