



ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2017-2018



**PennState**  
Schreyer Honors College







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Message from Dean Peggy Johnson



It is hard to believe that a year has passed since I became the Dean of the Schreyer Honors College. It has been a remarkable experience for me and I have learned so much from so many, including our extraordinary Scholars. I am also very grateful for the kind and generous support of many University administrators, faculty, board members, alumni, staff, and others in the Penn State community who continue to give so much to the College. Thank you for all that you do. Nothing is more rewarding than knowing that we are shaping lives of great purpose and that you are part of that transformative process.

One of the bittersweet feelings I've experienced working in higher education is saying goodbye to one class of students and, at the same time, welcoming a new class that is ready for the challenge and adventure of independent, undergraduate life. More than 500 Scholars graduated during the 2017-2018 academic year. Approximately 52 percent went directly into the workforce while nearly 43 percent began graduate and professional programs. Others have decided to seek service opportunities and give back to communities in need. To see the mission and the vision of the College manifested in this class of Scholars is heartening. Knowing they will become tomorrow's leaders speaks to their great promise.

Speaking of great promise, just a few weeks ago, 327 new first-year Scholars and 323 second-and third-year Scholars joined the Schreyer family. We conducted two orientations to accommodate and welcome all of these students. They are impressive on so many levels and their achievements and talents speak volumes. This year, the URM (underrepresented minority) percentage of first-year Scholars rose to 12 percent, an all-time high for the College, and the percentage of international students in the second- and third-year pool rose to 11 percent. We continue to focus on strategies to identify and recruit students in these demographics. Diversity and inclusivity are vital components of the College's Strategic Plan and a key priority for our entire staff.

The Strategic Plan remains very much on our minds. During the past year, our staff worked to update each of the seven objectives in the plan. We also welcomed Dr. Tom Enderlein, who is the College's first data analyst and academic assessment expert, to the staff in May. His expertise will help us make more data-driven decisions regarding the Strategic Plan and pursue other key initiatives.

As you read this Annual Report, I hope you will recognize the spirit of the College's mission and vision in each and every story; in the voices of our Scholars, our Scholar alumni, our faculty, our staff, and others who are part of this extraordinary community. They are the embodiment of the Schreyer legacy. They are leaders, innovators, and entrepreneurs in engineering, the sciences, business, technology, education, the arts, and so many more disciplines.

They are Schreyer. And WE ARE — proud!

*Peggy A Johnson*

Peggy A. Johnson  
Dean, Schreyer Honors College  
Penn State University





### Mission

The mission of the Schreyer Honors College is to promote:

- Achieving academic excellence with integrity
- Building a global perspective, and
- Creating opportunities for leadership and civic engagement

### Vision

To educate men and women who will have an important and ethical influence in the world, affecting academic, professional, civic, social, and business outcomes. To improve educational practice and to continue to be recognized as a leading force in honors education nationwide.

### History of the Schreyer Honors College

The Schreyer Honors College is a leading force in honors education. Under the leadership of director Paul Axt, Penn State launched the University Scholars Program in 1980. In September 1997, William and Joan Schreyer presented a \$30 million gift, and the College was expanded and renamed in their honor. A gift of an additional \$25 million in 2006 was part of the “For the Future: The Campaign for Penn State Students.” In the last four decades, more than 12,000 Penn State graduates have earned the distinction of being a Scholar.

### SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

## Cuevas takes on cyber-security challenges on multiple continents

Alejandro Cuevas Villalba, a native of Paraguay who graduated in May with honors in Security and Risk Analysis, took advantage of numerous opportunities during his four years in the Schreyer Honors College and found himself at the forefront of cybersecurity innovation.

Last fall, the cybersecurity research he conducted under the supervision of Penn State information sciences and technology professor Peng Liu was included in an annual research progress report to the Department of Defense and will be presented in November.

He was also second author on a paper on the digital immunity of large humanitarian organizations that received a Distinguished Paper Award at the 39th Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Symposium on Security and Privacy in San Francisco this past May.

A Schreyer international travel grant helped get Cuevas to the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) in Switzerland, where he met Stevens Le Blond, a scientist at EPFL's Decentralized and Distributed Systems Lab who led the project. The paper examined the challenges large humanitarian organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) face when it comes to computer security.

“It is not always easy to assess the magnitude of the problems that organizations like these can face,” Cuevas said. “Our hope is that this project can start conversations so that other research can be done and other organizations may benefit.”

“Our hope is that this project can start conversations so that other research can be done and other organizations may benefit.”



Cuevas' research team provided an overview of how economic, legal, political, and governmental factors affect humanitarian organizations' ability to protect sensitive data. They also highlighted how technology can serve as an additional safeguard by complementing existing laws.

“Where legislation is skipped, technology can serve as another barrier,” Cuevas said.

The IEEE Symposium on Security and Privacy, established in 1980, has roughly a 10-13 percent paper acceptance rate. Cuevas said he was merely looking to gain experience and find a project that would fit roughly within the time he would spend in Switzerland (mid-June to mid-August). The group originally aimed to have completed the

paper by September 2017, but Cuevas wound up doing work on it after returning to State College and resuming classes.

After participating in various levels of the research process and coordinating with other researchers on various sections of the paper, Cuevas found more opportunities open for him and confidence that he had the experience to take them on.

“Since then, I've worked on two other papers,” Cuevas said. “I can write more easily. I can take ownership of sections. I know how to go about it.”



## Abington Scholar digs historical challenges

Scholar Adriana Vagelli rarely wonders what it would be like to take on new challenges. The Penn State Abington student is usually too busy taking them on.

“If you tell me about any opportunity, I’m probably going to jump on it,” she said.

Vagelli was watching the news with her family when she saw a story about the Arch Street Project, an endeavor of archaeologists to excavate and analyze the remains of an 18th-century cemetery in Center City, Philadelphia.

