

2017-2018

Union College Students Selected For National Fellowships & Scholarships



For more information about applying for
National Fellowships & Scholarships, please contact:

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Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) Student Award

The English Teaching Assistant (ETA) Programs place Fulbrighters in classrooms abroad to provide assistance to the local English teachers. ETA’s help teach English language while serving as cultural ambassadors for the U.S. The age and academic level of the students varies by country, ranging from kindergarten to university level. Applicants for ETA Programs can apply to only one country.

Gianluca Avanzato ’18 (Germany)

As a Fulbright ETA, Avanzato will spend approximately 12 hours per week in the classroom assisting English teachers and leading English activities in a German elementary, middle, or secondary school. The rest of the time he will be immersing himself in German life, culture and writing. After completing his Fulbright Fellowship, Avanzato plans to pursue a Master’s degree in a field related to political theory, such as human geography, and then pursue a PhD in political theory.

How does this fellowship tie into your Union education?

“During my time at Union, I’ve taken several language classes—not just German, but also Chinese, Arabic, Latin, and Ancient Greek. These foreign/ancient languages supplemented my English language writing for political science and poetry courses, and allowed me to gain a deep appreciation for close reading, translation, and literature. I also studied abroad in Germany as a sophomore; I had a fantastic experience which included an independent study with Professor Nelson-Mukherjee that focused on creative responses to the writings of Hermann Hesse, a celebrated German writer.”



Hannah Rayhill ’18 (Greece)

As a Fulbright ETA, Rayhill will be providing a cross-cultural educational experience at the Hellenic American Educational Foundation (HAEF) for children in elementary, middle, or secondary school. Hannah will also serve as a coach and mentor in the Forensics Club—the School’s largest English language theater and debate club—where she will be able to connect with the students in a fun, creative, and supportive setting. At the end of the school year, Hannah will be a camp counselor at HAEF’s English language Summer Camp in June-July. After completing her Fulbright Fellowship, Rayhill plans to pursue a Ph.D. in either Anthropology or English. She then plans to teach at an international university and aid in the spread of self-assured free and tolerant thought across disciplines and cultures.

Why did you decide to apply for the Fulbright ETA?

“I firmly believe that I was meant to wander the earth and positively impact every environment I find myself in. I knew that I wanted to go abroad after school so I looked into fellowships and found the Fulbright. I read the candidate profile for Greece and that was it—I had found my dream and goal and started the application.”



Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) Student Award

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Abigail Salamone ’18 (Taiwan)

ETAs in Taiwan are placed full-time in one or more elementary or junior high schools, usually assisting local English teachers. A few may teach independently. Salamone and Salisbury will be in-school 35 hours per week teaching, consulting with teachers on American cultural issues and assisting in the editing or writing of educational materials for English teaching. Also, all ETAs are required to have service projects during the grant period. This service work is in the assigned host community - making connections with person-to person and doing genuinely contribution to communities for the better.

What are some experiences here at Union that helped prepare you for being a Fulbright ETA?
“Besides my Chinese and Anthropology courses here, I think my term abroad in India has helped me prepare for this fellowship. India allowed me to completely immerse myself in a culture different than my own, go out of my comfort zone, and see the world from a different perspective; making me more confident to do the same during my Fulbright fellowship.”



Jenna Salisbury ’18 (Taiwan)

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“Being a contributor in the growth and education of others is both admittedly rewarding and a catalyst for long term improvement as a leader and a teacher. While serving as an AOP English Tutor and mentor for Writing Our Communities, a mentorship program that pairs college undergraduates with local high school students, I experienced first-hand the potency of language, especially in the written form. The program involved weekly and bi-weekly workshops designed to improve the students’ articulation and expression in writing. Within a few short weeks, I saw immense improvement in my mentee’s writing (who spent her childhood in Trinidad). I saw how a better understanding of English and the written word contributed to her confidence and ability to argue and express her ideas effectively and provoke others to think. This is what I would like to achieve overseas: to offer students the opportunity to practice and improve their English and have another avenue of expression, another voice through which they can articulate their ideas across continental boundaries.”



