

Media Relations

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UNH Students Shine in Goldwater Competition



Caption: UNH Students Shine in Goldwater Competition | to r: Timothy Marquis, Madelyn Ball, Odin Achorn.

DURHAM, N.H. -- Two University of New Hampshire students are recipients of the prestigious Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, the premier undergraduate award for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) majors. Goldwater scholars receive up to \$7,500 to offset the cost of tuition, fees, books, and room and board. A third UNH student was recognized with an honorable mention.

Odin Achorn, a chemistry major from Newfields, and Madelyn Ball, a chemical engineering student from Potsdam, New York, were awarded scholarships; sophomore Timothy Marquis, a biomedical science major from Nashua received an honorable mention. All three students are members of the honors program and recipients of donor-funded awards from the Hamel Center for

Undergraduate Research.

“The Hamel Center’s Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program is in its 26th year at UNH, helping students to learn the research process – from writing competitive research proposals, to practicing and developing skills that allow them to apply their in-class knowledge to practical, real-world issues,” says Paul Tsang, director of the Hamel Center. “This is the kind of high-impact experience that we’re proud to be able to offer to undergraduates in all majors, and we believe this kind of experience has helped these three hard-working students to be recognized by the Goldwater scholarship committee. We’re very pleased for their success—it’s well deserved.”

UNH students have consistently experienced success in the Goldwater competition, which was established in 1986, but this year’s results represent the university’s best showing in the competition to date. In previous years, UNH has regularly had a winner and/or an honorable mention. This year is the first in which two UNH students have won the scholarship.

“I’m thrilled for the students, and delighted for the University,” said Lisa MacFarlane, senior vice provost for academic affairs. “The Goldwater is a prestigious and extraordinarily competitive award for outstanding undergraduates interested in careers in mathematics, the natural sciences and engineering. This is a testament to the students’ talent and hard work, to the terrific faculty who support and mentor them, and to the quality of UHN’s superb programs in science and engineering.”

Achorn has been working in the lab of Erik Berda, assistant professor of polymer and organic chemistry, since the summer of 2011 when he conducted research on atom transfer radical polymerization. “I am very pleased with the research opportunities that I have in Dr. Berda's group,” he said. “I feel like I will already have a lot of research experience similar to graduate school by the time I start in a PhD program.”

In 2012, Achorn received a Hamel Center Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF), which allowed him to experiment with synthesizing nanoparticles in the hopes of finding ways to fold polymers into more well-defined shapes. He will be presenting the results of this research in New Orleans this monthj before

embarking for a summer at the Adolphe Merkle Institute in Fribourg, Switzerland, on an International Research Opportunities Program (IROP) grant from the Hamel Center.

Ball, who was a 2012 Goldwater honorable mention recipient, has extensive research experience in the area of energy and biofuel production. She has participated in two Research Experience for Undergraduate (REU) summer programs, one at Stony Brook University and another at Washington University in St. Louis, and will do a third REU this summer through the Colorado Center for Biorefining and Biofuels, during which she will conduct research at the National Renewable Energy Lab. Ball used a Hamel Center Research Presentation grant to travel to the Biomedical Engineering Society Annual Meeting in October of 2011 to do a poster presentation of her biomedical engineering research at Stony Brook.

Ball has taken steps to internationalize her education: she traveled to Brazil as part of a Research Experience for Undergraduate (REU) program in Summer 2012 and conducted research on the effects of xylose and glucose on microbial production of xylitol while studying abroad at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics last semester.

“I’m honored to have received this scholarship,” Ball says, “and am very grateful for all the research opportunities I’ve had, both at UNH and elsewhere. Through my research in the lab of Dr. P.T. Vasudevan, I’ve been able to explore the area of bioenergy and develop and focus my research interests.”

Marquis was the university’s only sophomore nominee this year for the Goldwater. “It is a tremendous privilege to have been nominated for the Goldwater Scholarship, and to be named an honorable mention recipient. In particular, I want to thank my undergraduate research mentor and role model, Dr. Stacia Sower, for her unwavering support and dedication throughout my time at UNH and also during the Goldwater application process.”

Established by Congress in 1986 to foster and encourage excellence in science and mathematics, the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation operates an educational scholarship program to provide opportunities for American undergraduate students with excellent academic records and outstanding potential. Goldwater scholarships support study in the fields of mathematics, engineering and the natural sciences as preparation for careers in these areas. For more information, go to www.act.org/goldwater/.

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. Contact Jeanne Sokolowski at (603) 862-0733 or jeanne.sokolowski@unh.edu or visit <http://www.unh.edu/fellowships-office/>.

Photo to be downloaded: <http://www.unh.edu/news/releases/2013/apr/goldwater.jpg>

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The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state’s flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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Media Contact: [Erika Mantz](mailto:Erika.Mantz@unh.edu) | 603-862-1567 | UNH Media Relations

