

Record Number of UNH Students Win Gilman Study Abroad Scholarships

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Left to right: Heather Diversi, Brianna Cole, Kellie Shea, and Jennifer Baker. Not pictured: Audrey Petteruti. Courtesy photo

Five UNH students have received prestigious and competitive Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarships to fund study abroad trips in spring 2013. They are Jennifer Baker, Brianna Cole, Heather Diversi, Audrey Petteruti, and Kellie Shea. UNH has not seen this many Gilman winners in its history as an institution.

Gilman Scholarships provide up to \$5,000 in financial support to students who are traveling abroad on university-approved programs that are four weeks or longer. To be eligible for a Gilman, a student must have financial need, as evidenced by being a Pell grant recipient. The Gilman Scholarship requires that students commit to a “follow-on” project upon their return to the United States. These projects help advertise the benefits of study abroad and the Gilman program to the university and local communities.

Jennifer Baker, a senior cognitive science major from Tempe, Ariz., is the only UNH student studying in Japan this semester; she is headed to Nagoya, Japan. She has studied Japanese for two years and hopes to eventually pursue graduate studies in Japan. A first generation college student herself, Jennifer’s follow-on project will focus on educating the McNair scholars about Gilman and study abroad. “The process of applying for the Gilman scholarship really encouraged me to learn more about the Nagoya program and to encourage others to study abroad,” Baker said. “Despite the challenges of being in an underrepresented major and the high cost of the program, I am able to study abroad because of the Gilman—and others can, too.”

Brianna Cole, a junior political science/international affairs major from Salem, will travel to Buenos Aires, Argentina, to study at the University of Belgrano. Her program in Argentine and Latin American Studies offers an early start option that will give her an additional month in Buenos Aires. During that first month, she will do intensive language study, preparing her to take content classes in Spanish. Cole noted that “Not only was I fortunate enough to win the Gilman, but my program (Academic Programs International, or API) gives Gilman winners an additional award up to \$1,000 in matching funds.” Her follow-on project will involve outreach to Spanish language students at UNH to describe the experience of studying in Latin America as compared to Spain (where Brianna has studied previously).

A junior from Concord, **Heather Diversi** is majoring in biomedical sciences. Diversi will study in Australia at the University of Wollongong. “I am beyond excited to spend a semester studying at the University of Wollongong,” Diversi said. “Receiving the Gilman scholarship will allow me to fully immerse myself in the Australian culture and discover everything Australia has to offer.” In addition to the plethora of outdoor activities Diversi is excited about, she is also particularly looking forward to a class offered by the University of Wollongong called “Effective Communication in Health Care Relationships.” Diversi plans to attend physician assistant school after she graduates and felt that this course would be invaluable. She will prepare a presentation for members of Alpha Chi Sigma, a co-educational professional chemistry fraternity, for her follow-on project.

Audrey Petteruti is a junior in the Honors Program who hails from Brunswick, Maine. In Aix-en-Provence, France, she hopes to improve her fluency in French, which she has been studying for seven years. As a biomedical sciences major, Petteruti plans to attend medical school and become a doctor. As she wrote in her Gilman application essay, "One day, I hope to take this experience and practice medicine in an underserved area of northern Maine where the French language will be necessary to communicate and connect with the people." Petteruti's follow-on project will involve a presentation to Alpha Epsilon Delta, the National Health Pre-professional Honors Society, of which she is a member. Petteruti is also the recipient of the highly competitive Foley-Jackson scholarship for UNH students. Commenting on how critical the Gilman scholarship is to her study abroad plans, Petteruti said, "The Gilman Scholarship will allow me to concentrate on my studies abroad without financial pressure. Without UNH's outreach to students about the Gilman scholarship, getting to France would have been a struggle."

Honors student **Kellie Shea** of Beverly, Mass., will be the sole UNH student representative in Russia next semester. As a junior majoring in Russian/international affairs, Shea will study in St. Petersburg at the Gertsen Institute, where she will take classes in Advanced Conversation, Phonetics and Intonation, Advanced Grammar and Lexical Study, Contemporary Russian Society, Russian Literature, and an elective course in which she will analyze the political and economic system of Russia and the independent states of the former Soviet Union. "I plan to go to law school and hopefully focus on international and immigration law," Shea said. "So this scholarship greatly helps with my development and understanding in those areas by allowing me to study them in a foreign environment." Shea will "give back" upon her return to the U.S. by conducting a campus outreach program to advocate for international education opportunities to fellow members of the UNH Model United Nations.

Gilman Scholarships are offered twice a year, with deadlines in October and March. In preparation for the October deadline, the director of the Office of National Fellowships, Jeanne Sokolowski, with the assistance of Cindy Mills, the assistant director of financial aid, contacted all UNH Pell grant recipients with general information on the scholarship. She also held several information sessions and worked one-on-one with students applying for the Gilman. "I was surprised that not many UNH students had heard of the Gilman. I was delighted that I could increase visibility of this scholarship and make students aware of the Office of National Fellowships," Sokolowski said. "Funding is one of the major obstacles to studying abroad and so I was strongly motivated to publicize the Gilman to as many students as possible."

These five students also worked closely with the Center for International Education on choosing a program that was an excellent fit for their academic and professional plans, which is an essential factor in writing competitive applications for the Gilman. The center will continue its support to the Gilman winners through one-on-one advising, pre-departure orientation and reentry services—similar support that it gives to the approximately 25 percent of all UNH students who study abroad.

Two of the winners (Brianna Cole and Kellie Shea) are dual International Affairs (IA) majors. The IA program includes language proficiency, study and research abroad, and

capstone project and presentation requirements. As Cole noted, “My regional focus and IA capstone will be in regard to Argentine and Latin American studies, so I am really excited to experience life in Argentina first hand.” And Shea will begin research on her project, which examines the economic transition from the Soviet Union’s planned economy to its capitalist economy, while in St. Petersburg.

About the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarships: The Gilman Program aims to increase the number and diversity of students studying abroad, including students studying in non-traditional countries, especially those outside of Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand; students with diverse ethnic backgrounds; students from a diverse range of institutions; students engaged in non-traditional (for study abroad) fields of study, such as the sciences and engineering; and students with disabilities. For more information, [visit http://www.iie.org/Programs/Gilman-Scholarship-Program](http://www.iie.org/Programs/Gilman-Scholarship-Program)

About the Center for International Education:

The UNH Center for International Education supports campus-wide internationalization and student, faculty and staff engagement on the international level. Center responsibilities include:

- International Affairs Dual Major
- Study abroad
- Scholarship opportunities
- International seminars
- Faculty development

Contact Gregg Orifici at (603) 862-4788 or gregg.orifici@unh.edu

About the Office of National Fellowships: Established in 2005, the UNH Office of National Fellowships provides information, counsel, and editorial support to high achieving students applying for national and international fellowships and scholarships. The services of the Fellowships Office are available to undergraduates, graduate students, and alumni who are interested in opportunities like the Gilman Scholarship. Contact Jeanne Sokolowski at (603) 862-0733 or jeanne.sokolowski@unh.edu.

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Jeanne Sokolowski, Office of National Fellowships

Gregg Orifici, Center for International Education

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