Fulbright Student Research Award

The Fulbright US Student Program offers research, study and teaching opportunities in over 140 countries to recent college graduates, graduate students and developing professionals and artists. The program facilitates cultural exchange through direct interaction on an individual basis in the classroom, field, home, and in routine tasks, allowing the grantee to gain an appreciation of others' viewpoints and beliefs, the way they do things, and the way they think. Through engagement in the community, the individual will interact with their hosts on a one-to-one basis in an atmosphere of openness, academic integrity, and intellectual freedom, thereby promoting mutual understanding.

Elizabeth Donlon '18 (Germany)

How does this program tie into your Union education?

"I will be conducting research in a mechanical engineering laboratory focusing on instabilities in flames in combustion. Throughout my time at Union I have worked in the Aerogel Lab conducting research mostly focused on after treatment for exhaust from combustion engines. Both my classes and my research have taught me how to think critically, be inquisitive and to collaborate, which led me to want to apply for the fellowship."



Alexandra Novak '17 (Paraguay)

How does this program tie into your Union education?

"My Union education had a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary studies, and this fellowship allows me to combine liberal arts and science as I will be doing research in another language. Also, Union has a lot of sustainability activism on campus, and my research and cultural engagement really centers around those issues."



Sharifa Sahai '18 (Germany)

What will you be doing instead and why have you chosen that option?

"I have chosen to decline the Fulbright Fellowship. Instead I have accepted a software engineering residency at Google in NYC and have deferred acceptance to the Systems Biology PhD program at Harvard. I chose to do the residency at Google to build my computational skills and be close to home. Ultimately I want to conduct impactful, cross discipline research and pursuing a PhD in Systems Biology at Harvard will allow me to do so. I would like to apply to the Fulbright again in the future, perhaps for the postdoctoral scholar program. The mission of the Fulbright program is something that resonates a lot with me but I don't think it is the right path for me at the moment."

**declined award*



Olivia Britton '18 (European Union)

What will you be doing instead and why have you chosen that option?

"After college, I will enter a Ph.D. program in Political Science at Boston University with the support of the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship. My work will expand on the previous literature that investigates media and its effect on policy and assesses how these findings can be used to modify asylum policy and refugee accommodation."

**declined award*



National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship

The NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) helps ensure the vitality of the human resource base of science and engineering in the United States and reinforces its diversity. The program recognizes and supports outstanding graduate students in NSF-supported science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines who are pursuing research-based masters and doctoral degrees at accredited United States institutions.

Olivia Britton '18

Research while at Union: Under the guidance of Professors Guillermina Seri and Michelle Osborn researched (1) how neoliberalism has reshaped humanitarian aid efforts and thus created a market for the commoditization of refugee bodies in connection to the revitalization of abandoned small Italian towns and (2) the ways in which media depictions fabricate a narrative that makes refugees susceptible to the growing trend of fraudulent humanitarian relief projects. Also served as a researcher for the NY Six Upstate-Global Collective Student Summer Research Fellowship under the guidance of Professor Tom Lobe, investigating and analyzing the demographics and trends of movements of refugees in the Middle East, and is currently working with Professor Zoe Oxley, looking at early political socialization and gender gaps.

Graduate School Plans: Political Science Ph.D. program



James Boggs '18

Research while at Union: Worked with Professor John Rieffel to develop intelligent control systems for a class of soft robots called tensegrity robots. As a senior thesis in this lab, he worked to determine whether morphological computation is a more effective method of learning effective gaits than the kinds of machine learning used previously. Also interned during the summer of 2017 at the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C. as an undergraduate researcher with Dr. Alexandra Coman under Dr. David Aha in the National Center for Applied Research in Artificial Intelligence to develop a framework for agent rebellion against operator-given goals.

Graduate School Plans: Computational Science Ph.D. program



Kaitlyn Suarez '16

Research while at Union: Worked with Professor John Garver on tectonic research of the Chugach-Prince William (CPW) terrane in Alaska focused on determining the crystallinity and source of Precambrian zircons using a combination of U/Pb dating and Raman spectroscopy. Also analyzed volcanic rocks collected from Dominica with Professor Holli Frey as a sophomore to characterize the magma chamber that produced the Grand Bay ignimbrite.

