

Destination: Chile, Tanzania and Beyond

Six UNH students receive Gilman scholarships

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[Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarships](#) will help send UNH students to four continents to study this spring and summer, with six recipients receiving a total of \$18,500 for global internships and study-abroad programs.

This year's scholarship awards — four for the spring 2019 semester and two for the early decision cycle for summer 2019 — will allow students to study in Scotland, Chile,

Spain, Australia, Tanzania and France. All three UNH applicants to the summer early decision competition won scholarships; one student declined.

“As a top producer of Gilman Scholars, we're pleased that UNH students continue to be successful in the Gilman scholarship competition,” says Jeanne Sokolowski, director of the [Office of National Fellowships](#). “Beyond the financial benefit, we also find that the process of applying for a Gilman scholarship really helps students think about their goals for study abroad. This process helps them prepare for being abroad and maximize the experience.”

This year's Gilman scholarship recipients are Mallorie Biron, Hunter Cini, Ryan Fournier and Alicia Marx and for spring 2019 and Angelica Beltrán Franco and Alicia Guzman for summer 2019.



BIRON COURTESY PHOTO

Mallorie Biron '20, a [computer science](#) major, will be taking electives related to her major at the University of Stirling in Stirling, Scotland. It's a trip she's been working toward since her sophomore year, as going abroad as a computer science major can be difficult without some “future planning,” she says.

She credits [Radim Bartos](#), chair of the department of computer science, for helping her set up her UNH schedule through the last few years to best take advantage of the upcoming international opportunity.

“I hope to be able to adapt to new environments, which is a skill that is useful in any workplace,” Biron says. “The classes I'll be taking abroad are not offered at UNH, and I'm looking forward to learning something that I wouldn't learn (on campus).”

Biron is looking forward to checking out an on-campus castle and visiting the Highlands, Edinburgh and London. She's wanted to study abroad since she was an elementary school student.

“I've always wanted to visit and live in a different country, and studying abroad is the perfect opportunity,” she says.



CINI COURTESY PHOTO

Hunter Cini '21, a [mechanical engineering](#) major, has been studying Spanish since middle school and is looking forward to immersing himself in the culture while studying at Universidad de Carlos III en Madrid in Spain.

He won't exactly get a break from extensive school work — the only way Cini could manage to spend a semester abroad was to take a normal course load for a sophomore mechanical engineering major, meaning he'll have thermodynamics, strength of materials, material science and physics II on his plate — but he said the tradeoff was worth it to have a chance to “breathe Spanish air, eat the food and meet the people.”

“While I've been studying the Spanish language, history and culture for years, I have yet to really experience the true thing,” Cini says. “No matter how many vocab lists you make, verbs you conjugate or sentences you translate, nothing can improve your linguistic abilities quite like an actual conversation with a living, breathing person who speaks the language you're studying.”

Cini praises the Office of National Fellowships for its work educating him on the scholarship and guiding him through the application process, and calls [associate professor John Chaston](#) from the [department of languages, literatures and cultures](#) “one of my absolute favorite teachers of all time,” in part for encouraging him to seek an international learning opportunity, which could have tangible professional benefits.

“At a job fair, when speaking to a representative from a company, it arose that I was an avid Spanish speaker. The employer was absolutely elated to hear that not only was I bilingual, but that Spanish, specifically, was my second language,” Cini says. “She told me that opened up a lot of doors for my career.”



FOURNIER COURTESY PHOTO

Ryan Fournier '21 is an environmental engineering major who will be studying at the University of Newcastle's Callaghan campus in Australia. His schedule will include a pair of engineering courses, and Fournier is excited to study a familiar topic in an unfamiliar environment.

"I hope to gain a different perspective on engineering principles from my Australian professors," Fournier says. "In my career I hope to travel to different countries to help solve clean water crises, and study abroad has presented me with an opportunity to gain experience observing and taking part in a different culture."

Fournier, who hopes to dig into the surfing community, explore national parks and visit Sydney, was thrilled when he learned he had earned a Gilman scholarship, which he initially heard about as a first-semester freshman.

"I love adventure and new experiences, so this was a perfect opportunity for me to fulfill my love for adventure while also earning credits toward my degree," he says.



MARX COURTESY PHOTO

Alicia Marx '20 is a [communication sciences and disorders](#) major who is minoring in Spanish and deaf and hard-of-hearing studies. She will be studying at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso in Valparaíso, Chile, where she will complete some general education courses — taught in Spanish — to fulfill UNH requirements. She also plans to take a few additional classes offered by the university alongside local students and will be interning at a school with elementary-aged children.

“I am very excited about the internship opportunity because I will be able to get international experience in a school setting, as well as connect with Chilean children and learn about the culture,” Marx says.

Marx is looking forward to experiencing the geographical diversity of Chile — she plans to check several things off her to-do list, including exploring the Atacama Desert and hiking the Patagonia mountains — but is most excited about experiencing the day-to-day life.

“Aside from the academics, I am really most excited to converse with the local people and learn about the culture, the city and everything in between,” Marx says. “I plan to get a master’s degree in bilingual speech-language pathology, and in order to have success, it is not only important to know Spanish but also to be culturally competent.”



BELTRÁN FRANCO COURTESY PHOTO

Angelica Beltrán Franco '19, a [wildlife and conservation biology major](#) and [animal behavior minor](#), will spend the summer studying in Tanzania in conjunction with The School for Field Studies (SFS). She hopes to use the experience — which will feature courses on wildlife management conservation and African large carnivores — as a springboard to a career that allows her to integrate behavior studies and conservation to help endangered cats.

She likely won't be spending much time inside a classroom, either: The courses use the Serengeti, Tarangire and Lake Manyara National Parks and Ngorongoro Conservation Area as study sites, and the SFS website notes that “the Big Five” of lions, elephants, leopards, buffalo and rhinos all make their homes in Tanzania.

“I want to learn about the African biome because it has most of the species I am interested in getting experience with,” Beltrán Franco says, noting that the classes offered by the SFS will provide a perspective she can't get through coursework at UNH. “I also want to learn different types of conservation efforts done in Africa, as well as integrated behavior studies with endangered carnivores, to see how I can apply them into saving endangered species back in the United States.”

Beyond the educational benefits of the trip, Beltrán Franco is looking forward to experiencing a new culture and coming back — literally — stronger from the inside out.

“I want to study abroad to not only study subjects related to my major and my career goals but also to learn about what the country and its culture offer,” she says. “It's an

enriching experience because you learn about the music, folklore and gastronomy, and the best part is traveling abroad contributes to strengthening your own immune system.”



GUZMAN COURTESY PHOTO

Alicia Guzman '20 is a [psychology and justice studies dual major](#) with a minor in [forensics](#) who will be studying art at the Institute for American Universities in Aix-en-Provence, France. She credits the College of Liberal Arts for emphasizing the benefits of study-abroad opportunities, which will allow her to learn in and explore a country she's wanted to visit for years.

“I think being at UNH has really opened my eyes to the different options that we have as students,” she says. “I hope to get a better understanding of a different culture. I hope to learn as much as I can and see as much of the country as possible.”

Guzman was intrigued by international study opportunities even before coming to UNH but wasn't sure she would be able to absorb the full cost, so the scholarship was particularly rewarding.

“Receiving the Gilman scholarship has taken a huge weight off my shoulders and made me even more excited to travel abroad,” she says. “I've always wanted to go to France, and I'm beyond excited to finally see it.”

Interested in study-abroad opportunities? Learn more about the options available through the [Office of National Fellowships](#).

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