“I saw it and said, ‘I want to be a part of this,’” Vagelli said.

Vagelli reached out to one of those archaeologists involved in the excavation featured in that TV news report, Rutgers-Camden professor Kimberly Moran, to see how she could help, and wound up spending much of the summer of 2017 researching in various historical societies around the city.

“I figured out that you can’t just Google ‘18th-century coffins,’” she said, laughing. “Nothing really comes up.”

A biology major, Vagelli is writing her honors thesis about Benjamin Britton, who was one of the hundreds of individuals buried in the cemetery, after examining his coffin and conducting a skeletal analysis.

“I think people tend to glaze over history. They can’t form that connection anymore because of how much time has passed,” she said. “I think what I’m ultimately going to learn is that this person wasn’t different from me at all.”



“I feel like I’ve been able to form really good relationships, not only with peers but with professors as well.”

Vagelli’s love of history doesn’t end at dig sites. This summer, she presented a paper at the Hemingway Society Conference, writing about the famed 20th-century author’s final novel, published after his death, “Garden of Eden.”

“Hemingway is known for being associated with certain painters, like Cezanne,” she said. “He wanted to write the way the painters painted. What I’m going to argue with this paper is this novel is his ultimate modernist painting.”

Vagelli credits Penn State Abington English professor Linda Patterson Miller with presenting her with the opportunity. She likes that she knows each professor in the biology department. The beneficiary of a Penn State Raise.me scholarship, Vagelli continues to seek out — and rise to — new challenges each year.

“I don’t know if I would have been able to do anything like this before if it weren’t for the Schreyer Honors College,” she said.

## Keyaka gaining experience covering and practicing politics

Stephanie Keyaka didn’t want to limit the pursuit of her numerous passions. The trick was finding ways to streamline that pursuit.

“When I came into college, a small fear of mine was that I wasn’t going to be able to find a profession that encompassed these overlapping interests of mine, from politics, to gender issues, to human rights, civic engagement, criminal justice,” she said. “Everything was sort of interconnected but not too many organizations deal with all of these things at the same time.”

Keyaka, a Scholar majoring in women’s studies and political science and minoring in African American studies, has been able to find ways to develop those interests and do so from multiple vantage points. As a journalist with The Underground, an independent student news website co-founded by Scholar alumna Candice Crutchfield, Keyaka has reported on news, sports, politics and identity issues and written op-ed pieces for the site. She took over as editor-in-chief during the summer.

As part of the McCourtney Institute for Democracy’s Nevins Fellows program, she landed an internship with the office of Baltimore City Councilman Zeke Cohen.

“The cool thing about working with the city council is there’s always something immediate to do,” she said.

Keyaka helped with constituent services in the first district, taking calls from residents about parking issues, utility issues, and homelessness. She also took part in canvassing for the Better Budget Baltimore initiative, which was created



“It was a win-win situation for me, to get an extra degree in something I’m really passionate about, and being able to finish my thesis with my 2019 class,”

to help give city residents more say in its budgeting process, and for an affordable housing trust fund project. She also worked on a mural project that incorporated student art. The experience gave Keyaka a greater understanding of how local politics worked.

“My office is pretty transparent, which I really, really appreciated,” she said. “I think local politicians are a lot more transparent, easier to talk to and available to talk to than the national scale.”

An international development internship last year inspired Keyaka to pursue an integrated undergraduate-graduate program in political science and international affairs, with a concentration in human rights and humanitarian response. It helped that she realized she was on schedule to complete her undergraduate degree a year early.

“It was a win-win situation for me, to get an extra degree in something I’m really passionate about, and being able to finish my thesis with my 2019 class,” she said.

Keyaka’s desire to serve the public has not changed since she started at Penn State. Her coursework, internships, and other experiences have provided her with different options of how to serve.

“My goal throughout all of this is just to be knowledgeable about politics in general at all levels in the way that I can look through policies through a racial equity lens,” she said. “That’s really big to me, seeing the way these policies, these laws, these governments are using their powers and their privileges to help disenfranchised communities.”



# A Year-in-Review



Women's fencer Zara Moss was the runner-up in women's sabre at the 2018 NCAA Championships, capping a successful debut season in which she won 37 of 48 regular-season competitions. The Division of Undergraduate Studies student plans to major in business.



Men's volleyball player and security and risk analysis major Calvin Mende earned EIVA All-Academic honors for the second straight season, obtaining a 4.0 GPA for the Fall 2017 semester. He was also an All-EIVA first-team selection after leading the Nittany Lions in kills per set.



Scholar alumnus and University of Massachusetts philosophy professor John Kaag was the featured speaker at the 23rd Annual Mark Luchinsky Memorial Lecture in January.

Scholar Neha Gupta was a guest on an episode of the Harry television show that aired in April. The biology major discussed the charitable organization she founded, Empower Orphans, which has donated more than \$2.6 million to children around the world.

# Renovations expand Schreyer office space



The Schreyer Honors College offices expanded in 2018, adding office space for staff and collaborative space for students in Simmons Hall to existing offices in Atherton Hall.

Penn State's Office of the Physical Plant transformed what had previously been a rec room and an old mail room — complete with old-fashioned, combination-lock boxes — into offices for student programming and strategic communications.

The new layout also includes a reception area, a break area, work space for graduate students and interns, a collaboration space to be used by both staff and students, and a “knowledge station” with dry-erase boards.