Graduate School Plans: University of Massachusetts Amherst's Geosciences Ph.D. Program; research focused on petrology



Ryan Bouck '16

Research while at Union: Aerogel Laboratory (Professors Ann Anderson and Mary Carroll) student researcher focused on developing and optimizing cobalt-alumina aerogel catalysts as a more affordable, more sustainable alternative to platinum group metal catalysts used to break down automobile pollutants in catalytic converters. Specialized in scanning electron microscopy. Also worked on materials characterization projects with Professors Michael Hagerman and Rebecca Cortez.

Graduate School Plans: Cornell University's Materials Science and Engineering Ph.D. program; research focused on metallic materials research

**National Fellowships Office did not assist with this application*

Truman Scholarship

The Truman Scholarship is a highly competitive, merit-based award offered to U.S. citizens and U.S. nationals from Pacific Islands who want to go to graduate school in preparation for a career in public service. Each year, the Foundation reviews over 600 applications for the 55 to 65 Scholarships awarded annually. These 600 applications do not include the students who compete on their own campus for one of a school's four nominations. The scholarship offers up to \$30,000 to apply toward graduate study in the U.S. or abroad in a wide variety of fields.

Emmanuela “Ella” Oppong ’19

Bronx, New York

Ella is a Ghanaian-American student studying bioengineering with a minor in global service at Union College. Involved in several education and healthcare focused projects that seek to empower women and children in the U.S. and Africa, Ella initiated a partnership between Union’s chapter of the Society of Women Engineers and the local chapter of Girls Inc. in Schenectady, creating a science, engineering and art outreach program for young women. She is also spearheading the construction of a vocational school for orphaned students in Ghana with a Davis Projects for Peace grant. Ella is an active research student and plans on pursuing an MD/MPH. She hopes to utilize these degrees along with her research and engineering background to bridge gaps in healthcare and improve its accessibility in developing countries, especially those in Africa.



Critical Language Scholarship (Chinese in Taiwan)

The Critical Language Scholarship Program is a fully funded summer overseas language and cultural immersion program for American undergraduate and graduate students. For eight weeks, students from across the United States will participate in intensive Chinese courses at National Cheng Kung University (NCKU) in Taiwan. Designed to cover the equivalent of one academic year of university-level Chinese study, students receive a minimum of 20 hours per week of formal classroom instruction that focuses on intensive reading, writing, speaking and listening practice. CLS participants will live with local Chinese-speaking host families and meet regularly with local peers to learn more about the Chinese language and develop their personal networks. The group will engage in cultural excursions, lectures and other enrichment activities designed to support and enhance language learning and exposure to the host culture.

Taina Orellana ’18

Why did you decide to apply to this program?

“I first developed my passion for Mandarin while studying abroad in Shanghai during my third year at Union College. That following summer, I was able to return to Shanghai as an intern and improved my Mandarin level. Senior year, I began to take the Intermediate Mandarin sequence and continuously sought out opportunities that would help me get back to China. This program is designed to exponentially improve my language level and requires a strictly enforced language pledge. The emphasis on language attracted me to this program, even though it means that I will have to speak entirely in Mandarin the entire 8 weeks.”

Davis Projects for Peace

The Davis Projects for Peace is a program for students to work on a project that promotes peace. It is a summer program that encourages student initiative, innovation and entrepreneurship focusing on conflict prevention, resolution or reconciliation. While Davis funding per project is limited to \$10,000, projects with larger budgets are welcome and co-funding from other sources - such as other philanthropists, a college or university, foundation, NGO/PVO or students' own fundraising – is encouraged.

Emmanuela Oppong '19

Bronx, New York

Davis Project: “Stitching Talents” in Ghana

What are some experiences here at Union that helped prepare you for it?

“My experiences growing up in Ghana will give me the background I need to connect with the people I will be working with. However, the execution of the project comes from my leadership experience and the problem-solving skills I have acquired from my Union classes and participation in organizations and clubs on and off campus.”



