

SCHOLAR

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

RIISING ENTERPRISE

Schreyer Consulting Group providing students with foundation for success

**2018-2019
ANNUAL REPORT**

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Message from Dean Peggy A. Johnson



What a great year we have had in the Schreyer Honors College! Our Scholars, staff, faculty, and alumni have been so creative and productive. In this annual report, you will find summaries, statistics, and stories that showcase this remarkable year.

Our Scholars and Scholar alumni have so many accomplishments that it is challenging to summarize them all! Instead, I will point out a few examples that are highlighted in the pages to follow.

- Scholars won a significant number of national awards this past year. Notably, four Scholars were awarded Goldwater Scholarships after competing against thousands of other students across the United States.
- Scholars were also involved in many service activities that provide assistance to various communities. A group of Scholars is working to bring Remote Area Medical clinics to rural Pennsylvania to provide medical attention for those in need.
- Several recent Scholar alumni have been working to establish a new app, Beemia, designed to help students find housing and navigate college. It is a “community-fed information network” and is now available for Apple and Android devices.
- Perhaps you have heard Scholar alumna Laura Rosenberger on NPR recently. She is the director of the Alliance for Securing Democracy, a nonpartisan group that investigates the threat of other nations meddling in elections.

The year has also seen changes in the staff of the Schreyer Honors College. Dr. Mitch Kirsch, former Associate Dean for Student Affairs, retired in June after 14 years in the College and 23 years at Penn State. Lisa Kerchinski, Director of Career Development, was selected to serve as a Penn State Fellow for the 2019-2020 academic year with the vice president for Government and Community Relations, Zack Moore. Sarah Lyall-Combs will serve as the interim Director. Chi Nguyen joined the staff as a higher education data analyst. She is working with faculty in the Penn State Center for Higher Education to develop an assessment framework and to help us make data-driven decisions.

Finally, we were very excited to bring Dr. Lynette Yarger onto the staff this summer as our inaugural Assistant Dean for Equity and Inclusion. Dr. Yarger is currently an Associate Professor of Information Science and Technology, with expertise in using social theories to examine ways in which historically underserved groups use information and communication technologies to improve their life chances. She will help the Schreyer Honors College in developing diversity-related initiatives and advance programs and policies that support equity and inclusion.

I hope you will enjoy reading the Annual Report, which is now also known as “Scholar: The Magazine of the Schreyer Honors College.” Our mission and vision are embedded in everything our Scholars, faculty and staff, and alumni do. They are the embodiment of the Schreyer legacy. I am so proud and privileged to be part of this extraordinary community!

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.

Scholars serving in their communities and around the world

A core component of the Schreyer Honors College mission is “creating opportunities for leadership and civic engagement.” Schreyer Scholars continue to consistently exhibit service leadership close to home and globally.

After establishing the Penn State chapter of Remote Area Medical (RAM), a national nonprofit organization that organizes free mobile medical, dental and eye care clinics in impoverished and underserved communities, Scholars volunteered at clinics in Virginia, Tennessee, and West Virginia. Their goal is to bring the first annual RAM clinic to Pennsylvania.

“A lot of times when you think medical service, you think, overseas,” said Scholar alumna and mathematics major Elena Cadenas, who is the web designer and social media coordinator for the chapter. “This a direct contribution to our society, helping the community become stronger, making sure everyone is healthy.”

Scholar alumnus Alexandre Bourcier, who helped found the Penn State chapter, was honored with a Stand Up Award from the Rock Ethics Institute for his work with RAM. Students from other universities have reached out to him about establishing chapters or clinics in their own states.

“Our job is not only to take care of Pennsylvania, but also to inspire other schools and other states,” Bourcier said.

Since Scholar alumna Neha Gupta came to Penn State in 2014, Scholars have been serving youth around the world through Empower Orphans, the nonprofit organization Gupta founded when she was 9 years old. This year, Scholars in the Penn State chapter spent part of winter break volunteering at Malayaka House, a nonprofit orphanage in Entebbe, Uganda. Schreyer for Women, an organization created by Scholars in 2017, makes service a major priority, and several of its mem-

bers traveled to Africa, visiting girls’ schools in Tanzania and Kenya during the spring.

Oftentimes, the work or research of Scholars is done with service to other groups in mind. As part of her honors thesis, graduating Scholar Brooke Cichocki created a curriculum for music students designed to train them similar to an athletic training program. Scholar Muayyad Safri and two of his fellow Penn State students designed a device which converted human speech into written text via machine language code and won the top prize at the University’s spring hackathon competition. Their inspiration for the project was helping those who suffer from Parkinson’s

disease, arthritis, or other ailments that make it difficult to put pen to paper or type on a keyboard.

“I think service is always an important aspect of our collective experiences, and the opportunity to go to a completely different part of the world, experience a different culture, step outside of our comfort zone is something we should always do, regardless of age,” said former Associate Dean of Student Affairs Mitch Kirsch, who accompanied Scholars on trips to Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda this past year. “If we can plant that seed while students are in college, it sets out for the rest of your life. It’s part of an education that you can’t get in a classroom or reading.”



Yarger excited to take on new position

Dr. Lynette Yarger became the Schreyer Honors College's inaugural Assistant Dean for Equity and Inclusion on August 1. The Associate Professor of Information Sciences and Technology, who will maintain a half-time role in the College of Information Sciences and Technology and a half-time role in the Honors College, will help to develop diversity-related initiatives and advance programs and policies that support equity and inclusion.

Yarger worked as an Administrative Fellow in the Office of the Vice President for Information Technology and CIO during the 2018-19 year. She is a recipient of the National Science Foundation Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Award, the College of IST George J. McMurtry Teaching and Learning Award (2013), and the Penn State Teaching Fellow Award (2014).