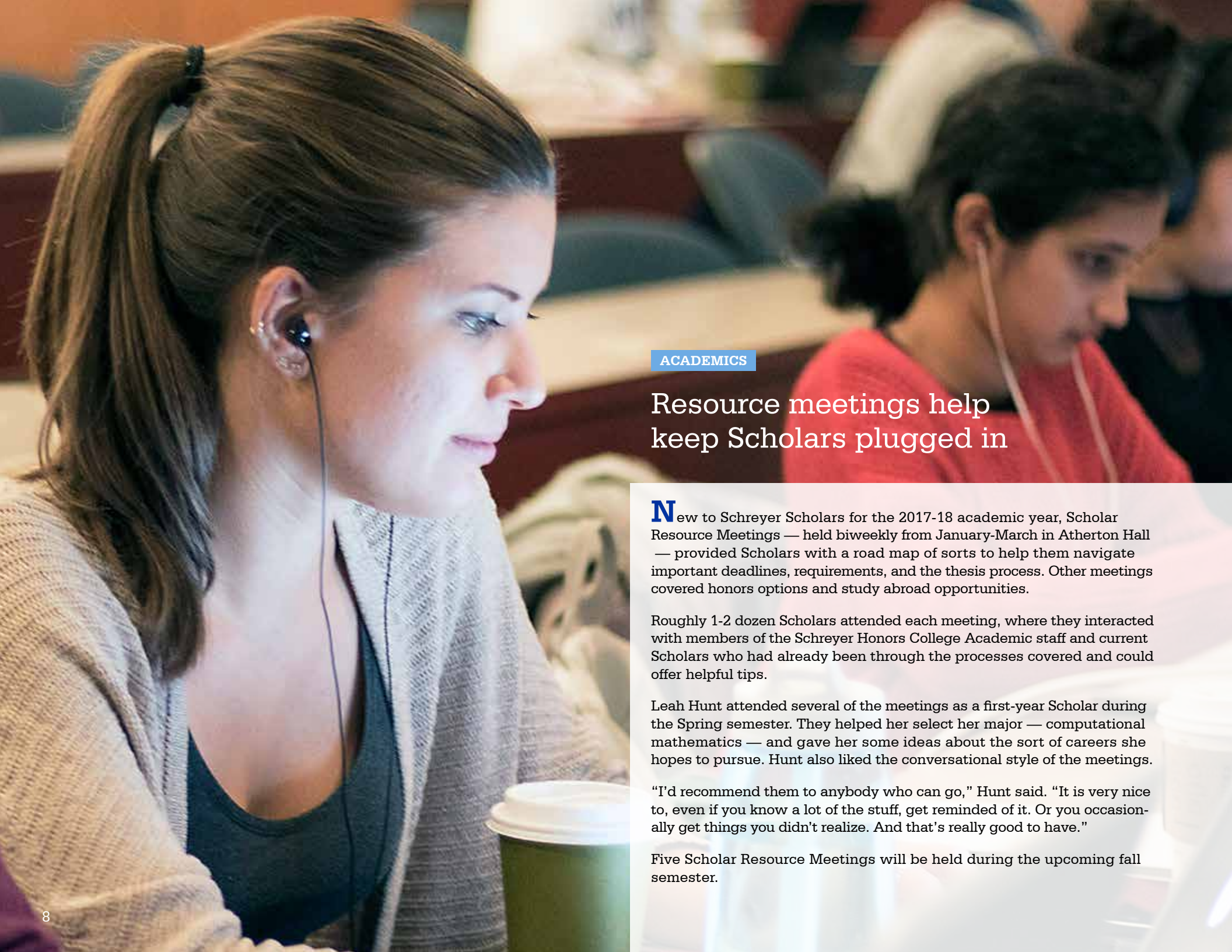
“The biggest challenge was to work within the framework of the old building,” said project architect Kathy Poissant of the Office of Physical Plant. “We have tried to hit a balance of respecting the existing architecture while adding a newer, contemporary look.”

Students will have access to the new space during working hours, and now Scholars who reside in both of the Honors College's primary residence halls will have expanded opportunities to interact with staff on a regular basis.

“It is so exciting to have new space in Simmons for students and staff,” Schreyer Honors College Dean Peggy A. Johnson said. “Schreyer staff will now have a presence in Simmons and the students will have some wonderful new space for collaborating and studying.”







ACADEMICS

Resource meetings help keep Scholars plugged in

New to Schreyer Scholars for the 2017-18 academic year, Scholar Resource Meetings — held biweekly from January-March in Atherton Hall — provided Scholars with a road map of sorts to help them navigate important deadlines, requirements, and the thesis process. Other meetings covered honors options and study abroad opportunities.

Roughly 1-2 dozen Scholars attended each meeting, where they interacted with members of the Schreyer Honors College Academic staff and current Scholars who had already been through the processes covered and could offer helpful tips.

Leah Hunt attended several of the meetings as a first-year Scholar during the Spring semester. They helped her select her major — computational mathematics — and gave her some ideas about the sort of careers she hopes to pursue. Hunt also liked the conversational style of the meetings.

“I’d recommend them to anybody who can go,” Hunt said. “It is very nice to, even if you know a lot of the stuff, get reminded of it. Or you occasionally get things you didn’t realize. And that’s really good to have.”

Five Scholar Resource Meetings will be held during the upcoming fall semester.

