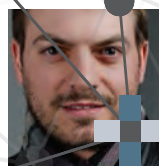
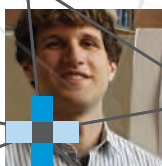
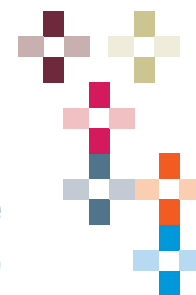


Winning Support



The Center for Fellowship and Scholarship Advising guides students in competing for prestigious scholarships, helping them achieve academic and career success

BY AMY SPEACH



AT A SPRING RECEPTION for students who applied for nationally competitive scholarships, Vice Chancellor and Provost Eric Spina began his address to the scholars, faculty, and staff gathered there with what he called “two very important words”: thank you.

“THANK YOU FOR WORKING very hard, doing important work for the institution, and representing us very well,” he said, commending students not only for their academic achievements, but also for taking advantage of



all Syracuse University has to offer, in and out of the classroom. He went on to acknowledge faculty and staff who were present at the event, which was hosted by the Center for Fellowship and Scholarship Advising, thanking them for supporting student success through their considerable efforts as teachers, mentors, coaches, and advisors. “That’s what makes Syracuse a great institution,” said Spina (pictured above). “It’s a holistic environment in which students can really begin to achieve their dreams and aspirations.”

Working together to uphold and encourage student achievement is the overarching goal of the Center for Fellowship and Scholarship Advising (CFSA). Established in 2012, it provides information, mentoring, and support for students and alumni interested in applying for national scholarships and

fellowships, including such renowned awards as the Fulbright, Rhodes, and Truman, as well as a wealth of other opportunities offered by private foundations and government agencies in diverse fields and countries. Co-directed by Kate Hanson and Judith O’Rourke ’75, G’10, CFSA offers information sessions, writing workshops, and one-on-one consultations throughout the academic year. The center also collaborates with some 50 staff and faculty mentors across campus to get the word out about scholarships and fellowships, match students with the opportunities that best meet their goals and capabilities, and guide them through the application process. “It’s important to emphasize the role of faculty in this process,” says Hanson, assistant director of scholarship and fellowship preparation in the Renée Crown University Honors Program. “They are the ones who mentor students and direct their research and make sure they are aware of the big and small opportunities. So they play a critical role in preparing students to be successful in their applications.”

Faculty also help identify the University’s shining stars and hidden gems, including exceptional students like John Giammatteo ’11, SU’s first recipient of the highly selective Marshall Scholarship. His volunteer

experience with a refugee family during the summer before his sophomore year at SU ignited a passionate interest in forced migration and led him to study abroad in India, collaborative research in Thailand, and, eventually, graduate studies in global migration and Southeast Asia studies in London. He urges other students to seek out opportunities through the CFSA. “Preparing for these scholarships is instrumental and is a means rather than an end,” says Giammatteo (pictured below), who begins law studies at Yale University in September.

O’Rourke, too, affirms the value of the application process, even in those cases when students aren’t selected to win awards. “Applying for these scholarships can be a culmination of a student’s academic program and a stepping stone to the next phase, whether in another academic area, such as a master’s or Ph.D. degree, or a job,” says O’Rourke, director of undergraduate studies. As an example, she points to Natascha Trellinger ’13, a College of Engineering and Computer Science graduate. Although Trellinger wasn’t awarded the Fulbright she sought, the application process helped clarify her goals and contributed



to her acceptance at Purdue University's School of Engineering Education, where she has a doctoral fellowship. "So it's not just about completing applications or getting scholarships," O'Rourke says, "but about how to help students have the best experience they can at Syracuse University, so they are positioned for the next stage to really succeed and make a contribution."

Since the center was estab-

lished, increased numbers of Syracuse students and alumni are applying for and winning prestigious scholarships. For example, the University was named by the Fulbright program as a top-producing institution of U.S. Fulbright students in 2012-13. This year, CFSA assisted 119 students with 131 award applications, more than 50 of whom won scholarships or fellowships, with 10 others named as final-

ists or honorable mentions. More than 400 students attended information sessions, writing workshops, or sought individual advising. "One of our goals now is to reach students as early as possible in their time at SU, making sure they take full advantage of all the resources we have here," Hanson says. Another objec-

tive is to continue to increase the numbers of applicants, and to reach out to students within a greater breadth of disciplines. "SU students are inspiring," she says. "They have great ideas and will have an important impact on their fields. It's exciting to be a part of that, and to help them in any way we can."

Meet six SU students and alumni who share their experiences of winning a nationally competitive fellowship or scholarship.