"A lot of times, when we talk about academic excellence, it's presented in a way that is at least received as being elitist, especially when you're talking about underrepresented communities," Yarger said. "This opportunity provided a forum to look at groups who are typically underrepresented at the Schreyer Honors College but from the mindset of success — students who are among our brightest. That was what was interesting to me, being able to work with a high caliber of student."

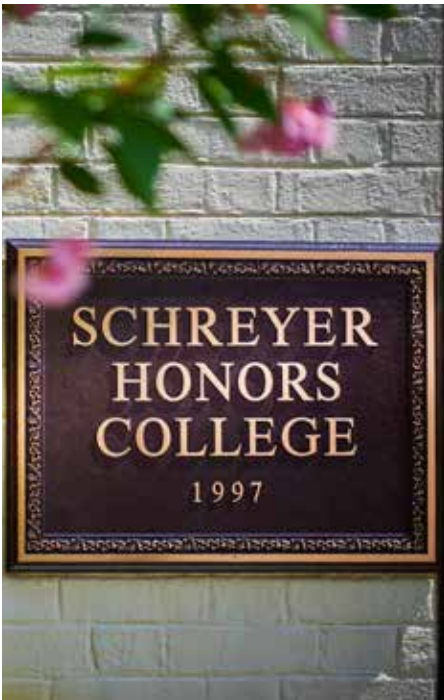
Yarger's research examines the ways in which historically underserved groups appropriate information and communication technologies to improve their life chances. Her work has been published in more than 75 peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and conference proceedings.



Lynette Yarger worked as a software engineer at AT&T prior to embarking on a distinguished academic career at Penn State

Yarger, who received her bachelor of science degree in computer and information systems from Mercy College and her master of science and doctoral degrees in computer information systems from Georgia State University, recently completed a nine-month information technology leadership program as part of the Big Ten Academic Alliance. She plans to leverage those leadership skills and her experience in teaching information technology to undergraduates in her new role.

"IT is the language of our young people," she said. "Because I've worked and taught undergraduate students in this area of technology, I've been able to keep up with the trends of what's interesting and the ways they're using the technology. I think at that level I can build on some of those connections."



Beemia team looking to create community on college campuses

Three recent Scholar alumni and their team have developed an app and website that will make it easier for college students to find housing, activities, and more.

Nicole Kosuda, Dan Lordan, and Colleen McBride are all working full-time with Beemia, which launched this past March at Penn State and has plans to expand to college towns across the country.

Andrew Strause, the chief executive officer of Beemia, and Lordan were interns together in Penn State's Division of Development and Alumni Relations in 2016. A year later, after Lordan had graduated with honors in biology and political science, Strause asked if he would be interested in joining him in his startup. Lordan would eventually leave his full-time job with DDAR as a senior business analyst in the Office of Research and Analytics to become the chief operating officer of the next iteration of the business, FindItU.

McBride, who had worked with Lordan in the Penn State chapter of Empower Orphans, joined last summer and is now the company's chief marketing officer. Her best friend, Kosuda, started as a photography intern last fall and is now the chief content officer. The two first met at first-year student orientation.

This past fall, McBride decided to rebrand the company. Strause's father, Ryan, is an apiarist. A beehive metaphor made sense. FindItU became Beemia.

"We are bringing communities together to grow and thrive and connecting students with businesses, and everybody is playing their part," said McBride, whose older brother, Kevin, created the graphic design palette on a freelance basis.



Scholar alumni working with Beemia include Dan Lordan, top left, Nicole Kosuda, bottom left, and Colleen McBride, bottom center

The platform has three main categories: Beemia Housing, which helps students find apartments and housing and list sublets; Beemia Lifestyle, which provides information from events to bands; and Beemia Buzz, a lifestyle blog with original student storytelling.

"We wanted to have the restaurants, the bars, the bands," Kosuda said. "But Buzz was a different way where we could actually feature college writers, actual college students, and have their work featured on our platform."

Beemia wants to help all students — especially first-year students, first-generation students, international students, transfer students, and those without a

support system — plug into sections of the community they might not know about.

"The University has so many things that we can take advantage of," Lordan said. "I was lucky that when I reached out to my networks, someone could point me in the right direction. We don't think, collectively, that your access to information or opportunities should be limited by your network, or your ability to make connections."

"We wanted to make a place where everybody could find what they needed at the moment they needed it."

A Year-in-REVIEW

Scholar **Noah Roberson** earned an Elite 90 Award for the third straight year, becoming first Penn State student-athlete to do so. The men's gymnast was also a four-time Academic All-Big Ten selection and a three-time Big Ten Distinguished Scholar. He graduated with a 4.0 grade-point average in biomedical engineering and mechanical engineering.

Scholars **Noorein Ahmed** and **Nick Karafilis** were the dual recipients of the inaugural "Guide State Forward" award during Homecoming weekend. The award replaced the crowning of a traditional Homecoming king and queen as Penn State Homecoming elected to move to a gender-neutral court this year.

Nearly 40 Scholars participated in the Ignite Retreat, a three-day workshop facilitated by Scholar alumni **Spud Marshall** and **Chad Littlefield** that included workshops and activities with professional change-makers and social entrepreneurs at the Krislund Camp and Conference Center in Madisonburg, Pennsylvania, in September.

Penn State Willaman Professor of Biology **Peter Hudson** spoke about the threat of global disease, population growth, educating women, and the power of images to effect change during the Annual Mark Luchinsky Memorial Lecture on January 28.

More than three dozen Scholar alumni returned to campus on March 23 for Connect, the College's signature career development event, where they interacted with 120 current Scholars on topics that included entrepreneurship, unconventional career paths, and graduate and medical school.