Student Awards

**Astronaut Scholarship Foundation**  
Taylor Baum

**Boren Fellowship & Scholarship**  
Laura Guay

**Congress-Bundestag Exchange for Young Professionals**  
Bradley Morabito  
Benjamin Rowles

**DAAD RISE**  
Matthew Driban  
Sojung Kim  
Daniel Kozar

**Erickson Discovery Grants**  
Vivek Anil  
Audrey Arner  
Bridget Baksa  
Rebecca Barnes  
Celeste Belknap  
Rebecca Bussard  
Darcy Calabria  
Sabrina Carrozzi  
Ryan Czekaj  
Lauren Echols  
Nakul Grover  
Catherine Hanagan  
Tice Harkins  
Corey Herr  
Raymond Hoy  
Maria Hudock  
Kailash Jayachandran  
Nicole Laganke  
Joash Lake  
Fabiola Maldonado  
Kathryn Mayberry  
Phoebe McClincy

Colton Ruggery  
Jessica Jean Smith  
Jonathan Thomas  
Gavin Turner  
Madeline Winn  
Philip Zachariah  
Everett Zofchak

**Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship (ETA)**  
Emily Kohlman  
Madison Taylor

**Fulbright Full Grant for Study/Research**  
Alana Mazzei

**Gates Cambridge Scholarship**  
Aaron Bernstein

**Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship**  
Taylor Baum  
Rosalie Sowers

**Nakatani RIES Fellowship**  
Benjamin Piazza

**National Science Foundation**  
Paul Blanchard  
Jason Cornelius  
Mark Frederick  
Aaron Kandel

**NIST SURF**  
Michael Bichnevicius  
Katy Gerace

**Young Fellows Program**  
Benjamin Rowles

Scholars exploring the world as they shape it

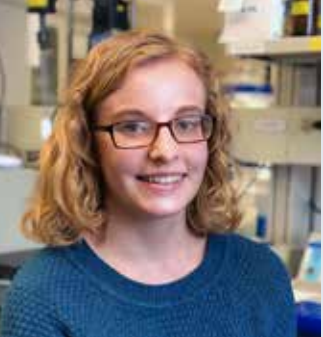
Schreyer Scholars are recognized nationally and internationally for their academic excellence and willingness to serve communities here and abroad. These prestigious scholarships and grants allow them to continue their research or take on challenging new projects in a variety of disciplines.



Taylor Baum  
Astronaut Scholarship,  
Goldwater Scholarship



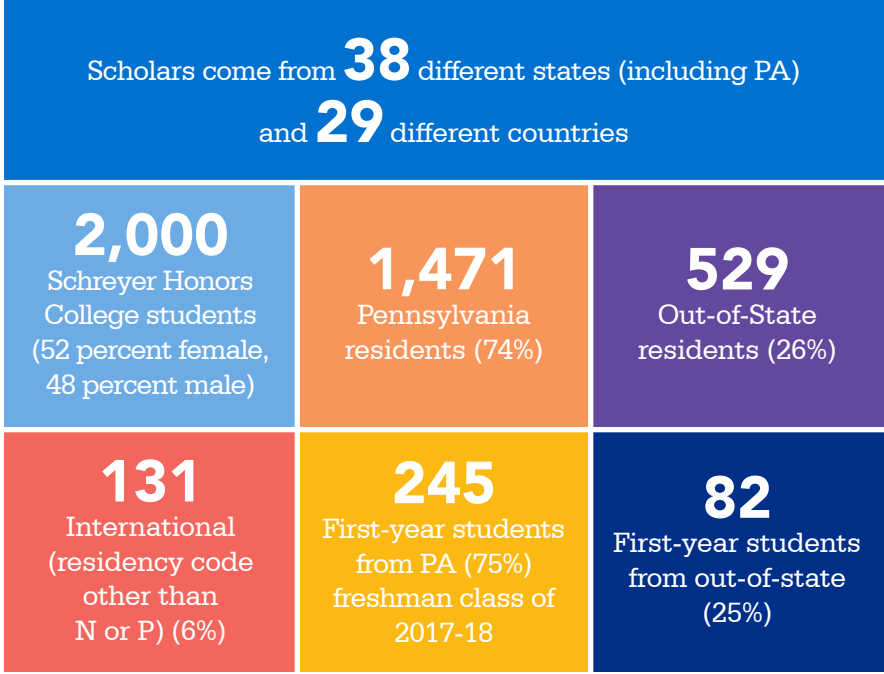
Benjamin Rowles  
Young Fellows Program,  
Congress-Bundestag Exchange



Rosalie Sowers  
Goldwater Scholarship

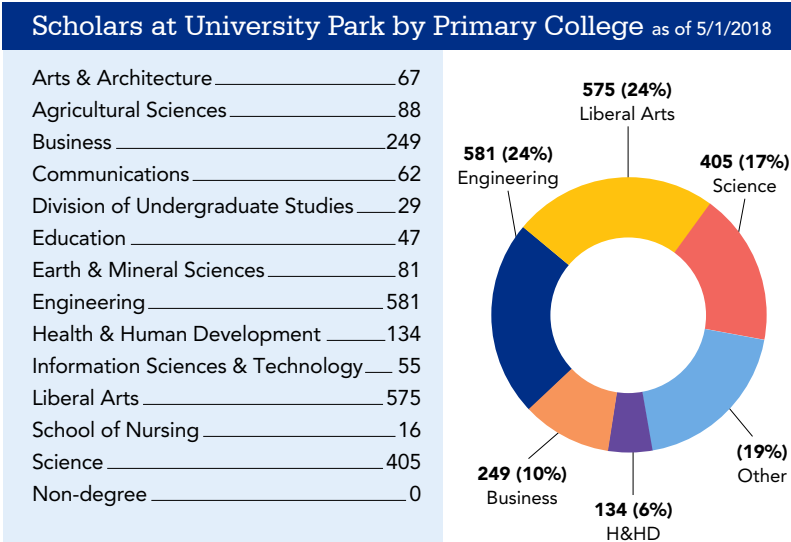


Facts & Figures

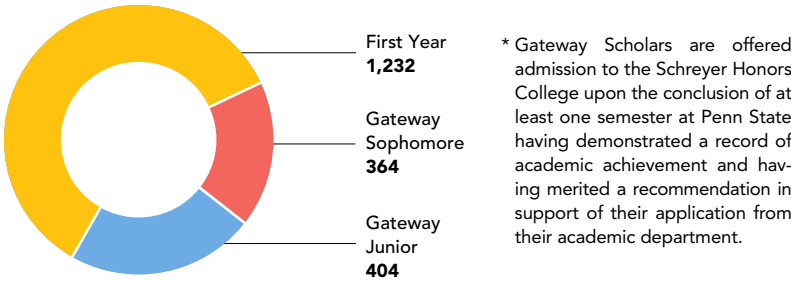


First-Year Students			
	Fall 2017	Fall 2016	Fall 2015
SHC mid-50% range High School GPA	4.00 – 4.33	4.00 – 4.33	3.98 – 4.33
PSU mid-50% range High School GPA	3.55 – 3.97	3.55 – 3.97	3.55 – 3.97
SHC mid-50% range SAT	1340 – 1490	1350 – 1490	1940 – 2150#
PSU mid-50% range SAT	1250 – 1430	1250 – 1430	1750 – 2000#

\*-PSU scores are for University Park only. #-SAT figures changed to a 1600 scale in 2016.



