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Introduction to the University Scholars Program

Designed to support an interdisciplinary, intergenerational community of scholars, the University Scholars Program was created in 1998 with a gift from Duke University Trustee Melinda French Gates and her husband Bill Gates, through the William H. Gates Foundation.

Undergraduate, graduate, and professional school University Scholars are selected each year for their ability to explore new academic horizons as demonstrated by their scholastic achievement, academic aptitude, breadth of interests, creativity and intellectual leadership. They represent diverse personal and intellectual backgrounds and share an excitement for original research, collaborative thinking, and innovative scholarship.

Stimulating intellectual and social interaction among these various groups of people—through USP seminars, symposia, mentoring, and other formal and informal programming—is the core of the USP.

Please read on for details on our community, our programming, our expectations, and our opportunities. A complete list of current scholars may be found at the end of the handbook, listed by cohort.

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**How was I selected for the USP?**

All University Scholars are selected based upon their applications to Duke University.

**Undergraduate University Scholars**

If you are an undergraduate University Scholar, then you were recommended to the program by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions as fitting the profile of an exceptional, creative, academically accomplished student with a range of intellectual passions and academic interests, who can thereby profit from an interdisciplinary program. You have also demonstrated, through official financial-aid applications, that you need scholarship support to achieve your academic ambitions. From there, your file was selected by a reading committee composed of USP faculty advisors for a short list of interviewees. You then proved yourself as brilliant and multi-faceted as your application suggested during your interview with USP faculty and students.

**Graduate and Professional School University Scholars**

If you are a graduate or professional school University Scholar, then you were nominated by the department or school to which you applied. Your selection was narrowed down and confirmed by the director of the USP and the Graduate School or professional schools. Graduate and professional school University Scholars are selected for being outstanding, innovative students who have exhibited wide interdisciplinary interests and commitments. You show evidence of profiting from intellectual collaboration and interchange at the very highest levels. You are good communicators who are excited to share your specialized knowledge. You are excited by ideas and are capable of seeing how ideas from other fields can be translated into your own course of study. Finally, you are eager and willing to convey your ideas with undergraduates and other graduate or professional school students who seek a better understanding of your areas of expertise.

**What happens in the USP?**

The USP holds meetings of various kinds – intellectual and social, discussion and mentoring – throughout the academic year. Your attendance is required at some of these events; others are optional (see Participation Expectations for All University Scholars for more details).

**University Scholars Undergraduate Assembly**

The weekend prior to the start of classes, undergraduate University Scholars come together to develop stronger relationships among undergraduates, within and between class cohorts, while understanding the USP’s expectations for undergraduates in the program.

**USP Annual Fall Retreat**

This is our opportunity to build upon our strong USP community, one-on-one and as a whole, bringing ideas together. We use our time together to discuss the goals of the program for this academic year by getting to know each other - "Unis" new and seasoned, establishing or strengthening mentoring relationships, addressing personal goals, proposing ideas for seminar speakers and topics, and developing symposium ideas.
University Scholars Program Seminars

These informal seminars, held every two weeks, bring together graduate and professional school University Scholars, undergraduate scholars, and interested faculty, as well as distinguished visiting scholars, scientists and artists for roundtable discussions, formal presentations, informal meals, and intellectual fellowship. Students of all levels are encouraged to lead a seminar on their own work-in-progress, a paper for a class, current lab research, an idea for a course, a conference paper, a thesis chapter, or on a topic of particular interest to them.

Annual University Scholars Symposium

Each year, University Scholars showcase their research and scholarship in a symposium to which the entire university community is invited. The format and content of the symposium is determined wholly by the imagination and creativity of the University Scholars. In recent years, students have worked together in small groups to generate original presentations and artwork along a specified theme and have proposed keynote speakers with expertise on the subject. Previous recent symposia include:

- “Masquerade” (2018)
- “Relativity” (2017)
- “Progress” (2016)
- “Fundamentals” (2015)
- “Reason(s)” (2014)
- “Fundamentals” (2013)
- “Futures” (2012)
- “Puzzles” (2011)