Student Awards

Astronaut Scholarship Foundation
Katelyn Kirchner

DAAD RISE
Matthew Aronson
Maria Badanova
Rijul Bhimwal
Anastasia Hale
David Krum
Annie Liu
Marissa Maney

Erickson Discovery Grants
Ethan Adams
Lena Becker
Isabel Brady
Amanda Rose Byrd
Yu-Jen Chiu
Carly Danielson
Autumn Deitrick
Victor Ficarra
Nicholas Gigliotti
Lindsey Goodnight
James Graef
John Gurklis
Kathryn King
Victoria Emily Leger
Amanda Martin
Aileen McKinstry
Matthew Mouck
Lily Murray
Guinevere Vanbuskirk
Oliver

Jay Pendyala
Philip Ratnasamy
Lily Qing Lian Robinson
Katelyn Ruisil
Steven Schneible
Jessica Smith
Lucy Spicher
Rachel Danielle Swope
Emily Thyrum
Israel Tucker
Andrew White
Yinqi Zhang
Xinye Zhao

Foreign Language and Area Studies Program
Erika Pugh
Kristen Swantek

Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship (ETA)
Tessa Sontheimer

Fulbright Full Grant for Study/Research
Kyle Cornman

Benjamin Gilman International Scholarship
Ouniol Akililu
Rachel Aul

Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship
Anna Brogan
Sojung Kim
Guinevere Oliver
Ananda Rankin

National Science Foundation (NSF)
Taylor Baum
Michael Bichnevicus
Sylvia Bintrim
Eric Pauley
Everett Zofchak

Kerchinski named Administrative Fellow

Schreyer Honors College director of career development **Lisa Kerchinski** was selected as one of three Administrative Fellows for the 2019-20 year. Her one-year appointment began August 1.

The Administrative Fellows Program offers Penn State faculty and staff the opportunity to work with senior University officers to gain knowledge and experiences pertaining to the challenges of leadership in the academic community. **Zack Moore**, vice president for Government and Community Relations, will be Kerchinski's mentor during the program.

"I've always been very interested in higher education," said Kerchinski, who came to the Honors College in 2007. "That's where I've spent my entire career. I thought learning more about the university through this program was a fantastic opportunity."

Sarah Lyall-Combs, who previously served as the associate director of Penn State's Center for Global Studies (CGS), will serve as interim director of career development.



CHALLENGE SEEKERS

WITH HELP OF ALUMNI, SCHREYER CONSULTING GROUP BUILDING PIPELINE OF TALENT



FOR THE BETTER PART OF THE PAST DECADE, SCHOLARS IN THE SCHREYER CONSULTING GROUP HAVE SOUGHT ADVICE FROM ALUMNI AND OTHER CONSULTING PROFESSIONALS THROUGH ON-SITE VISITS OR CAMPUS EVENTS. THEY HAVE HONED THEIR SKILLS IN CASE INTERVIEWS AND THEN TURNED AROUND AND TRAINED THEIR CLASSMATES. THEY HAVE OPENED THE EYES OF THEIR PEERS TO CONSULTING OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARE NOT LIMITED TO THE BUSINESS DOMAIN. AND THEY HAVE PREPARED THEMSELVES FOR CHALLENGING AND REWARDING CAREERS.

“It’s always been something that a core group of Scholars and a core group of companies have been interested in,” said Schreyer Honors College Director of Career Development Lisa Kerchinski, “but I’ve really seen it grow, and it just seems like more people are aware of this as a career opportunity.”

Since an intern in the career development office, Jenna Robinson, helped create the structure for the organization in 2011, the Schreyer Consulting Group (SCG) has been known by different

names and has had different priorities over the years. The staples have been the desire of its members to prepare themselves and future Scholars for the consulting world and the willingness of Scholar alumni to help where they can.

“What I think the club has evolved into is a network of people supporting each other and trying to figure this out,” said outgoing president Matthew Cherry, who graduated this spring with honors in finance and is an incoming business analyst at Deloitte. “We’re set up more like an MBA consulting club than an undergrad one.”

Case interview prep is a primary part of the group’s fall meetings, and it recently, with assistance from the Smeal Business Career Center, completed a 30-page interviewing guidebook. Officers or other upperclassmen will often meet individually with younger students who want to gain experience, or simply learn about the process, for informal, one-on-one sessions.

“Whenever people reach out to us, we’re happy to just sit down,” said junior finance major Nimay Godbole, who will be SCG’s president for the 2019-20 year.

Godbole said the confidence he had going into the summer internship he landed as a summer associate with Strategy& was partly inspired by watching his former mentor, Scholar alumnus Caleb Kwok, successfully interview with McKinsey & Company, where he is now a business analyst.

“I knew all these other candidates were coming from the schools that had traditionally been recruited, but I had a lot of confidence in the fact that I had worked hard and deserved to be there just as much as they did, and I was going to put my best foot forward when it came time to do so,” said Kwok, a 2018 graduate and former SCG president.

The other major focus of the group is networking. That means using the connections SCG has already established with major consulting firms like Deloitte, McKinsey, KPMG, PwC, and others to bring representatives to campus for small-group visits. There are also “treks” — trips to the offices of consulting firms in New York, Washington, D.C., Pittsburgh, or Philadelphia — each year.

Kerchinski will help make introductions for these trips, but she has been impressed by the students’ ownership of their organization and planning, and by the way she has seen them ensure as many of their fellow Scholars as possible enjoy the experience.

“People who have had more exposure will give up a seat on a trek even if they’ve planned it to share that opportunity with someone who’s perhaps not had that same access, which I think is very mature and really good servant leadership,” Kerchinski said.

Scholars who initially take an interest in the organization or consulting are often surprised to discover it isn’t only about the business world. SCG’s executive board includes Scholars majoring in supply chain and information systems, health policy and administration, and engineering. The group has coordinated visits from nonprofit consulting firms like Redstone Strategy Group.

“What’s so great about consulting is that every single major that we offer here can bring something unique to consulting and give you a unique skill set that you can put towards solving a problem,” said Sydney Hannah, the vice president for corporate outreach and a mechanical engineering and international politics double major. “We pride ourselves in our ability to demonstrate how consulting incorporates such a wide variety of majors and skill sets.”