Enrollment by Campus as of the beginning of fall 2017				
Campus Location:	Total	First Year	*Gateway Sophomore	*Gateway Junior
Abington	13	2	11	0
Altoona	4	0	2	2
Behrend	47	10	24	13
Berks	15	2	3	10
Brandywine	5	1	3	1
Capital	19	3	8	8
University Park	1,878	1,197	311	370
Other locations	19	17	2	0
<b>TOTAL 2017-18</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>1,232</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>404</b>



Building a Global Perspective			
	2017–18	2016–17	2015–16
Travel Grants Issued: (service, research, internships)	237*	285*	334*
Number of Countries Represented:	50	47	52
<b>50</b> countries Australia, Brazil, China, Fiji, Hungary, Jordan, Russia, Senegal, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom		<b>222</b> Scholars studied abroad	

\*Many students take advantage of multiple experiences.

How Graduating Scholars Perform						
	Summer†	Fall†	Spring†	Total	Avg. GPA	IUG^
2017–18	26	43	486	555	3.83	67
2016–17	17	52	432	501	3.81	54
2015–16	19	51	429	499	3.83	52

†Number of Graduating Scholars

^IUG is the Integrated Undergraduate-Graduate Program in which Scholars simultaneously complete requirements for bachelor’s and master’s degrees in selected disciplines.

Five- and Ten-Year Outcomes

The Schreyer Honors College tradition of academic excellence follows our Scholars well into their futures. Review the breakdown of post-baccalaureate degrees obtained by Scholars five and ten years after they’ve graduated from the honors college online at <https://www.shc.psu.edu/admissions/why/graduates.cfm>.

- 2017-18 Alumni Recognition
- 2017 Schreyer Honors College Outstanding Scholar Alumni
  - Christa Hasenkopf '03 Sci
  - Herman Pontzer '99 Lib
- 2017 Schreyer Honors College Outstanding Mentor Award
  - Douglas Evans '86 Eng

CATCHING UP WITH

Kelsey Bonsell '13

Kelsey Bonsell is a 2013 Scholar alumna and a graduate of the Penn State College of Communications with a bachelor’s degree in advertising. After graduation, she worked briefly at a startup focused on non-profit crowdfunding and has now been at Google for five years managing some of the company’s largest clients, most recently in the restaurant space. She is getting married to her Penn State sweetheart in September 2018 and they live with their dog Mac in Chicago.

“At Schreyer I was constantly surrounded by extremely driven and interesting people, which pushed me to work hard and think differently. I knew I had to find a similar community in the workplace. When working with my clients, I draw upon my experiences in Schreyer to challenge normal thought, paths, and outcomes to build a custom and ideal solution for every challenge. In my free time, I volunteer in the education space, focusing on helping first-generation college students get into college and secure scholarships and grants to help them find and define their own ‘Schreyer Honors College experience.’”

Google Senior Partner Manager  
Chicago, IL  
Penn State College of Communication, Advertising, Class of 2013



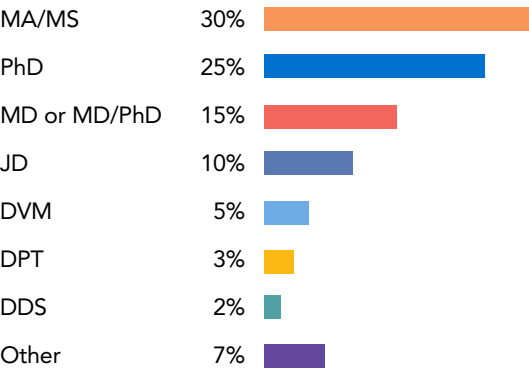
- 2018 Penn State Distinguished Alumni Award
- Richard Riegel '85 Eng

- Penn State Alumni Achievement Award
- Jared Edgar McKnight '11 A&A, Lib
  - Nicole Reed Fry '05 EMS