University Scholars Mentoring

An informal, intellectual mentoring program offers interdisciplinary research possibilities, helps to shape multidisciplinary interests into an interdisciplinary program, and encourages collaborative thinking and intellectual risk-taking. Mentoring also allows for more informal advising and conversations about life experience and development. Mentoring in the USP is a student-driven endeavor. Relationships are established between pairs of graduate or professional school students and undergraduates. All mentors/mentees are required to meet at least twice per semester, if not more frequently. (See Reimbursement for Conference and Mentor Expenses)
USP Breakfasts
These are informal, student breakfasts designed to bring University Scholars together in a casual setting on a monthly basis. What you talk about or do at these breakfasts is up to you! Come to discuss matters ranging from the practical to the esoteric, to meet informally with your mentor or mentee, or just to take a break from the rush of your day and grab a free piece of fruit or doughnut! Come for five minutes or an hour--just come for however long you have. For example, in the past, Unis have gathered at informal events such as these to have conversations about issues such as the US media’s election coverage, gender in academia, writing science fiction, what to do during a gap year, and even learning how to knit. These breakfasts can also be a chance to gather advice on how to apply for graduate or professional school or to discuss career options.

Cultural Programming
Duke Performances offers $10.00 tickets to all Duke students for a wide variety of arts-related events on campus and off. Audience members often have the opportunity to engage with the artist(s) during discussions scheduled either before or after their performance.

USP Finalist Campus Visit
In the spring of every year, prospective undergraduate finalists for the USP award fly into Duke for their on-campus interviews, participate in a USP seminar, meet finalists from the other undergrad scholars communities, sit in on classes, have dinner with faculty, and other activities. This year, the visit will take place March 27 – March 30, 2019.

- Undergraduate University Scholars are required to form a committee to ensure that every prospective student will be hosted in a dorm room for the weekend and that they will have regular contact with current scholars throughout the weekend.
- Representatives from each cohort of University Scholars are expected to participate in the interview process, as each interview team will ideally be comprised of one USP Faculty Advisor, one undergraduate, one graduate and one professional school University Scholar.
- There will be several other USP events throughout the interview weekend, and ALL scholars are expected to attend.

USP Graduation Celebration
Each year, on the Friday of Commencement Weekend, the USP celebrates the achievements of its graduating scholars. Friends and families are welcome to attend. This year, the celebration will be a breakfast at 9:00 am on Friday, May 10, 2019 at the Washington Duke Inn.

How does USP funding work?
Undergraduate University Scholars
Undergraduate University Scholars receive a University Scholarship providing full tuition plus a stipend towards room, board, and mandatory fees for eight semesters. Summer sessions at Duke are not covered by the scholarship, but eligible students may apply for additional support through the Office of Financial Aid. Additionally, Duke University will meet 100% of the demonstrated
need of all admitted University Scholars who are U.S. citizens or non-citizens eligible for student aid. University Scholars can expect that any additional demonstrated financial need beyond the costs covered by the scholarship will be covered by grants, not loans. For example, Financial Aid will also provide grants to cover the cost of health insurance for those students who cannot afford it on their own or round-trip travel to and from Duke and home.

**G.P.A.**

Scholars are expected to maintain a high standard of academic achievement. At a minimum, the G.P.A. at the end of the first year should be a 3.0 and each subsequent year a 3.2. Any scholar not meeting this standard will be “under review.”

- G.P.A. is calculated year by year and is not cumulative.
- Summer session grades at Duke or from a Duke-sponsored study abroad program will count “forward” toward the end-of-the-year G.P.A. of the following academic year.
- G.P.A. is based on a minimum of 4.0 one-credit courses per semester. Partial credit courses such as PE, music, dance, Focus, or audited courses do not count towards total credit hours or G.P.A.
- For one semester, scholars in good standing may request to take an under-load with the signed approval of the scholarship program director and appropriate academic dean.

**Under Review Status:**

- Students under review may come off review if they meet the minimum G.P.A. requirements for the year following the under review period.
- Students under review who do not meet the minimum G.P.A. requirements will lose their scholarship funding and the right to be considered a named scholar.
- Scholars who enter their senior year “under review” must achieve a 3.2 by the end of the fall semester or lose funding for their final semester.
- Scholars “under review” will not be given permission to take fewer than four courses per semester.
- Once funding is lost, it cannot be reinstated.