DAAD Study Scholarship (Germany)

Highly qualified final year undergraduate students or those who have received an undergraduate degree of all disciplines may apply for the DAAD Study Scholarship for a full Master's degree program at a German university or for study at a German university as part of a postgraduate or Master's degree program completed in the home country.

Madeline Samuel '17

**declined award*

Princeton in Asia

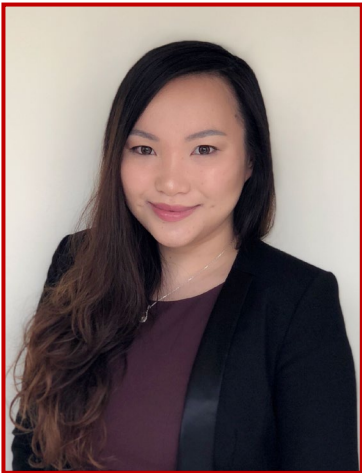
The PiA sponsors over 150 fellowships and internships in 22 countries and regions that contribute to important global issues at the local level: education, public health, environmental sustainability, access to information/media, economic development and social justice. Princeton in Asia Fellows teach in kindergartens, secondary schools, polytechnics and universities; they work with international and local nonprofits as well as some of Asia's most innovative businesses and social enterprises; they write for newspapers and create content for news platforms with an international reach. Due to the size and diversity of the positions available, we encourage applicants of all disciplines and backgrounds to apply.

Xi Gao '15

As a PiA Fellow, Xi will spend next year working with IoT One in Shanghai, China. At Union, Xi was a double major in Economics and Asian Studies, completed a mini-term in Bali and terms in Japan and Washington D.C., was President of the Asian Student Union, tutored in the Economics Department and Language Center, and was a Posse Scholar. Since graduating, she has worked as a Risk Assurance Associate at PwC in Boston.

What are some experiences at Union that helped prepare you for being a Fulbright ETA?

“The Asian Studies courses (International Politics in East Asia, International Economics, Contemporary Chinese Politics, etc.) that I took at Union definitely prepared me for the fellowship experience. For example, when I took Professor Ferry's language courses (The Changing Face of China, Media China), it was not about memorizing vocabulary words but more about learning current topics such as media, feminism, or environmentalism. These topics are all interesting fields that PiA internship opportunities specialize in.”



Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) for Young Professionals

The CBYX program is sponsored in the U.S. by the Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Each year the CBYX fellowship provides 75 American and 75 German young professionals the opportunity to spend one year in each others’ countries, studying, interning, and living with hosts on a cultural immersion program.

Garrett Maron ’18

Why did you decide to apply?

“I have studied German since freshman year of high school, and through my education I have developed a unique relationship with both the culture and the language. Additionally, Germany has a lot of opportunities in my hopeful professional field of biotechnology. I wanted to combine both my relationship with the country and my career prospects into a single program that would allow me to live abroad and have life changing experiences.”



Bretta Beer ’18

Why do you want to spend a year in Germany specifically rather than in another European country?

“As I hugged my host mother and sister goodbye in the small, rural town of Northeim in Lower Saxony, Germany, I knew that I had to return to this country. I have been fortunate enough to travel to several states in the U.S. and a handful of countries outside of America, but only in Germany did I feel an immediate sense of home as I first stepped off the train in Northeim nearly four years ago. My extensive German heritage may have influenced this native feeling, or perhaps it was my years of German language acquisition finally coming to fruition. During my stay in Germany, I attended the Gymnasium Corvinianum where I was immersed into the German educational system. The students’ and teachers’ patience and humorous light-heartedness as we discussed famous novels including The Great Gatsby evoked a sense of confidence in both my language abilities and within myself. Germany gave me a second family, long-lasting friendships, and fortitude towards any future endeavors upon which I wish to embark. I would like to go back to Germany more than any other European country to give back to the nation for all it has given me.”



Teaching Assistant Program in France (TAPIF)

The Teaching Assistant Program in France (TAPIF) offers young educators the opportunity to work in France for 7 months, teaching English to French students of all ages. The program's goal is to strengthen foreign-language instruction in French schools by establishing a native speaker presence, while also providing young educators around the world with initial international teaching experience and first-hand knowledge of French language and culture. Assistants teach 12 hours per week in up to 3 schools. Classes are conducted in English.