The treks help Scholars gain a greater understanding of daily consulting. The case interview prep allows them to make a strong first impression with employers. The connections with alumni bring it all together, which has been one of the group’s greatest benefits since its beginnings.

“We were helping get candidates directly in front of alumni, who would then kick a resume as a referral over to the recruiting arm, which made it a lot easier to get into the interview, and then the case study prep helped them get through the interviews,” said Justin Cook, who took a business risk consulting job at Deloitte after graduating in 2013 and is now a private equity associate for Partners Group.

There is a growing number of Scholar alumni in the consulting world, and many of them are willing to offer advice or help current students make connections — for the benefit of the students and the benefit of their employers.

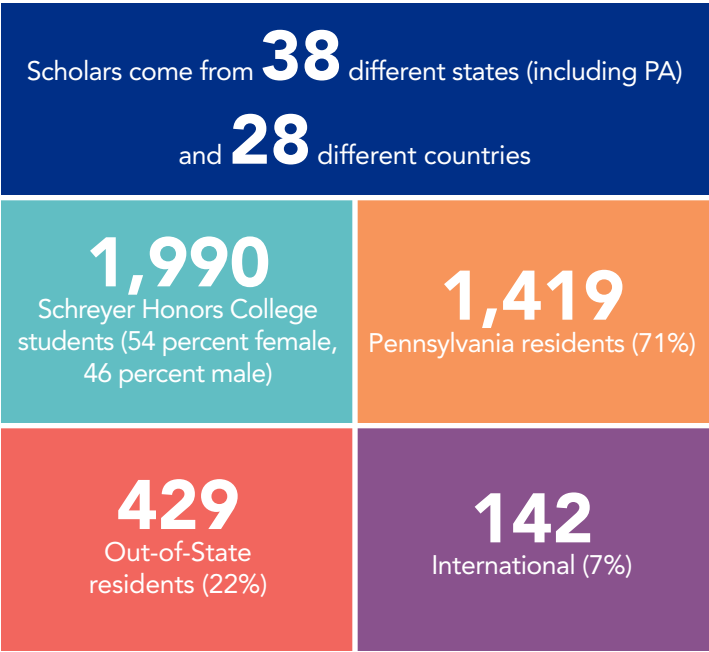
“It’s amazing to see the initiative of these students,” said Scholar alumna Shruthi Baskaran, who is a project leader at Boston Consulting Group. “I think that’s exactly what consulting companies look for at the end of the day. You want people to solve their own problems. This is an excellent example of students being able to tap into the resources they do have and taking it one step ahead.”

Students from various academic disciplines are drawn to consulting out of curiosity, and while that curiosity will serve them well if they wind up in a consulting career, the Schreyer Consulting Group will prepare them for the workforce even if they don’t.

Ken Graham, a Penn State graduate and global consultant who meets regularly with Scholars throughout the year, believes the opportunity exists for the Schreyer Consulting Group to take on projects from outside companies so that students can develop real-life experience as they prepare for post-graduate opportunities.

“I think this is an awfully good learning laboratory for them,” Graham said. “On the one hand, they can almost see Schreyer Consulting maybe not as a business, but as an entity. And yet, they’re wanting to develop members. They’re willing to develop non-members. It is the desire to help.”

FACTS & FIGURES

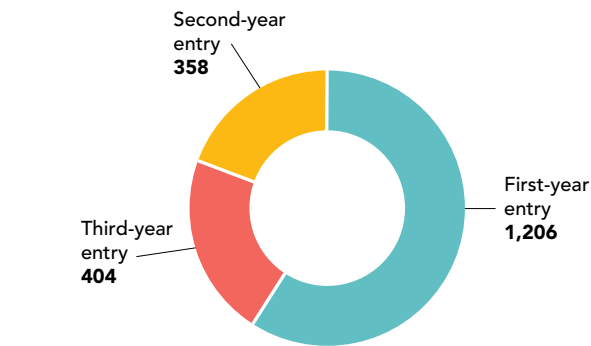
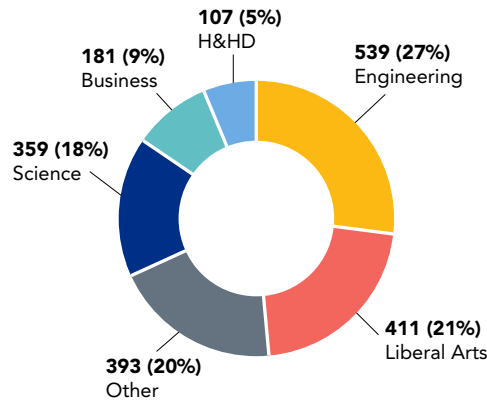


First-Year Students			
	Fall 2018	Fall 2017	Fall 2016
SHC mid-50% range High School GPA	4.00–4.33	4.00–4.33	4.00–4.33
PSU mid-50% range High School GPA	3.55–3.97	3.55–3.97	3.55–3.97
SHC mid-50% range SAT	1330–1490	1340–1490	1350–1490
PSU mid-50% range SAT	1250–1430	1250–1430	1250–1430

*-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 2018				
Campus Location:	Total	First-year entry	Second-year entry	Third-year entry
Abington	26	1	15	10
Altoona	7	4	1	2
Berks	14	3	3	8
Beaver	2	1	1	
Brandywine	9	3	4	2
Erie	46	13	19	14
Greater Allegheny	2		2	
Harrisburg	22	4	7	11
Hazleton	4	2	2	
Lehigh Valley	1	1		
Mont Alto	2	1	1	
New Kensington	1		1	
University Park	1823	1167	301	355
Wilkes-Barre	1	1		
World Campus	3	1	1	1
Worthington Scranton	2	1		1
York	3	3		
Total	1968	1206	358	404

Scholars at University Park by Primary College as of the beginning of fall 2018	
Arts & Architecture	54
Agricultural Sciences	95
Business	181
Communications	51
Division of Undergraduate Studies	37
Education	35
Earth & Mineral Sciences	65
Engineering	539
Health & Human Development	107
Information Sciences & Technology	40
Liberal Arts	411
School of Nursing	16
Eberly College of Science	359



*Current Penn State students are offered admission to the Schreyer Honors College upon the conclusion of at least one semester at Penn State having demonstrated a record of academic achievement and having merited a recommendation in support of their application from their academic department.