**OTHER CONDITIONS**

- Adherence to the Duke Community Standard: Scholars who are suspended or dismissed for academic or disciplinary reasons will lose all funding provided by the scholarship even if the student is subsequently readmitted. Other disciplinary actions may also result in revocation of all funding by the scholarship program.
- Individual program requirements, including full engagement in activities that go un-met may result in “under review” status and thus possible termination of all scholarship benefits.

Programmatic expectations and requirements include:

- Regular attendance at USP seminars or events.
- Regular meetings with your mentors and responsiveness to mentor communications.
- Adherence to deadlines for funding requests, symposium presentations, etc. as necessary.
0. Treatment of education enrichment funding as a unique opportunity, not an entitlement and use of the funds with integrity.

- Scholars who misuse educational enrichment funding provided by OUSF programs and/or fail to comply with OUSF special funding guidelines may lose both scholarship support and any further enrichment opportunities.
- A leave of absence undertaken after a semester has begun consumes all scholarship funding for that semester.

Graduate and Professional School University Scholars

Graduate and professional school University Scholars receive the equivalent of one year’s tuition as calculated by the Graduate and Professional Schools. The scholar’s individual department or professional program determines how and when the funds will be distributed and what eligibility standards (departmental service such as a research assistantship or instructorship, for example) accompany the funding, if any.

Graduate and professional school University Scholars are expected to remain involved in the University Scholars Program for the duration of their tenure as students at Duke to ensure continuity of mentoring as well as sustained commitment to the intellectual agenda of the USP as a whole. This expectation applies whether or not graduate and professional school students are currently receiving USP funding, have already received it, or have yet to receive it.

What additional opportunities does the USP provide?

University Scholars Undergraduate Enrichment Funding

Undergraduate University Scholars in good standing may receive support for an intensive internship, research experience, or summer abroad. The total maximum USP funding that students can receive during their undergraduate career is $7000. Students may split the funding to use for different kinds of experiences over different time frames. Typically, students apply for USP funding for the summer following their third year, although in some cases, students have received permission to use funding sooner. Students eligible for summer enrichment funding must demonstrate active participation in USP seminars and events, in addition to being in good academic standing.

Students must submit a proposal, a letter of support from a faculty advisor, and a detailed budget (guidelines are available online on the USP website and on the USP Sakai site). Upon their return, students must submit a brief report summarizing the experience and lead a USP seminar to discuss their projects with other University Scholars.

Undergraduate Semester Study Away

Undergraduate University Scholars may study abroad through an approved program for one or two semesters. During the academic year, the University Scholars Program will cover tuition charges up to, but not in excess of, Duke’s tuition charges. Students who have demonstrated additional need may expect similar support for their remaining expenses. Some non-Duke study
abroad programs will cost less than Duke’s tuition. In such cases, your USP scholarship will be reduced to cover the actual program costs. Please note that Duke charges a non-Duke study abroad fee which is covered by your USP award. For more about how scholarships are applied to semester study away programs and how to receive your funding, go to: https://financialaid.duke.edu/current-undergraduates/study-abroad

**Undergraduate Summer Study Away**
The USP does not provide funding for summer study programs, whether a student chooses to do summer session at Duke or embark upon a study abroad program. However, students may be eligible to receive additional funding from the Office of Financial Aid to cover summer tuition, room, and board. Some students may opt to use USP summer enrichment funding to cover costs of summer study abroad programs if their financial aid package is insufficient to cover most of the program costs. Please note, however, that a student cannot receive full funding from both Financial Aid and from the University Scholars Program. Doing so will jeopardize a student’s scholarship status. For more on funding summer study, go to: https://financialaid.duke.edu/current-undergraduates/merit-aid#summer

**Conference Funding for Graduate & Professional School Students**
Graduate or professional school University Scholars may apply for funding for up to $500 for conference travel or professional development workshops. See below for details of the terms of the award. Request forms for conference funding are available via the USP website as a form-fillable PDF at http://jhfc.duke.edu/usp/program/opportunitiesbenefits/grant-funding/

**AWARD APPLICATION PROCEDURE:** The application must be complete and submitted at least one month (30 days) prior to the date of the conference. **No awards will be granted retroactively.** The application form must also be accompanied by a brief letter of intent (with relevant details of the trip) and a brief abstract of the paper or poster to be presented at the conference.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Eligible students include graduate student University Scholar enrolled in a Ph.D. granting program or professional school University Scholar enrolled in one of the 7 professional schools that the USP supports (Divinity School, Fuqua School of Business, Law School, Nicholas School of the Environment, Sanford School of Public Policy, School of Medicine, or School of Nursing). Graduate and professional school University Scholars are limited to one conference travel award per fiscal year (July 1-June 30) through the University Scholars Program.

