

Distinguished Scholarship Program

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Celebrating Students and Alumni

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

DistinguishedScholarships.wsu.edu

Director's Message



April Seehafer

Mine is arguably one of the most rewarding jobs on campus. Every day I meet with rising stars, bright students interested in becoming more competitive for national awards. Distinguished scholarships that will broaden academic horizons, expand professional networks, and foster leadership qualities. I am honored to be in the position to help them along their path.

This year in particular, I thought often about WSU’s distinguished scholarship applicants while we planned new webpages and information pieces. One new webpage defines just a few of the many benefits students gain by applying. Certainly, one significant reward includes *winning* a prestigious award. In addition, the application process often leads to self-discovery and self-awareness, valuable external feedback and recognition, and personal growth opportunities.

Throughout the past year, I’ve grown more aware of the qualities held by the students who seek these life-changing awards. A few adjectives likely apply to all of them; by nature, they are generally positive, hard-working, and friendly. Beyond those, characteristics vary considerably—one person might be more creative than logical, another more skilled at written than verbal communication, and another more enterprising than goal-oriented. Yet I’ve observed that the one skill they all cultivate throughout the application process is tenacity.

For example, applicants must approach, and follow up with, their mentors with requests to write appropriate letters of recommendation. They have to adhere to strict timelines throughout the process, ones set by both WSU and the scholarship-granting organization. They may have to compose multiple drafts of personal essays, be resilient and consider input from many reviewers. This year, one applicant drafted 13 ever-improved versions of a required document; and another took her laptop on a camping trip and wrote—quite literally and cozily—by firelight. They were happy to do so, they said.

While the students work hard, many at WSU, including the Distinguished Scholarships Program, seek new ways and means to assist them. Our new Opportunity Fund has already helped students overcome financial challenges so they could enjoy special experiences, such as attending professional meetings and presenting at conferences. Such accomplishments help build applicants’ eligibility to compete for distinguished scholarships. In addition, the DSP relies on partnerships with faculty, staff, and students to recruit, prepare, encourage, critique, and celebrate with our applicants. It’s my pleasure to work with them as well as our remarkable students.

—April Seehafer

According to the Numbers

Applicants	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17
First-Generation	28.3%	42.2%	51.2%
Low-Income ¹	19.6%	55.6%	73.3%
Underrepresented	25.0%	35.6%	46.5%
Women	62.5%	62.2%	70.9%

22.1%
Applicants with multiple majors and/or minors

4.00
Average GPA of Goldwater winners (highest of all awards)

89.5%
Applicants from the State of Washington

65.1%
Applicants with senior status

Award Name	Submitted Applications	Awarded
Boren	4	—
CLS	2	—
Fulbright	3	1
Fullbright U.K.	3	—
Gates Cambridge	1	—
Gilman ¹	59	10
Goldwater	3	3
Marshall	1	—
Truman	2	—
Udall	4	1

¹Gilman Scholars awards require applicants to be low-income students.

Two-time Goldwater

Goldwater Scholar **Keesha Matz** ('18 Microbiology, pictured on the cover) is a published and award-winning researcher whose WSU faculty-mentored work has advanced understanding of the Nipah virus and the *Borrelia burgdorferi* bacterium, a cause of Lyme disease.

In summer 2017, she held an undergraduate research fellowship at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. She studied a protein of the Ebola virus that evades an antiviral response at the cellular level. The future virologist, who also received a 2016-17 Goldwater honorable mention, is: a member of the WSU Honors College; in the STARS program in the School of Molecular Biology; a recipient of a Regents Scholarship to WSU; and, a research presenter at national and international professional conferences. She also studied environmental ethics and Spanish in Costa Rica.

Distinguished Scholarships Program Accomplishments



Director April Seehafer received the university-wide 2016–17 “Outstanding Staff Member” award from the Associated Students of Washington State University (ASWSU). She is shown here flanked by (l to r) Garrett Kalt, Kevin Schilling, and Alyssa Norris, ASWSU members and distinguished scholarship applicants.

HIGHLIGHTING WSU SCHOLARS

The WSU Distinguished Scholars Gallery in the CUB displays the names of 160 recipients of 7 unique distinguished scholarships awarded to WSU students and alumni since 1907. Nearly 100 awards have been made since 2011, the year the Distinguished Scholarships Program was launched.

FACULTY & STAFF SUPPORT

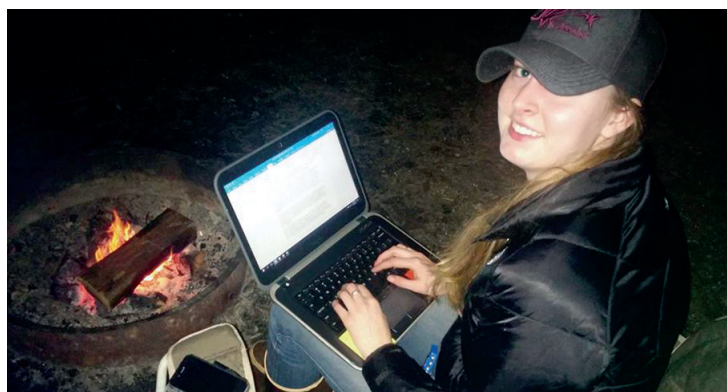
Interest continues to grow among faculty and staff in terms of helping students prepare to apply for distinguished scholarships. There are 27 members on the Advisory Board and on committees. And more than 30 faculty members wrote detailed letters of recommendation.