Building a Global Perspective			
	2018–19	2017–18	2016–17
Travel Grants Issued: (service, research, internships)	320*	237*	285*
Number of Countries Represented:	50	50	47
50 countries		297	
Australia, Brazil, China, Fiji, Hungary, Jordan, Russia, Senegal, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom		Scholars studied abroad	

*Many students take advantage of multiple experiences.

How Graduating Scholars Perform						
	Summer†	Fall†	Spring†	Total	Avg. GPA	IUG^
2018–19	30	36	438	504	3.86	47
2017–18	26	43	486	555	3.83	67
2016–17	17	52	432	501	3.81	54

†Number of Graduating Scholars

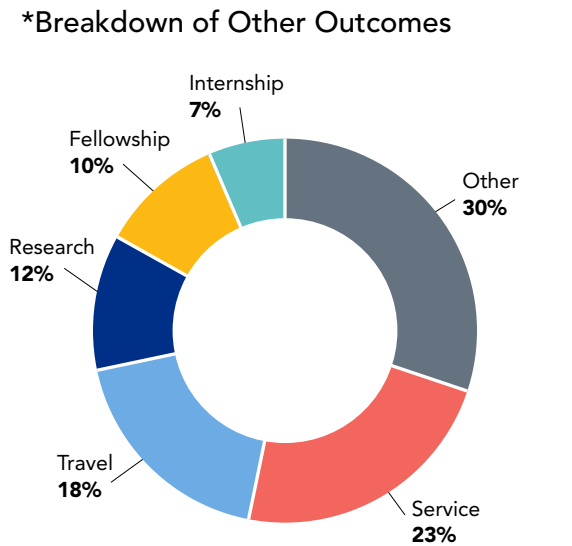
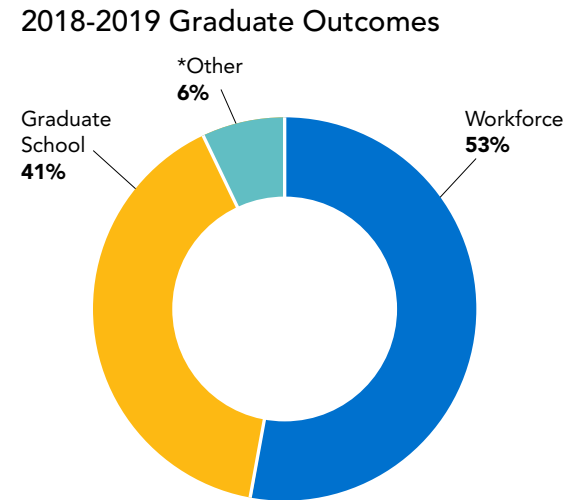
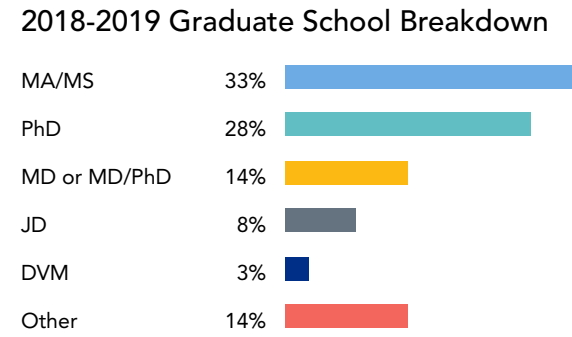
^IUG is the Integrated Undergraduate-Graduate Program in which Scholars simultaneously complete requirements for bachelor's and master's degrees in selected disciplines.

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/outcomes>.

Sample listing of Graduate Schools

Brandeis University
Brown University
Cambridge University
Colorado School of Mines
Duquesne University
George Washington University
Harvard University
Johns Hopkins School of Nursing
Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Memorial University of Newfoundland
Northwestern University
University of Oxford
Peking University
Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine
Princeton University
Savannah College of Art and Design
Stanford University
Tufts University
Yale University



Founder looks back on beginnings of honors program



Dr. Paul Axt and Dean Peggy A. Johnson at a recent Founders Day

When Penn State’s Faculty Senate passed legislation to create the University’s first honors program, it did so with an ideal candidate for its director in mind.

The problem was, Paul Axt didn’t want to do it.

“I kept saying ‘No,’ and they kept after me,” Axt recalled. “I was complaining about this to my wife (Patricia) and she said, ‘You know, I think you’d enjoy it.’”

Forty years later, Axt has no regrets about his eventual decision to design and lead the University Scholars Program for its first eight years. The majority of the template he put in place remains today and laid the foundation for what would become the Schreyer Honors College.

“This thing that I absolutely did not want to do was one of the most enjoyable things I did and, I think, left the University with a significant and enduring improvement,” he said in a recent interview.

Axt, who had just concluded a four-year term heading the Department of Mathematics, took the next year off from teaching and other duties. He visited honors programs at other universities, talked to department heads across campus to learn which faculty members to target, and visited high schools to recruit prospective students. Roughly half the number of students who met the initial criteria accepted the offer to become the first class of Scholars.

“And they were a remarkable group,” Axt said. “Oh boy, were they something.”