Ph.D. students who have not yet passed their preliminary exams are eligible to receive conference funding from the University Scholars Program prior to passing those exams. Ph.D. students who have passed their preliminary exams and have already received conference travel funding from the Graduate School may receive funding for a second conference through the University Scholars Program.

Graduate or professional school University Scholars who are actively participating in a conference (i.e., presenting a paper or poster, or leading a discussion) are eligible. Students attending conferences during the academic year must be registered at the time of the conference. For summer conferences, students must be registered for the upcoming fall
semester, and have been registered for the previous spring semester. **No exceptions will be made.**

**TERMS OF THE AWARD:** The University Scholars Program will provide up to $500 towards expenses for registration fees, primary transportation to and from the conference, lodging, and meals.

*Reimbursement for Conference and Mentor Expenses*

**CONFERENCES REIMBURSEMENTS:** Save all original expense receipts. When you return from your trip, please submit scanned copies of your receipts along with a [Miscellaneous Reimbursement Form](#) to the University Scholars Program for appropriate charge codes and allocations. All materials for reimbursement must be submitted within one month upon return.

**MENTOR MEETING REIMBURSEMENTS:** The USP will reimburse up to $12 per person, twice a semester, or a maximum of $24 per person per semester. The procedure for reimbursement is the same as above for conference travel reimbursement.

*Graduate and Professional School Social and Intellectual Network*

One of the most important features of being a University Scholar as a graduate or professional school student at Duke is actually an intangible benefit. Past and present graduate and professional school University Scholars cite the opportunity to form connections with peers outside of one’s home department, school, or program as being one of the most compelling aspects of the program. Such cross-departmental relationships foster both friendships and networking relationship and also offer the possibility of intellectual exchange to enhance interdisciplinary approaches to research.

*Graduate Consul Award*

All graduate and professional school University Scholars who have completed their first year are eligible to apply for a position as a Graduate Consul with the program. Graduate Consuls receive a generous fellowship of $4000 per year and the opportunity to substantially shape the program’s development. Graduate Consuls may reapply to serve for more than one year and are encouraged to do so. Grad Consul responsibilities include helping to plan the annual retreat, coordinating mentor relationships, working with undergraduates who need advice, organizing breakfasts and other informal get-togethers for Unis, coordinating and attending USP seminars as their schedules allow, choosing a symposium theme, supervising symposium committees, and assisting the Director with other requests.

*Participation Expectations for University Scholars*

**Participation Expectations for All University Scholars**

- Regular attendance at USP Seminars (at least twice per semester)
- Active participation in USP mentoring (at least twice per semester)
- Respond promptly to all invitations for mentor meetings
- Respond promptly to all Evites for USP events **even if you will not be able to participate**
- Help to plan the Annual Symposium
- Participate in Interview Weekend events
Additional Expectations for Undergraduate University Scholars

1st and 2nd Years

- 1st years: Post flyers for the USP Symposium and/or introduce panelists
- Be involved in a symposium group (whether as part of a presentation, designing posters, preparing programs, etc.)
- Coordinate hosting for prospective University Scholars during Interview Weekend in April for both housing and social activities
- Meet at least twice a semester with your USP graduate or professional school mentor
- Meet at least once a semester with the USP Director

3rd and 4th Years

- Pursue a Summer Enrichment opportunity
- Organize a USP Seminar (working as a group with other students or with your Mentor, bringing in a speaker, sharing your Summer Enrichment experience, suggesting and following through on a particular topic, etc.)
- Present something (individually or with a group) at the Annual Symposium
- Develop a research project for a senior thesis
- Meet at least twice a semester with your USP graduate or professional school mentor
- Meet at least once a semester with the USP Director

Additional Expectations for Graduate and Prof School Scholars

1st Year

- Assume a leadership role as an individual mentor
- Participate in and/or lead a group that develops a presentation for the Annual Symposium
- Organize a USP Seminar (leading a seminar on your original research or on something in your particular field of study, working as a group with other students or with your mentee, bringing in a speaker, suggesting and following through on a particular topic, etc.)
- Meet at least twice a semester with your USP undergraduate mentee

2nd Year and Beyond: Please note that all students are expected to remain involved with the USP throughout their tenure at Duke. So what can you do to contribute?

