



## Distinguished Scholarships Program

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

## Celebrating Students and Alumni

*Who have broadened their educations with  
nationally competitive, prestigious awards*

**[DistinguishedScholarships.wsu.edu](http://DistinguishedScholarships.wsu.edu)**



**2015-16**



## Director's Message



As the Director of the WSU Distinguished Scholarships Program, I have the unique pleasure of talking to, and working with, hundreds of high-achieving and ambitious students who are destined to make a difference. I meet them at new student orientations, workshops, and various events. Some are referred to me by faculty mentors and academic advisors. Still others visit the program's website and come by my office full of questions about prestigious, nationally competitive awards—ones that we call "distinguished scholarships." The important thing is that we connect.

I learn about their qualifications, hopes, and dreams. They learn from *me* that applying for a distinguished scholarship is not for the faint-at-heart. "It's a marathon, not a sprint," I tell them. "I'm by your side and many more people will help us along the way." Then we roll up our sleeves and I help students begin their applications. They write and rewrite essays, weather editors' critiques by advisory board and committee members, request recommendation letters from faculty mentors, and develop poise at practice interviews.

*"... every applicant benefits from the process..."*

I believe deeply that every applicant benefits from the process. They clarify personal and professional goals, recognize their vast accomplishments within and beyond classrooms, and become succinct writers. The rewards from those efforts are immeasurable and may have lifelong implications. As the prominent sign on my wall promises, "the best is yet to come."

—April Seehafer

## Gilman Scholar's Perspective

Araceli Baeza wanted to study in Rome to experience the culture that produced some of the world's greatest philosophers, ones who impacted her WSU majors in political science/pre-law and philosophy. Looking back following her summer 2016 study-abroad month, she said that thanks in great part to Gilman support, she got even more than she hoped for from the WSU First-Generation Abroad experience.

"I took courses on history, art, and critical perspectives while I was studying abroad, and I learned so much about philosophies of aesthetics, religion, societies, and social structures," said Baeza. "I also gained the confidence to believe in myself, and be more open-minded and patient with people from other societies. I learned to work and live well with others who do things differently. I will carry all of these skills I gained into my future career and implement them into my everyday life."

## According to the Numbers

Applicants	2014-15	2015-16
First-Generation	28.3%	42.2%
Low-Income	19.6%	55.6%
Underrepresented	25.0%	35.6%
Women	62.5%	62.2%

**51.1%**

Applicants with double majors

**3.66**

Average GPA of winners

**86.7%**

Applicants from the State of Washington

Gilman had the highest percentage of first-generation (68.4%) applicants

Award Name	Submitted and/or Endorsed by WSU
Boren	2
Fulbright	11
Gates Cambridge	1
Gilman	19
Goldwater	3
Marshall	2
Rhodes	1
Truman	1
Udall	5

**45**

Applications led to

**12**

Award winners in 2015-16





# Distinguished Scholarships Program Accomplishments

## NEW DIRECTOR

In January 2016, WSU alumna April Seehafer succeeded retired Founding Director Sarah Ann Hones.

## NOTEWORTHY AWARDS

WSU's first Udall Scholar (2015) successfully applied for her second Udall (2016); hers was one of just five awards nationwide in the Native American health-care category.

Two new Udall Scholars were announced: WSU's first in the Native American tribal policy category, and WSU's first in the environment category.

A 2015 Goldwater Scholar received his second distinguished award: a 2016 Fulbright U.S. Student Program Fellowship.

## CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

Provost and Executive Vice President Daniel J. Bernardo was guest speaker at the third annual Celebration in fall 2016; unique "WSU Distinguished Scholar" pins were given to awardees, and faculty were recognized for their mentorship.



WSU Distinguished Scholars at the fall 2016 Celebration  
(Provost and Executive VP Bernardo far left,  
Director Seehafer far right)



Children of Udall awardees Rachel Ellenwood and Tillie Torpey  
admire their moms' WSU Distinguished Scholar pins.

## HIGHLIGHTING WSU SCHOLARS

The WSU Distinguished Scholars Gallery became a designated stop on orientation and VIP campus tours; this Compton Union Building wall features the names of 145 recipients of 7 unique distinguished scholarships awarded to WSU students and alumni since 1907.

## FACULTY & STAFF SUPPORT

New Advisory Board and committee members were appointed and joined existing volunteers; 35 faculty and staff members from several colleges and campuses now serve in one or more appointments.

A new Udall Undergraduate Scholarship Selection committee was created; it is the fifth board or committee associated with the program.

## RECRUITING THE FUTURE

A "Recommend a Student" mini-campaign asks faculty and staff to recommend students who might be good candidates for distinguished scholarships; an online form and a printed postcard make the process easy.

A total of 144 students who had earned a 3.9 or better GPA in their first WSU semester (fall 2015) were invited to the Freshman Scholars Progression in January 2016; 25 faculty and staff members hosted information tables and discussed types of activities and accomplishments that boost resumes of students seeking distinguished scholarships.

Hundreds of student touchpoints included one-to-one meetings, summer orientation presentations, the Freshman Scholars Progression, interactive workshops, website visits, informational handouts, and Gallery and other events.

## SUPPORTING STUDENT APPLICANTS

Distinguished Scholarships, in partnership with the nationally ranked Writing Program, developed a new, for-credit course to help students understand what reviewers expect in personal statements. UNIV 303 (Strategies for Writing Professional Documents) meets weekly in fall and spring semesters to help applicants write interest-generating essays on what they've accomplished, and aspire yet to do, with support from an award.

## AWARDS BY THE NUMBERS





## Distinguished Scholars Across the Globe

WSU Distinguished Scholars' prestigious awards have enhanced their studies at WSU and around the world since the Distinguished Scholarships program began in 2011.



## Celebrating Our Fifth Year

The WSU Distinguished Scholarships Program celebrates its fifth year of enabling transformative educational experiences for students. The program assists undergraduate and graduate students along the arduous, but rewarding, path to prestigious awards that fund recipients' academic pursuits at WSU and around the world. Awards make them into ambassadors of our university and nation. In its support of student success, the thriving program depends on the volunteer efforts of tireless advisory board and committee members as well as faculty mentors.



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## WSU Distinguished Scholars Program Board and Committee Members

The WSU Distinguished Scholarships Program and WSU Undergraduate Education are honored to acknowledge those who have worked to bring success to the program and to each student pursuing a prestigious, nationally competitive award. These faculty and staff members make all the difference for WSU Distinguished Scholars of yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

*Thank you!*

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