ASTRONAUT SCHOLAR

Ryan Milcarek '14, a mechanical engineering major in the College of Engineering and Computer Science (E&CS), received the Astronaut Scholarship in 2013. The Astronaut Scholarship Foundation annually awards the \$10,000 scholarship to 26 science and engineering students nationwide who exhibit exceptional performance, initiative, and creativity in their field.

Ryan Milcarek '14 meets Astronaut Hall of Fame inductee Shannon Lucid.

What inspired you to enter the engineering field?

I was originally an industrial design major at SU and loved it. But after my first year, I went on a church mission trip for two years and served in some areas in Nevada that were impoverished. I saw a lot of poor living conditions, and seeing those situations just changed me. I started to worry that the foundation I was getting didn't have enough science, math, and technical background for me to really make the change in the world I wanted to make. So when I came back I decided to switch to engineering and focus on the energy field. That felt like the right thing for me. And it's been good.

What did the Astronaut Scholarship mean for you and how has it helped you?

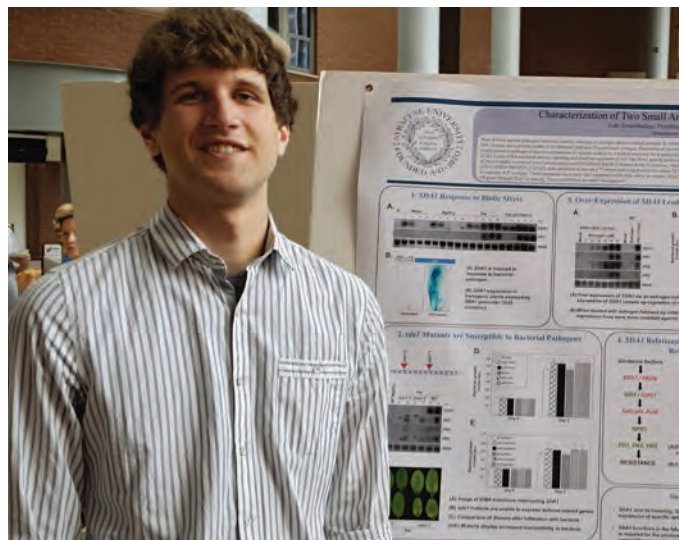
The scholarship supports undergraduate researchers so they have the funding and desire to keep going forward. And that's been true for me. I'm getting ready to start Ph.D. work here at Syracuse in the fall. But there have been times I've wondered, "Do I really want to continue going to school?" I have a family. I have a wife and daughter, and another baby on the way. It's crazy trying to balance schedules. It would be so much easier to just go to work and come home at 5 o'clock every night and be done. But I believe that I got the chance to do this and I'm go-

ASTRONAUT SCHOLAR AND GOLDWATER SCHOLAR

Luke Strauskulage '15, a biotechnology major in the College of Arts and Sciences and a student in the Renée Crown University Honors Program, was awarded both a 2014 Astronaut Scholarship and a Goldwater Scholarship. The Goldwater is a prestigious national award of up to \$7,500 per year for one to two years, presented to outstanding students pursuing research careers in mathematics, natural sciences, or engineering.

Your goal is to pursue a Ph.D. degree in molecular biology. Was that your focus when you arrived at SU?

No, I came in as a dual biology and science education major, thinking I'd either like to teach or do something like vet school or med school. But when I met Dr. Ramesh Raina [biology department chair] during Freshman Forum, he encouraged everyone who was in science to get into a research lab. He was nice enough to take me into his lab, and has been encouraging me to pursue research as a career ever since. Having that



experience, and his support, has changed my perspective about what I want to do. I wasn't really aware of the possibility of a research career before I came here.

Describe the research you're working on.

In Dr. Raina's lab, we work with plant defense, looking at what sort of genes are related to keeping plants healthy when threatened with pathogens, like bacteria or fungus. We work with a model plant system, not actual crops, working out which genes are related to keeping the plant healthy on its own and asking if we could potentially manipulate that to keep the plant healthier in the long run. If we could prevent crop loss to disease and pathogens, then in theory there should not be a food shortage in the world. That's what this research would go toward: keeping crops healthy,

which not only saves money and feeds people, but could also be good for the environment, because if you have a crop that is healthier and more resistant on its own, fewer pesticides would need to be used.

What helped your application for the Goldwater Scholarship stand out among others?

One thing that may have helped was my work as a freshman in Dr. Jon Zubieta's chemistry research lab studying solid state coordination chemistry. I was able to generate several novel crystal structures, and my work from the lab has been published. There was also my time in Dr. Raina's lab, where I began working last summer through the Ruth Meyer Undergraduate Research Scholars program [in the College of Arts and Sciences]. I would say that my extracurricular activities helped, too. I am part of the SU Club Quidditch Team—a new sport based on the game in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series and focused on gender inclusion in athletics. I am also a part of the undergraduate Mock Trial Team in A&S, which is something I wrote about in my application, describing how it helped me learn about problem solving from a different perspective. These activities are somewhat unique for a science student, and may have helped make my application memorable.

ing to finish it. Having the support of the Astronaut Scholarship helped me to continue.