- Use USP Seminars as opportunities to present your original research and to generate ideas for works-in-progress. Seminar topics can include papers for a course, ongoing research, a chapter for a thesis, an idea for teaching a course, etc.
- Take advantage of USP Conference Funding
- Consider serving the program as a Graduate Consul
- Meet at least twice a semester with your USP undergraduate mentee
- Maintain regular involvement in USP events!
Current University Scholars

Undergraduate University Scholars

Class of 2019
Hadeel Abdelhy (Trinity)
William Ding (Pratt)
Daniel Kwon (Trinity)
JJ Moncus (Trinity)
Jack Myhre (Pratt)
Aleah Peffer (Trinity)
Chelsea Southworth (Trinity)
Austin Tate (Pratt)

Class of 2020
Dasha Andreichenko (Trinity)
Gabriella Apeadu (Trinity)
Martin Cala (Pratt)
Amy Jiang (Trinity)
Kezia Matson (Trinity)
Nima Mohammadi (Trinity)
Valerie Muensterman (Trinity)
Liam Pulsifer (Trinity)
Bigyan Regmi (Trinity)
Jasmine Tan (Trinity)

Class of 2021
June Eric-Udorie (Trinity)
Gabriel Goldhagen (Pratt)
Dara Kovacheva (Trinity)
Amik Mandal (Trinity)
Noah Michaud (Trinity)
Anna Steltenkamp (Trinity)
Maria Zurita Ontiveros (Trinity)

Class of 2022
Sude Almus (Trinity)
Keren Amkraut (Trinity)
Yasser Elmzoudi (Pratt)
Annie Lee (Trinity)

Graduate University Scholars

Mohammed Ali (History)
Orsola Capovilla-Searle (Mathematics)
Jorge Cardenas (Electrical & Computer Engineering)
Aimee Chabot (Business)
Jonathan Choi (Environmental Policy, Law)
Molly Copeland (Sociology)
Jessica Covil (English)
Evan Donahue (Art, Art History, Visual Media Studies)
Bryce Gessell (Philosophy)
Lydia Greene (Ecology, Evolutionary Anthropology)
Stephanie Gu (Biochemistry)
Kristin Hagan (Biomedical Engineering)
Katy Hansen (Environmental Policy)
Bobby Harris (Environmental Policy)
Ana Huang (Cultural Anthropology)
Samuel Hunnicutt (Romance Studies)
Kevin Kiley (Sociology)
Jeffrey Letourneau (Molecular Genetics & Microbiology)
Leon Li (Psychology)
Kelly Moran (Statistics)
Caitlin Murdoch (Molecular Genetics & Microbiology)
Nikki Pelot (Biomedical Engineering)
Rebecca Ponce De Leon (Business)
Brandie Quarles (Biology)
Hannah Ridge (Political Science)
Nicolas Sanchez (Romance Studies, Spanish)
Jon Schaefer (Clinical Psychology)
Dane Sequeira (Mechanical Engineering)
Han Setiawan (Medical Physics)
Jordan Sjol (Literature)
Nicole Solomon (Biostatistics)
Joshua Stivers (Cognitive Neuroscience)
Walter Torres (Marine Science & Conservation)
Austin Wadle (Civil & Environmental Engineering)
Pual Yoon (Medical Physics)
Maria Zhu (Economics)

Professional School University Scholars

Asma Agad (Nursing)
Christian Bale (Law)
Joseph Bianco (Law)
Sena McCrory (Nicholas School of the Environment)
Bruce McCuskey (Divinity)
Kelley Robbins-Thompson (Nicholas School of the Environment)
Daniel Ramirez (Nicholas School of the Environment)
Melanie Rogers (Medicine)
Priya Shankar (Sanford School of Public Policy)
Katie Starr (Nursing)
Kate Thomas (Fuqua School of Business)
Kristin Whitley (Nursing)
Colton Wickham (Fuqua School of Business)
Miquela Wiegel (Medicine)
Jessica Wilkinson (Sanford School of Public Policy)
Bennett Wright (Law)
Phillip Yelverton (Divinity)