Elena Pettiford '18

What are some experiences here at Union that helped prepare you for being a Teaching Assistant in France?

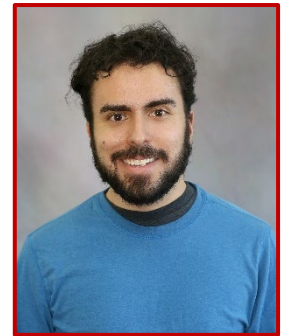
"Being a French major and having participated in the Union term abroad in Rennes has helped to prepare me for working in France for a period of time — not only in learning the language but also in understanding the culture."



William Garner '18

Why did you decide to apply to this program?

"I like working with foreign languages and being immersed in foreign cultures so I wanted to apply for a fellowship abroad. I thought that it would be great to share my passion for language-learning through teaching so I applied to this program to be a language assistant in middle school and high school classes. I'm also interested in possibly becoming either a French or ESL teacher in the future, so this program will give me some valuable preparation."



North American Language and Culture Assistants Program in Spain

The English Language and Culture Assistants provides university students and graduates, native speakers of English, with the opportunity to work in Spain supporting English teachers. Assistants will spend a full academic year in Spain, working 12-16 hours a week. They receive full medical insurance and a monthly stipend to cover for accommodation and food expenses.

Jenna Swartz '18

Gallagher Student Health Careers Scholarship

Gallagher Student Health & Special Risk (formerly Koster Insurance) celebrated the final year of the Health Careers Scholarship Program in Fall 2018. The Program was founded in 2000 by Teresa Koster, the former Division President of Koster Insurance. The Program invested in the healthcare community by providing outstanding students with financial assistance to pursue health-related careers. Thanks to the generous donations made by partners and its parent company, Arthur J. Gallagher & Co., the Gallagher Student Health branch is proud to have had the opportunity to award 100 students approximately \$500,000 since the Program's inception. Even though this program has come to an end, Gallagher Student Health & Special Risk remains committed to the betterment of the higher education community.

Emmanuela Oppong '19

Bronx, New York

Gilman Scholarship

Gilman scholars receive up to \$5,000 to apply towards their study abroad or internship program costs. The program aims to diversify the students who study and intern abroad and the countries and regions where they go. Students receiving a Federal Pell Grant from two- and four-year institutions who will be studying abroad or participating in an international internship for academic credit are eligible to apply. Scholarship recipients have the opportunity to gain a better understanding of other cultures, countries, languages, and economies -- making them better prepared to assume leadership roles within government and the private sector.

Emmanuela Oppong '19

Winter Break, South Africa

Belen Barragan '19

Spring, Germany

Tawreak Eddington '21

Summer, Poland mini term

Jennifer Duran '20

Fall, Argentina

Lavonia Duncan '20

Fall, Greece

Claire Lockwood '20

Fall, Australia

Enrique Roman '20

Fall, Argentina

Erendira Garcia Pallares '20

Fall, Czech Republic

[Bridging Scholarship](#)

The Bridging Project offers scholarships to American undergraduate students participating in study-abroad programs in Japan. Funding from private foundations and major U.S. corporations, through donations to the nonprofit US-Japan Bridging Foundation, makes it possible to award about 100 scholarships each year to assist students with the travel and living expenses they will incur while studying abroad in Japan for a semester or an academic year. Applications are accepted twice a year for Bridging Scholarships. Scholarship recipients receive a stipend of \$2,500 (for semester-long programs) or \$4,000 (for academic year programs).

Xiao Peng Li '19 Fall, Japan

Brooklyn, New York

[City Year](#)

City Year partners with schools to help bridge the gap by providing diverse, talented and trained young adult tutors, mentors and role models who work alongside teachers to support student success. City Year is contributing to a clearer and bolder vision of what public schools can and should be for all children: places of learning, exploration and risk-taking, where every student feels safe and connected to the school community; where data is used continuously to help promote student growth and achievement; and where all students have access to positive, caring relationships and personalized learning environments that encourage them to persevere through challenges, build on their strengths and thrive.

Angelica Rivera '18

Deibel Bennett '18