Word of the work the Scholars were doing quickly spread across campus, allowing the program to grow. The initial offices were housed in the Willard Building, but in 1984, Axt learned that the graduate students who lived in Atherton Hall were being moved to another dormitory on campus and saw an opportunity to create a central living space for Scholars.

“There was much more interchange among the students,” he said. “They were good for each other and the effect of the program was very much enhanced by having them together.”

At the suggestion of a student, Axt asked art professor John Cook to design a Scholars medal to reward graduates of the program at commencement. He wanted them to take advantage of the close interaction with faculty members and research opportunities they were afforded, so an honors thesis became a program requirement.

“We wanted them to have the experience of independent research activity of their own — going after things, putting ideas together, expressing them in a way that could be understood,” he said. “That seemed to me a really crucial thing.”

Axt, who retired from Penn State in 1991, still attends the College’s Founders Day and its spring medals ceremony when he can. His thoughts on what defines a Scholar haven’t changed over the years.

“They have to be smart,” he said. “They have to know how to use their smarts. They have to be willing to do so. They have to work well with their fellow students. And they have to want to achieve. That, maybe, is the most important thing.”



Scholar alumna fighting to protect democracy on global scale



When she was a Penn State student and Schreyer Scholar, Laura Rosenberger was never one to accept the status quo.

“I liked to push boundaries. And I think that was encouraged in many of my classes,” she said. “I was encouraged to challenge things and not accept conventional wisdom. It wasn’t just about rote learning. It was about how to think.”

Rosenberger, who triple majored in sociology, psychology, and women’s studies at Penn State, continues to apply her critical thinking skills to substantial topics. She is a senior fellow at the German Marshall Fund and the director of the Alliance for Securing Democracy, a bipartisan, transatlantic initiative which she helped found in the wake of the Russian Federation’s efforts to meddle in the United States’ 2016 presidential election.

“We didn’t have the tools to really understand what we were facing,” she said. “And we didn’t necessarily have the policy solutions at hand, either. Doing that was going to require a whole new approach, a whole new set of thinking,

analysis, and real policy development work to ensure that we had the tools necessary to understand and counter these tactics.

“I’ve always been a very mission-driven person and in that moment was searching for what the right mission was. This felt like an important mission to take on. I decided to take this concept and see if I could turn it into something real.”

Rosenberger was a senior at Penn State during 9-11, and the events of the day inspired her to “do what I could to see that something like that never happened again.” She was studying both foreign policy and domestic policy at the time, and her career path has reflected an interest in both.

After earning a master’s degree in international peace and conflict resolution from American University, she has held several positions in the State Department and National Security Council, including NSC director for China and Korea; chief-of-staff and senior advisor to former Deputy Secretary of State Tony Blinken; and foreign policy advisor for Hillary Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign.

Today, she travels to global conferences on security issues and holds private briefings for members of Congress who want to know more about the cybersecurity threats Russia and other nations pose to democracies around the world. Changing minds and keeping politics out of these issues has not been easy, but Rosenberger says she has seen progress.

“I think we know a lot more,” she said. “Some of it is work we’ve contributed to, some of it was just helping to bring pressure to shift the focus and actual force a lot of this information to become public.

“In our presentations a couple years ago, it was about convincing people there was a problem. Now it’s much more about helping people understand the problem and explaining its complexity.”

Overnight programs allow prospective students to feel at home



When Nathan Gardner visited Penn State for one of the Schreyer Honors College's overnight programs for accepted students, he was considering a couple of other universities and wanted to get a feel for the campus.

He left with a feeling that he wanted to be there.

"It was the ability of the Honors College to really offer enough for me as a student to feel like what I'd worked for through high school went toward something," said Gardner, a native of Millersville, Maryland, who recently completed his first year as an engineering student. "They make sure you're on track, and any resources you need, they have here."

Each spring, the College hosts a pair of weekend visits for offered out-of-state and underrepresented minority students and their families designed to inform and to provide a sense of what life for Scholars is like.

"We know that when a student has a chance to visit campus that their chance of accepting the offer of admission more than doubles," said Schreyer Honors College admissions director Moradeyo Olorunnisola. "We know that students from outside of easy driving distance are less likely to visit us and URM students are less aware that they should visit and also less able to afford an extended trip. For both of

these groups, it's likely they've never been to Penn State. They don't have any measurement to inform their decision."

The admissions staff relies on the help of current Scholars, who serve as tour guides throughout the stay. They will take the prospective students to class, answer questions about housing, and organize group activities to allow prospective students to get to know each other.

"It's really about a balance between scheduling structured events such as presentations by the staff, tours of campus," said Scholar Andrew Pei. "And then leaving some informal time to spend with prospective students."

The extended stays allow students to see parts of campus they wouldn't have time to see on most visits. Pei, a chemical engineering major, took some students who planned to study biomedical engineering on a tour of the recently opened Chemical and Biomedical Engineering Building.

Gardner made connections with current Scholars and prospective students who became Scholars during his visit. Penn State was the only school he visited overnight, and he said it was a major factor in his decision to choose the University and the Honors College.

"It really did feel like you were in college for the one or two days," he said.

Professor showing Scholars the value and application of research

Dr. Andrew Zydney often sees Scholars get so caught up in the research aspect of their honors theses that, at least initially, they overlook the writing aspect.

"Data that is just our data is not really a contribution to the field," the Distinguished Professor of Chemical Engineering said. "It's got to get written up in a format that other people can appreciate what is done. It's really interesting to see how students come to grips with trying to communicate what they've done in an effective way."

Since coming to Penn State in 2002, Zydney has helped guide Scholars through their first research experiences as an instructor and honors adviser and exposed them to real-life medical applications of his and others' research on membrane filtration technology.

"Students sometimes come in with the false impression that research is all fun and glory and it's not," he said. "There's a lot of tedium to getting experiments done and done accurately so that the data is useful. But they need to see that and understand that, and they need to become hopefully excited about seeing how the small things they're doing in the lab will eventually have an impact on a much broader project."