Recipients of WSU Distinguished Scholar pins at the fall 2017 Celebration are (l to r) two Gilman Scholars, Lysandra Perez and L.D. Hare, and three Goldwater Scholars, Amelia Brown, Julianna Brutman, and Keesha Matz.

WSU SCORES 100% ON GOLDWATERS

Three Pullman juniors were endorsed by WSU and all three women received \$7,500 Goldwater Scholarship awards to apply to upcoming tuition, room and board, and fees associated with their WSU educations. All are WSU Regents Scholars, STEM majors graduating in 2018, and have plans to earn doctoral degrees and enter research careers to improve human health. They are: Amelia Brown, a materials science and engineering major; Julianna Brutman, a neuroscience major; and Keesha Matz, a microbiology major. Their awards represent three of the five Goldwaters won by Washington students; the other two attend Ivy League schools out of state.



Applicant Alyssa Norris composed personal essays in the most unique settings this year—two national parks!

RECRUITING THE FUTURE

A total of 639 students who had earned a 3.7 or better GPA in their first WSU semester (fall 2016) were invited to Freshman Scholars Progression events in January 2017. Over two dozen faculty and staff members hosted information tables at two sessions and discussed types of activities and accomplishments that boost resumes of students seeking distinguished scholarships. Guest speakers were WSU First Lady and Electrical Engineering Professor Noel Schulz, and Psychology Professor Ray Quock.

Hundreds of student touchpoints this year included one-to-one meetings, summer orientation presentations, the Freshman Scholars Progression, interactive workshops, website visits, informational handouts, and Gallery and other events. Academic advisors and faculty and staff members often refer exceptional students to the program to learn about benefits and opportunities.

NOTEWORTHY FINALISTS IN LATE 2017

Two distinguished scholars made WSU history by becoming finalists for two prestigious awards. Ryan Summers, a Goldwater Scholar, interviewed for a 2017 Rhodes Scholar award; WSU has had 10 Rhodes Scholars, from 1907 through 1956, with its most recent finalist in 1985. Alyssa Norris, a Udall Undergraduate Scholar honorable mention and Fulbright U.K. Summer Institute winner, was a finalist for a Truman Scholar award, WSU's first since Truman winners in 1983 and 1990. Both Summers and Norris received strong endorsements from WSU for the Rhodes and Truman.

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.



Our New “Opportunity Fund”

Students seeking distinguished scholarships work hard to build resumes that reflect academic achievement, leadership, and accomplishments. Along the way, they may encounter great opportunities. Those often come with a cost.

The Distinguished Scholarships Program launched in 2017 a new “Opportunity Fund.” It’s in line with the belief that talented students should never feel discouraged due to their financial situation to attain impactful experiences that broaden portfolios and expand professional networks.

Some experiences might present life-changing opportunities, such as a chance to cultivate cultural and foreign-language skills through one-to-one tutoring. Or the opportunity to attend an industry conference, meeting, or event.

Other experiences might help students be more competitive, such as funding for travel to make presentations, or to acquire professional clothing or prepare for national interviews.

More information, including a link to “support students,” is available on the website below. The Distinguished Scholars Opportunity Fund will be featured on WSU’s CougGive day on March 28.

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!*

J. Manuel Acevedo ⁵
Erica W. Austin ¹
Robin Bond ²
Kay Brothers ⁵
Peter Chilson ³
Cornell W. Clayton ^{1, 3}
William B. Davis ³
Rita Fuchs-Lokensgard ⁴
Lydia Gerber ²
Lisa M. Gloss ^{1, 4}
Paula Groves Price ⁵
Stephanie Hampton ⁵
Zach Heiden ⁴
Larry Hufford ¹
Larry W. "Chip" Hunter ¹
William P. Kabasenche ²
Kathleen "Kate" McAteer ⁴

M. Grant Norton ^{1, 2, 3}
Emma Noyes ⁵
Chris Oakley ^{1, 3}
Julie Padowski ⁵
Esther Pratt ²
Tahira M. Probst ²
Ana María Rodríguez-Vivaldi ³
Mary Sánchez Lanier ^{1, 3, 4, 5}
John Schneider ⁴
April Seehafer ^{1, 3, 4, 5}
Victor Villanueva Jr. ¹
Mary F. Wack
Richard S. Zack Jr. ^{1, 3}

¹ WSU Distinguished Scholarships Program Advisory Board Member

² WSU Distinguished Scholarships Selection Committee

³ WSU Distinguished Scholarships Endorsement Committee

⁴ Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship Selection Committee

⁵ Udall Undergraduate Scholarship Selection Committee