What mentors and experiences have been especially important to you at SU?

My advisor, Professor Frederick Carranti, has been phenomenal. When I started in engineering, he hired me as an energy analyst with the U.S. Department of Energy's Industrial Assessment Center. [Carranti is founding director of the Syracuse IAC, which is based in E&CS.] Working in the IAC changed everything. I would have been so focused on the books and what's in the books. But being in the IAC, we see real-world problems and find real-world solutions to them. I'm doing what I'd be doing if I were to go into the industry right now.

How has your relationship with the Center for Fellowship and Scholarship Advising been helpful?

I first went to the center in fall 2012 to discuss scholarship opportunities. They put on workshops to teach how to write your personal statement and get you through the basics to apply. I met with Kate Hanson at the center again this spring, which was very helpful. She showed me four additional fellowships I can apply for and encouraged me to get started over the summer. So that's my plan.





FULBRIGHT ENGLISH TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP SCHOLAR

Jennifer-Lee Nieves Álvarez '13, a College of Arts and Sciences/Maxwell School graduate who begins master's degree studies at the Maxwell School in the fall, received a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) to live and work in South Korea this past academic year. The Fulbright ETA is an aspect of the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, which provides grants for individually designed study and research projects abroad and facilitates international cultural exchange.

Why was the Fulbright ETA a good fit for you?

As an international relations major, I have always been interested in other languages and cross-cultural exchange. In 2012, I visited Korea as part of an exchange program between the U.S. Congress and the Korean National Assembly and learned about U.S.-Korea foreign relations and Korean politics and culture. The Fulbright ETA gave me the opportunity to return to Korea to share my own culture and immerse myself in the Korean culture while living with a host family, teaching at an elementary school, studying the language, and volunteering as a tutor.

Describe a memorable time during your stay in South Korea.

One memory that stands out was the first time I met North Korean defectors at a Hana Center [government resettlement center] where Fulbright ETAs tutor. We ate one of my favorite dishes, *bibimbap*, a mix of rice, vegetables, and meat. Although there was a language barrier—my knowledge of Korean was very basic and the students didn't speak any English—through simple Korean sentences we were able to talk about Korean pop culture, their favorite singers, actors, and dramas. Often foreigners and even South Koreans have an idea of how North Koreans should look or behave; however, through our conversation—and after months of tutoring

them and even celebrating Christmas together—I learned they are like any other teenagers or young adults.

What did you do for fun and relaxation?

I traveled whenever I had the opportunity. I visited many cities in Korea, attended festivals, such as the Busan International Film Festival, and traveled abroad in the region. Since coffee culture is big in Korea, I liked to go to a café and have some green tea or enjoy the sunny weather while eating *patbingsu*, Korean shaved ice with red beans and fruits. Koreans enjoy the outdoors and love hiking. Even though I'm not very athletic, I went hiking a couple of times and enjoyed the beautiful landscape, rivers, and temples around the mountains. I also met a Korean lady who offered cooking classes with whom I exchanged recipes. I learned how to make some traditional Korean food, while she learned how to make Puerto Rican rice and some French recipes.



GILMAN SCHOLAR

Ivan Zhivkov '15 is a history and international relations major in the College of Arts and Sciences/Maxwell School from New York City who was born in Bulgaria. He received a Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship to spend the fall 2013 semester in Istanbul, Turkey, through SU Abroad. Gilman Scholarships, which are sponsored by the U.S. Department of State for U.S. citizens receiving federal financial aid, award up to \$8,000 to students traditionally underrepresented in study abroad programs.

What did you do in Turkey?

Besides taking classes, I connected with a center in Istanbul that catered to Syrian and African refugees—providing basic services and a community where they could talk about what they were experiencing and receive some instruction. I got to interview some of the families who were there with the help of my companion who spoke a little bit of Arabic. And I spoke with the people running the shelter—an American religious organization—about why they decided to help out, why some families are coming to them, and what problems they are facing. That got me in touch with more than just the regular day-to-day things about my life in Turkey to meet people who just arrived and don't have strong roots in the country and to try to help them out as best I could.

Describe someone interesting you met during your stay.

The Gilman Scholarship provided me the opportunity to meet and interact with the U.S. consulate general of Istanbul, who was a Foreign Service officer. He invited the Gilman students to Thanksgiving dinner at his residence. It was a great experience. I spoke with him in regard

to his travel in the Foreign Service and he said you not only get to learn about different cultures, but you pick up languages and establish connections. And I would definitely like to do something similar after graduate school, something in the Foreign Service that involves traveling and interacting with others.