- 2017 Penn State Alumni Association Alumni Fellow Award
- Vincent Sorgi '93 Bus



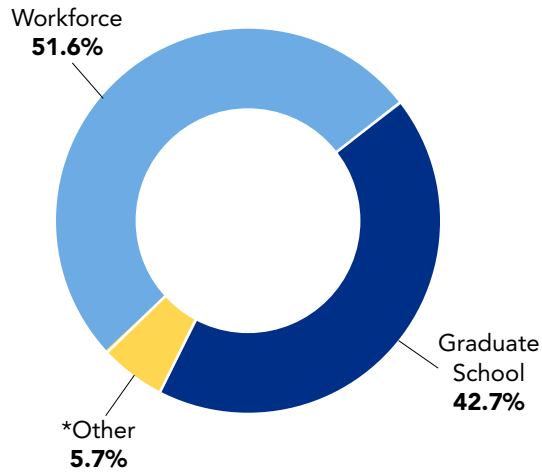
# 2017-2018 Graduate School Breakdown



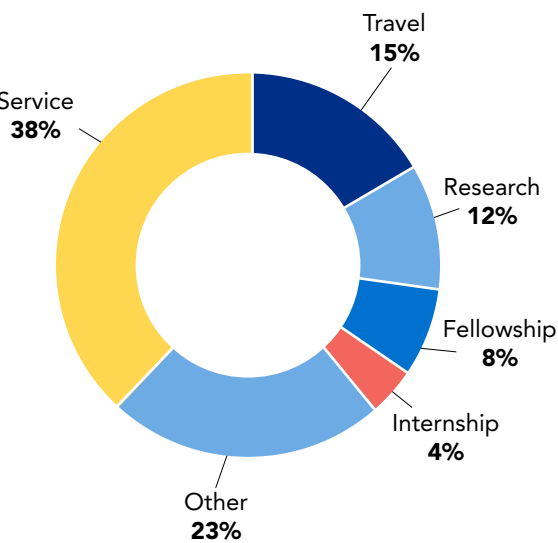
## Sample listing of Graduate Schools

- Brown University
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Los Angeles
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Columbia University
- Cornell University
- Drexel University
- Emory University
- George Washington University
- Harvard University
- Johns Hopkins University
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- University of Michigan
- Northwestern University
- Ohio State University
- Oklahoma State University
- University of Oxford
- University of Pennsylvania
- Purdue University
- Stanford University
- Temple University
- University of Virginia
- Yale University

## 2017-2018 Graduate Outcomes



## \*Breakdown of Other Outcomes



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

# Marshall provides communities with tools to effect positive change

When he was in high school, Spud Marshall and a couple of friends made a handshake pact that they would never take a standard 9-to-5 job.

The only such job he would have considered was working for Disney as an Imagineer.

“I’ve always been fascinated by this idea that you could create spaces and experiences that transport people out of their normal life and drop them in a different way of interacting,” he said.

A few weeks before he graduated from the Schreyer Honors College in 2008, Marshall had a sustainability education job lined up... with Disney. But the economy crashed, and Disney called and said the job was no longer there. For the next few months, he would Google “cool things to do around the world for free.”

“I made it to like the 300th page on the search results,” he said.

After completing a graduate program in organizational change in Blekinge, Sweden, Marshall returned to State College, where he began to help people make community connections and give them a different way of interacting. His time as a Scholar helped provide him the foundation and inspiration.

“I was in a community where people were pushing themselves and learning. That was the value that I got from this space,” he said. “I was a big-picture, fringe thinker, and a lot of my effort during those four years was figuring out how do I throw myself out into fringe spaces in our community.”

Marshall has spent nearly a decade helping transform the State College community. In 2010,

he co-founded New Leaf Initiative, a nonprofit community innovation hub. Two years later, he co-founded the co.space, which put students — several Schreyer Scholars among them — and young professionals under the same roof, a sort of entrepreneurial Real World.

His most recent undertaking is Trailhead, which provides \$1,000 grants to people with creative ideas that will benefit the community. One recipient is creating artistic picnic tables to establish regular neighborhood block parties, while another is using hammocks to bring people of different walks of life together.

“Culture is created by individuals, not by organizations,” Marshall said. “We don’t want to create this network of 50 organizations that are Trailhead members. Instead, we’re going to create a network of 50 people who happen to represent these different organizations. But it’s the people who are going to shape the culture.”

A frequent speaker at TedxPSU, Marshall also works in small communities all over the country, coordinating leadership retreats and consulting for organizations large and small. He would like to eventually localize more of that work to Pennsylvania, but he has seen how communities of various demographics and mindsets can be improved by only a few motivated and well-organized people.

“For me, change-making is all about someone who sees an issue, a pattern, a series of problems in their neighboring region, and they just want to positively change it,” Marshall said. “I’m curious to help people see the different ways they can create positive ripples in the communities that they’re a part of and expand their lens a little bit.”



“You’re not just trying to solve a problem to make a profit. You’re trying to solve pressing environmental and social issues in your community.”



## Berkman seeks to build dialogue, spark passion in students



Michael Berkman loves to sit and talk politics with his students. The Penn State political science professor and longtime Schreyer Honors College honors adviser enjoys it even more when he can build on those relationships with Scholars throughout their time at the University — and after they’ve graduated.

“To me, one of the real virtues of the honors program is that you can get to know these students over an extended period of time,” he said. “I like watching them develop intellectually and professionally from when they come in to when they leave.”

After obtaining his doctorate degree from Indiana University, Berkman came to Penn State in 1988. Since 2016, he has been the director of Penn State’s McCourtney Institute for Democracy, an interdisciplinary center for research, teaching, and outreach that Berkman says has increased his passion for American democracy.

“I have a real passion for understanding current events and what’s going on in the world,” he said. “I have a strong sense of social justice. That drives a lot of what I do in terms of the kinds of things I read, things I listen to, things I tend to talk about, the people I hang out with.”

Berkman teaches the Intro to American Politics course, tweaking the syllabus each year to keep it in line with current events — the first year of the Trump presidency and immigration being two recent examples. He has also taught special elections courses during presidential election years. The smaller class sizes of honors courses work perfectly for the kind of environment he strives to create.

“I’m not anti-lecture, but I like the atmosphere you can create with a small class,” he said. “It takes some work, but I do try to work at it. I consider it an accomplishment if I can get them talking to one another and not just talking to me.”

One of three honors advisers in the department, he takes on 20-30 advisees each year and is pleased with the way the Honors College has prioritized the thesis.

“I like finding out what they’re interested in and try to help them get there,” Berkman said. “Try to open them up to things they haven’t thought about before. Their energy is fun to be around.”

The father of a Scholar alumnus — 2017 graduate Ben Berkman — Berkman enjoys catching up with former students like Scholar alumni Sean Misko, Amanda Wentzel, and Laura Rosenberger at McCourtney events or other gatherings and learning about their current careers or just getting their takes on today’s political climate.