When he was an undergraduate student at Yale University, Zydney took a chemical engineering course and found a mentor in its instructor. John Fenn, who would go on to become the first chemical engineer to receive the Nobel Prize, encouraged Zydney to get involved in research. He strives to do the same for his students today.

"First and foremost, I want them getting excited about what research is all about, and the fact that we are trying to tackle exciting problems that, in many cases within my group, are at the interface between engineering and the life sciences," Zydney said. "This is a very fruitful area for research, and I do want them to see what the application is, what we're trying to solve, what's the big problem that we're working on and why I want to spend my time doing this."

Last fall, Zydney joined the Schreyer Honors College's Distinguished Honors Faculty Program. In October, he took a small group of Scholars to a local hemodialysis center, where they spoke with both staff and patients, received a first-hand look at the dialysis process, and discussed hemodialysis from both a clinical and engineering standpoint. He plans to take another group during the coming academic year.



Andrew Zydney was one of 11 faculty members of the Distinguished Honors Faculty Program this past year

Zydney teaches CHE 210, Introduction to Material Balances, and alternating senior elective courses more closely related to his research, in addition to a first-year seminar. He is inspired by students who have passion for what they are working on and by keeping tabs on them after they've left Penn State.

"It's always fun getting phone calls, letters, emails, from former students who write and say, 'This is what I'm doing now and I never would have gotten here if it wouldn't have been for time in my lab or experience in the course or interactions through Schreyer,'" he said. "To me, that's still the most satisfying part of this job."



A Fond Farewell

KIRSCH RETIRES AFTER 14 YEARS AS ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

RHEA SULLIVAN AND HER FATHER, STEPHEN, WERE ON THE UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS FOR A VISIT DURING HER JUNIOR YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL. THEY WERE TRYING TO NAVIGATE A CAMPUS MAP AND NOT HAVING MUCH SUCCESS WITH IT. A WOMAN WITH A WIDE AND UNDERSTANDING SMILE APPROACHED THEM.

“Can I help you get to where you need to go?” she said.

That’s what Dr. Michele ‘Mitch’ Kirsch did for Scholars during her 14 years with the Schreyer Honors College, whether it was walking with the Sullivans to the Thomas Building, where she would lead an information session that afternoon, or providing support to countless students as they navigated college classes and college life. The associate dean for student affairs retired this June, leaving a legacy of leadership and support.

Sullivan, who graduated with honors in biochemistry and molecular biology from Penn State in 2018 and recently wrapped up her first year in the College of Medicine’s MD/

PhD program, was surprised and impressed when Kirsch remembered her name — and her father’s — the next time she saw her, at first-year student orientation nearly two years later. During the next few years, she would take frequent advantage of Kirsch’s standing offer to visit her office just to check in.

“She wasn’t just saying that to have students feel good that there was somebody there,” Sullivan said. “She was genuinely saying ‘I want to get to know you more. I want to be a support system for you.’”

When Kirsch and her husband, Rodney, went to Drake University in 1982, the vice president of student affairs, Don Adams, offered her a part-time position as a career counselor.

He also encouraged her to take on a graduate assistantship in the financial aid office as she pursued her doctoral degree, and that decision is one she believes shaped her career.

“Don Adams was my adviser, my mentor, and my coach,” Kirsch said. “I would not be where I am today without him. He taught me all I needed to know about being a student- centered professional. He is the chairman of my personal board of directors.”

A lot of the people in her office disliked doing the financial aid presentations at orientation. Kirsch discovered that she enjoyed it, which was her entry into the admissions profession.

She gained experience in admissions and in administrative roles at Indiana University-Bloomington and the University of California at Berkeley before coming to Penn State in 1996. She was assistant director for undergraduate admissions and customer services, then the MBA admissions director for the Smeal College of Business before joining the Schreyer Honors College in 2005.

“The thing that really attracted me to the job is I would oversee all the aspects of higher education I had done before — admissions, student aid, student programs, career development, and the marketing side,” Kirsch said.

The students and their well-being were Kirsch’s priority and that approach funneled down through the Schreyer staff she supervised. She also took an active role in making Scholars’ families feel welcomed, and not just when they came to campus. She worked closely with the Schreyer Parents Council, sent newsletters to parents of Scholars, and helped organize Summer Send-Offs, where families would host events for incoming Scholars.

“That’s what Mitch was big about, was enablement,” said Scholar alumnus Greg Tallman, whose mother, Maryann, hosted the first Send-Off in 2006. “That’s your idea — what can I do to help? How can I make that happen?”

Kirsch was also instrumental in the establishment of the Alumni Admissions Interview Program, which allows prospective students to have one-on-one interaction with Scholar alumni. During the 2018-19 recruiting cycle, nearly 1,100 interviews took place in 21 states and the District of Columbia.

Kirsch credits the College’s External Advisory Board, Richard Dandrea in particular, with pushing to help launch the program.

“We were anxious about how we could pull it off with limited staffing resources and ended up conducting pilots for two years,” she said, “before realizing how our alumni would step up and make it happen.”

Schreyer Honors College staff appreciated the generosity of Kirsch’s leadership and how she leveraged the numerous connections she had with University partners to help her co-workers and the College.

“Mitch is Mitch,” said director of admissions Moradeyo Olorunnisola. “She’s very congruent. The Mitch that you see in one situation is the one you see in all. We don’t love her as a boss because she was easy or because she coddled us, but because she held us to high standards, and she was always honest without being cruel.

“She would compel you to raise your level of performance.”

Kirsch’s favorite moments were welcoming first-year students to campus each August and saying farewell to graduating seniors each May (or, in some cases, August or December). In between, she saw those students realize their immense potential, overcome challenges, and gain perspective.