What was one of the most meaningful experiences of your trip?

One time in my first few weeks, in one of my classes I was the only non-Turkish student and the professor made introductions and asked me a bunch of questions. And after the class some people approached me and we became quick friends. They took me around to some historical museums and to some of their favorite places that were not touristy destinations, kind of giving me an inside feel for the city. So it was amazing, just making friends with them. We still keep in contact, and a few of the friends I met over there studied here at SU this semester. They didn't want to go back at the end. It was a little bit sad when they left, but I'm just so glad they came.

FULBRIGHT ENGLISH TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP SCHOLAR

Stephanie Claytor '10 is a Newhouse and College of Arts and Sciences/Maxwell School alumna who is a multimedia journalist at KTAL, the NBC affiliate in Shreveport, Louisiana. She received a 2010 Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) to live and work in Colombia.

What did it mean to you to receive the Fulbright ETA?

It meant the world to me. At the time, I knew I did not want to enter the workforce, and instead wanted to travel and explore the world. After studying in the Dominican Republic in 2008, I felt I had some unfinished business in Latin America. I was fascinated with it and wanted to live abroad for a year instead of just a semester. So to receive that opportunity was phenomenal. While there, I was surrounded by many intellectuals, Colombians and Americans. Many of them I am still friends with today. I say now it was the best job ever.

What did you do in Colombia?

I worked at La Universidad de la Sabana, where I led English conversation classes, taught an intermediate English class, tutored master's students, proctored exams, and ran an English radio show. In my spare time I blogged in Spanish for "Afrocolombianidad," a blog hosted by the leading newspaper in Bogota. I



also gave black history presentations around the country on behalf of the U.S. Embassy. My side project was creating videos about Afro-Colombian culture.

What mentors or experiences at SU were especially helpful to you?

While studying at Syracuse, I had many experiences and influential people enter my life that led me to securing a Fulbright. My first roommate was Dominican. She helped me with my Spanish. I was a member of the Raices Dance Troupe, an experience that helped me learn various types of Latin dances, a huge asset in Colombia. I studied abroad in the Dominican Republic. My host sister introduced me to the Fulbright program because she was applying for one to go to the

United States. She also wrote my recommendation letter. While taking the Afro-Latin America class at Syracuse, my professor enlightened me about Colombia's black population. A combination of these experiences inspired me to apply for a Fulbright.

How did your experience contribute to your career goals?

Being a Fulbright alum helped me become fluent in Spanish. While living there, I dreamed and thought in Spanish. My Spanish-speaking abilities have been an enormous asset in my ability to get television reporter jobs. Also, since I was teaching English, it made me more cognizant of my own English speaking habits and helped me polish my English.



FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR

Robert Clines G'14 is a Maxwell School graduate with a doctoral degree in history who begins a faculty position at Western Carolina University this fall. As a 2012-13 recipient of the highly competitive U.S. Fulbright grant, he spent nine months in Italy conducting research for his dissertation.

Describe your research in Italy.

My research work was on Catholic missions to the Middle East between 1550 and 1650. Those archival sources are located in Rome, so I worked in several archives there, reading 16th- and 17th-century manuscripts and writing my dissertation. The manuscripts are all handwritten. They are original documents—letters written in the 1560s and '70s in a variety of languages. I worked primarily in Italian.

How did your interest in the topic originate?

As an undergraduate I went to John Carroll University, a small private school in Ohio run by Jesuit priests, where I got interested in Jesuit history. The Jesuits are known for their educational skills. They're teachers. That's what they do. So then I did a master's degree at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. My master's thesis was on Jesuit education in a church in Rome, and I stumbled upon a bunch of sources relating to Jesuit missions to the Middle East. It was

fascinating to read. I found there was way more than I could use for my master's thesis, so that became my dissertation topic. I also had a personal interest in the topic because my mother's parents—my grandparents—are Lebanese.

What was your experience like living in Rome?

I've lived in Rome off and on for 10 years now, so in many ways it was like going home. I have a lot of friends there, both English language ex-pats who are tour guides and work in pubs, and also Italians and other historians. It's a great place to live. The food is fantastic. And if they get the sense you're not a tourist, they're very friendly, especially if you know some Italian. It can be difficult though. It's a large city, and not the most efficient city in the world. In July it's extremely hot and there's not a lot of air conditioning. There are a lot of traffic strikes and transit strikes. So that's always a good excuse to not go to the archive and go to the beach instead.

What advice would you offer to other students interested in applying for a nationally competitive scholarship?

It's all about fostering relationships with people who can put you in a position to win one. That's key. It's important to know what you want to do in advance—if the application due date is in October, you should be thinking about it in June. And one other thing: The best way to ensure you never win an award is to not apply. So just try. «