“The best ones for me are the ones who develop into doing some interesting thesis research and the ones that just go off and do stuff that I really couldn’t have imagined myself doing – the study abroads and Teach for America,” he said. “I live vicariously through them a little bit.”

## Accepted students programs give future Scholars preview of Schreyer experience



More than 280 prospective students attended a Schreyer accepted students program in March and April. The afternoons included tours of the Honors College’s residence halls campus, informational sessions about orientation, student housing, and more, and question-and-answer panels with current Schreyer Scholars.

“We designed the accepted student receptions as a way for our students who are thinking about us to come and test-drive the Schreyer Honors College,” said director of admissions Moradeyo Olorunnisola. “See who we are, meet members of the community, imagine themselves here on campus, in our space, and to ask any questions that they have regarding their decision-making.

“What we try to do is provide them with reasons to pick us and to show them why we think they will be great here.”

During the Q&A panels, accepted students asked current Scholars what it was like to juggle multiple majors, how they handled the honors thesis requirement, the kind of extracurricular activities they were involved in, and if they could room with friends who were Penn State students but not in the Honors College.

“I have some friends who already go here, so I already knew a lot,” said Alyssa Boob of Spring Mills, a senior at Penns Valley High School, “but it was interesting to see how many people have double majors or minors.”

Taylor Selembo, who attends the Levine Middle College High School in Charlotte, North Carolina, knew a lot about Penn State — where her parents, alumni George and Priscilla, met — but by attending one of the programs, learned more about her housing options, including the GLOBE in Simmons Hall.

“I felt that it was extremely valuable to have the Scholars students answer my questions and serve as guides,” Selembo said, “because they were able to offer a perspective that only a current student would be able to.”

Boob, who has also accepted her offer to attend Penn State and the Schreyer Honors College, liked the “small-school feel at a huge university” and thought it was “amazing how driven everybody is.” Matt Wozniak, a senior at Johns Creek High School in Atlanta, Georgia, will attend the Schreyer Honors College this fall. His trip north for a reception this spring was one of the reasons why.

“Maybe it was the goodie bag, more likely it was how I was treated and respected, but you just got a sense that you were going to be invested in while at the Schreyer Honors College,” he said.



# Alumni connect with Scholars at annual networking event

The Schreyer Honors College’s annual alumni career networking event, Connect, puts current Scholars in the same rooms with Scholar alumni from a wide variety of disciplines. Sponsored by the Scholar Alumni Society Board and MACOM, provides students with networking opportunities and alumni with a way to stay involved.

This past March, more than three dozen Scholar alumni and 120 students gathered in Penn State’s Forest Resources Building, discussing startups, consulting, STEM careers, and graduate school, among other topics. Students also had the option of getting formal headshots taken for their LinkedIn pages.

Work-life balance and pursuing passion projects within or outside of traditional career paths, were common themes in multiple panel discussions.

“I thought it was significant to hear about how some people find fulfillment within their career, and then some people find it outside of their career,” said sophomore Kate Sweeney, a double major in English and Community, Environment, and Development. “It was nice to bring that all together.”

Scholar alumnus Derek Gerberich, a senior manager for account services at Metric Theory, a digital marketing agency, told students that he uses his interest in college basketball analytics to make impressions during interviews. Asia Grant, a digital consultant for IBM, pursues her passion of reading the children’s book she published to kindergarten classes. Boyoung Kim, an equity research associate at Bloomberg, plays in an orchestra once a week.

“Your life is always going to have a menu of things that make you happy,” said Scholar alumna Jenna Knapp, the director of sourcing and production at Thread, a company that creates fabrics from recycled materials. “And your job is just one of them.”



The mantra that came through to students in many of the sessions and in the networking session that followed, where they had a chance to talk to alumni one-on-one, was the kind of career and life success that can come from pursuing passions.

“To see these alums who have been in this position and have applied that to their own lives, it’s very inspirational,” said Scholar Pragya Singh, a senior majoring in risk management. “It gives you the courage to go and apply that to your life.”



CONNECT Database is a searchable directory, established in 2017, to be used by current Scholars for quick access to career-related advice and networking opportunities. Scholars are able to directly contact Schreyer Scholar alumni from a wide variety of professions via a secure, self-service web application. It is an opportunity for current Scholars to build their own networks and an opportunity for Scholar alumni to remain involved with the Honors College.

More information may be found at [shc.psu.edu/alumni/involved/connect.cfm](http://shc.psu.edu/alumni/involved/connect.cfm)

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

# Meyer a mainstay for the College



“I believe my life has been shaped by incredible learning experiences, inspirational mentors, a little bit of serendipity, and priceless friends.” Meyer said.

After growing up in Centre County, Meyer worked at several entry-level positions to finance her own education at Centre Business School, Inc., where she accepted a position to represent the school at career fairs in surrounding counties. Her love for students helped form the idea of pursuing a career in higher education. Her dream of working at Penn State came to fruition when she accepted a position at the University Scholars Program, and the rest is history — from Receptionist to Staff Assistant, Office Manager, the College’s first Coordinator of Alumni Relations, Coordinator of Students Programs, and her current role, Director of Student Programs — all at Schreyer.

“No two days have been the same,” said Meyer, who studied at Penn State and is a graduate of Leadership Centre County. “I truly love what I do. I especially love the feeling of pride when students feel empowered to share their dreams and serve as leaders on campus.”

As the only current staff member who experienced the transition from University Scholars Program to formal inception of the Schreyer Honors College, Meyer has worked for six deans and directors, who “each shared a special legacy.” Her career also includes the first SHO TIME and 13 in total, the first Mark Luchinsky Memorial Lecture and all 23 since (missing just one year), and more than 80 medals ceremonies.

“Each one has its own personality,” Meyer said. “I’ve had a tear of joy at each one.”