“The students we recruit are going to be successful, but I felt like, at some level, they chose us,” Kirsch said. “We have a responsibility to give them what we promised, from an academic standpoint and a cocurricular standpoint. How they choose to take advantage of it is up to them, but it’s our responsibility to put it out there. And then knowing how each of them will differently choose to take advantage of it is what makes that moment really special.”

Sullivan, who participates in the Alumni Admissions Interview Program, met a student from New York last year who told her she dreamed of joining Penn State’s forensic science program. The student scheduled a November visit to campus but was already on the way when the University closed due to inclement weather. The tour was canceled, but the student called ahead to Kirsch to see what to do. She was in the office already and not only stayed until the student arrived, but also talked with her about the Honors College for several hours. Sullivan was not surprised to hear this.

“I really think that she represents the definition of what the Schreyer Honors College is,” Sullivan said.



Bartuska sisters striving to honor Scholar alumna’s gift with their work



Kathryn Sutton grew up in the small town of Peckville in northeastern Pennsylvania. She became a member of the University Scholars Program at Penn State (now the Schreyer Honors College), which set the foundation for a successful law career that now spans three decades.

“I have found from my own experience that the Honors College gave me an excellent education and a basis upon which to succeed later in life,” said Sutton, a partner at Morgan, Lewis, and Bockius. “I want to be able to pass that onto other people, and I think that the Honors College embodies that understanding, recognizes that potential, and provides an opportunity for students at Penn State to succeed in the future.”

It was a dual desire — to help students from the Northern tier of the state have those same opportunities, and to honor her daughter Lauryn, who died at age 14 in 2009 from an aneurysm — that inspired Sutton to establish the Lauryn

Sutton Memorial Open Doors Honors Scholarship, which will support Scholars in perpetuity.

A pair of students from the region — Scholar alumna Katherine Bartuska, who graduated in May with degrees in economics and international politics, and her sister, Elizabeth, a rising junior Scholar majoring in biological engineering — have benefited from the scholarship.

Elizabeth will transition to the University Park campus this fall after spending two years at Penn State Wilkes Barre, and she will become the director of the student affairs committee on the Penn State Council of Commonwealth Student Government. Through an honors trip, she visited the Salton Sea, a dying saline lake in southern California, which has helped shape her current career path. She also visited London during a study abroad trip.

“These are things I never would have been able to do if I hadn’t received support from donors and the Honors College,” she said.

Katherine was able to study at the Maastricht University School of Business and Economics in the Netherlands during her junior year and take on unpaid internships — including one with the United States Agency for International Development — she would not have been able to without financial assistance. She is currently a research assistant for Penn State Distinguished Professor of Economics Robert C. Marshall and planning to attend graduate school.

The Bartuska sisters, natives of Lehman, Pennsylvania, are grateful to the Sutton family not only for the support they have received but also for the example Kathryn Sutton has set as a Scholar alumna and philanthropist.

“The contributions of alumni to this University have always been something that I think is one of Penn State and the Schreyer Honors College’s strongest assets,” Katherine Bartuska said. “It makes me proud to be from the region hearing success stories such as hers.”

Endowment and Gift Spending		
2018–19 Fiscal Year	Number of Awards	Amount Awarded
Academic Excellence Scholarships: (includes charitable and institutional funds)	1,270	\$5,259,522
Need-based and Merit Scholarships:	416	\$1,305,495
Student Awards: (travel grants, internships, and research awards)	503	\$336,860
Program Support:	–	\$1,054,879
TOTAL:	2,189	\$7,956,756
Total Endowment Value: \$112,096,749.89 (as of July 1, 2019)		



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Lees helping guide parents through Scholars' journeys



Ken and Juliann Lee will lead the Schreyer Parents Council during the upcoming year

Ken and Juliann Lee didn't know much about the Schreyer Honors College until their son, David, took a keen interest in it during a visit to the University Park campus in the summer of 2014.

Now, as the co-chairs of the Schreyer Parents Council, they want to help other parents and prospective students learn what their family came to learn about the College.

The Lees came home from that visit, went online, and began researching the Honors College as well as other honors programs around the country. They liked that the Schreyer Honors College was ranked highly among its peers and felt that it would help make a 40,000-student campus feel a little smaller for David, who had roughly 250 people in his class at Thomas Jefferson High School in Jefferson Hills, Pennsylvania.



David Lee graduated in May with honors in biochemistry and molecular biology

"He's always up for a challenge," Juliann said. "That's what benefited him the most, being around that caliber of student. They push each other, and when somebody succeeds at something, they're so happy. They feel like they're part of the success."

The Lees learned about the Schreyer Parents Council during New Student Orientation prior to David's first year and felt like it would be an easy way to give back to the College. As members of the council's Outreach Committee, they've been able to answer questions from parents and students over the phone, which weren't that different from many of the questions they'd had.

"We can pretty much predict what they're going to ask," said Ken, a 1986 Penn State alumnus. "Just being able to share our stories with them hopefully has led to students making the right decision to come to Schreyer."

David graduated with honors in biochemistry and molecular biology this spring, receiving the medal that had become a goal of his during that summer day in 2014. He will study pharmacology or neuroscience in a doctorate program at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill this fall, where he will room with fellow Scholar alumnus Ishan Phadke.

"He's not afraid of the next step," Ken said. "There are friends of his that don't want to leave their college experience and friends. The Schreyer experience has prepared him, and he's anxious to get on to the next chapter of his life."

GEAR IS HERE

The Schreyer Honors College launched its first online store for Schreyer gear and apparel in October 2018.

Previously, Scholars, parents, families, alumni, and friends of the College were only able to purchase gear from the Schreyer Honors College Student Council at various College events on campus with cash or check as payment. Now, they can order from the online site (shc.psu.edu/gear) at any time.

All revenue generated from sales of Penn State Schreyer Honors College apparel and merchandise (minus product and service costs to our University partner, Promoversity) directly supports Honors College scholarships and student programming.



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