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Media Relations

University Of New Hampshire Student Awarded Prestigious Truman Scholarship

April 15, 2011



UNH junior Brooks Payette learns he has been awarded a Truman Scholarship worth up to \$30,000 for graduate studies. UNH Vice Provost of Academic Affairs Lisa MacFarlane is in the background.

DURHAM, N. H. – University of New Hampshire junior Brooks Payette has been selected as a 2011 Truman Scholar, a prestigious national award that provides up to \$30,000 for graduate studies in public service fields. More than 602 applicants from 264 colleges and universities vied for one of the 60 scholarships awarded this year.

Payette, a nontraditional student majoring in political science, received the award from the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation, established in 1975 as a memorial to the 33rd president. Since 1977, nearly 2,800 college juniors have received the award.

Scholarships are given to those who demonstrate outstanding potential for public service and intend to work in the field. The competitive selection process requires a strong record of public service, as well as a policy proposal that addresses a particular issue in society. Payette's proposal, addressed to the U.S. Department of Education, urges an increase of physical fitness activities in schools to address and combat childhood obesity.

"The Truman Scholarships are very competitive, and Brooks' achievement in receiving one is a wonderful tribute to his own abilities and work ethic, and to the support provided by Professor Robert Stiefel and the Fellowship Office," says John Aber, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs.

A senior airman with the 157th Air Refueling Wing, New Hampshire Air National Guard, Civil Engineer Squadron, Payette transferred to UNH in the fall of 2009 after taking a six-year break from education. He joined the Guard in 2008, previously working as reporter and photographer since 2002.


"To say receiving the Truman Scholarship is an honor is an understatement. This selection puts me in an inspiring association of people who have made a difference in public service," says Payette. "What makes it even more special is being the first UNH recipient ever. In a way, I feel like it is something I can give back to a university that has provided so many opportunities for me."


Payette will attend the Truman Summer Institute in 2012. After completing further education, the Berlin native plans to work in the area of public education with a focus on children's health, specifically addressing childhood obesity. A former high school track and hockey coach, Payette is a volunteer for the UNH women's hockey team.


"For Brooks, athletics is part of the overall necessity of physical exercise to maintain a healthy body and at the broadest level a healthy nation. He has the intelligence, heart, and perseverance to contribute significantly to the betterment of public health at all levels of society and for civilians and military alike," says professor Robert Stiefel, who nominated Payette for the Truman Award.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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Cutline: UNH junior Brooks Payette learns he has been awarded a Truman Scholarship worth up to \$30,000 for graduate studies. UNH Vice Provost of Academic Affairs Lisa MacFarlane is in the background.

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