In her current role as Director of Student Programs, Meyer facilitates student engagement and leadership by planning Schreyer Honors Orientation (SHO TIME), Gateway Orientation (GO TIME) and getting students acclimated to the Schreyer community. She also serves as the co-adviser for Schreyer Honors College Student Council, leads the Scholar Ambassador Team, prepares orientation team leaders and mentors, and manages the Society of Distinguished Alumni Mentoring Program.

Many Scholars look to Meyer as a mentor, going into her office for a famous “couch conversation” or sending a postcard from abroad to add to her collection. Although Meyer and

her husband have no children of their own, they often joke that they have 1,800 children, they just do not pay for their tuition.

“The sense of community that we create here is family,” Meyer said. “My personal values align with the values of Schreyer Honors College — lifelong learning, having a global perspective, serving as a leader with integrity, being able to give back. When you can find a career that does that, you’ve found the perfect fit.”

Meyer enjoys spending time with family, friends, and outdoor photography — perhaps starting her own business in retirement. She hopes that one day her legacy will be remembered as “someone who had a positive influence in students’ lives, and someone that lived a life of integrity and unwavering faith.”



## Scholar alumni inspired to give back

Erin Talbert remembers how Penn State leadership rallied around her during one of the most difficult periods of her life. It’s one of the main reasons she and her husband, Tony, both Penn State graduates, created the Talbert Family Open Doors Honors Scholarship, which will be matched 2:1 by the University and will support Schreyer Scholars who meet financial need requirements through the Complete Penn State program.

When Talbert came home for Christmas break during her first year as an undergraduate student at Penn State, her parents told her they were suffering extreme financial hardship and wouldn’t be able to pay her tuition. Distraught, she went to the interim dean of the College of Communications, Jeremy Cohen, and asked for help. Cohen, University Scholars Program director James Rambeau, and director of student aid Anna Griswold got together and came up with a plan — a student aid package plus loans — that would allow Talbert to stay in school.

“I look back at that pivotal moment where it would have been so easy to just not come back, knowing there was no way I could pay that bill,” she said. “People stepped forward and made it happen. That was no small thing.”

Erin and Tony — who met on her first day of college when he offered to help her move in — were both Schreyer Scholars. Erin, an advertising and public relations major, worked several part-time jobs on campus during her time as an undergraduate to supplement the aid package; Tony, an industrial engineering major, helped by paying for her textbooks. They believe their honors experiences helped them land their first jobs — Erin as a consultant at Accenture and Tony as a real estate investment banker at Chatham Financial.



“When we were interviewing for jobs, we both felt that was what set our resumes off in a different pile,” she said. “When it came time to where our money went, when we actually looked back to what we thought was most transformative, it was our time in the honors college.”

The Talberts previously helped establish the first student scholarship for the Schreyer Scholar Alumni Society Board. Erin recently completed a six-year term on the Board. The Talberts

understand the challenges Schreyer Scholars face even without having to worry about the financial responsibilities of college, and they wanted to step forward and help current and future students the way Penn State leaders had helped Erin.

“Penn State can feel so big. There is more need than we could ever hope to fill,” she said. “I know the impact that every little bit can have.”

Endowment and Gift Spending		
2017–18 Fiscal Year	Number of Awards	Amount Awarded
Academic Excellence Scholarships: (includes charitable and institutional funds)	1,146	\$4,890,557
Need-based and Merit Scholarships:	274	\$1,057,029
Student Awards: (travel grants, internships, and research awards)	476	\$284,270
Program Support:	–	\$846,685
TOTAL:	1,896	\$7,078,541
Total Endowment Value: \$103,559,645.75 (as of July 1, 2018)		



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## Ifferts' parents impressed by their desire to change the world

When his two children, Madeline and Jack, are home at the same time — a rarity these days — Craig Iffert will hear them talk about their respective career aspirations with one another.

The conversation hardly ever involves financial compensation.

“They’re more like ‘How are we going to make a difference?’” Craig said. “They want their activities to drive something positive.”

Craig and his wife, Nancy Veronesi, of Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, have been pleased with the opportunities the Schreyer Honors College has afforded their children and with the way they pursue various challenges.

Madeline graduated from Penn State and the Schreyer Honors College in 2016 with degrees in industrial engineering and Spanish. She worked for one year with the Solstice Initiative in Boston, informing Massachusetts and New York residents about solar options, and now is taking part in a two-year Operations Management Leadership Program with GE; first at GE Hitachi in Wilmington, North Carolina and now at GE’s LM Wind Power in Grand Forks, North Dakota as a manufacturing productivity leader.

Jack, a civil engineering major, is entering his fourth year at Penn State. He is a member of the Presidential Leadership Academy, President of Apollo THON group, and the Humanitarian Engineering and Social Entrepreneurship (HESE) Program and has held internships as a project engineer at The Whiting-Turner Contracting Company and a transportation planning and traffic operations intern at Kimley-Horn.

“Both had paid internships in the summer after their freshman year,” Nancy said. “First of all, it’s because Penn State has those great job fairs. But I think the reason they’re getting interviews is because they’re from Schreyer.”



Craig was impressed with the way Jack was able to obtain grant money for trips to Tanzania and Kenya.

“For him to able to build a case of why he’s doing this, how it’s going to benefit others, why people should invest in him ... I was pretty much blown away,” Craig said. “He’s figured out a way to go support these endeavors on his own. To me, that’s pretty adult-like.”

Nancy has served on the Outreach Committee of the Schreyer Parents Council, and she has talked to parents of prospective students while those students conducted interviews with Scholar alumni. She can provide the perspective of a mother whose two children took different paths through the same honors program and who has seen them develop leadership skills and an altruistic spirit in different ways.

“It’s been rewarding for us to be able to help advertise or promote Schreyer to other people,” Nancy said.







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