

Twice as Nice

Mercer '23 named finalist for Rhodes and Marshall scholarships

Monday, November 7, 2022



Sam Mercer '23, a chemical engineering major at UNH, was named a finalist for a pair of prestigious fellowships to study in the United Kingdom.

Both the Marshall and Rhodes scholarships fund two full years of graduate study, while seeking young Americans with strong academics, demonstrated leadership ability and clarity of future goals. Mercer is the second UNH student in five years to become a finalist for both, joining Eden Suoth '18.

“It’s a significant honor to be selected as a finalist for these

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awards,” says Jeanne Sokolowski, director of the UNH Office of National Fellowships. “Sam’s profile as a Filipino-American from Maine, a first-generation college student, and Goldwater scholar with a commitment to developing sustainable energy sources are part of what made his application distinctive, along with his many accomplishments at UNH.”

Mercer, who began his academic journey at UNH at just 15-years-old, has been an active member in the UNH and larger chemical engineering research communities. He received his Goldwater scholarship as a sophomore, has presented research at an array of conferences throughout the country and had research funded through an array of grants and awards.

Mercer says it is still sinking in how much of an honor it is to be a finalist for each.

“Both scholarships are some of the most competitive in the world that provide life-changing opportunities to focus on developing my career and character,” says Mercer.

If he receives the Rhodes, he will study at Oxford both years, with graduate study focused on energy systems, and mathematical modeling and scientific computing. If awarded a Marshall, he plans to complete one year at the University of Edinburgh and one at Oxford, with a graduate study focused on energy, society and sustainability, and mathematical modeling and scientific computing. If he receives both, Mercer will have to decline one.

Mercer says he’s motivated by analyzing how new technologies can be created and deployed to meet energy challenges and how scientific research plays a role in developing the new groundbreaking systems.

“I have sought to bridge the gap between scientific research and community energy action,” says Mercer. “I want to use my technical expertise to jointly build affordable, efficient energy

solutions while working with policymakers and industrial stakeholders to find pragmatic routes to competitively scale them into the communities that need them most.”

In addition to his research endeavors, Mercer is an active leader in UNH student organizations and founded two startup companies in collaboration with the Peter T. Paul Entrepreneurship Center – Eizent Innovations and Apropos Energy. He co-revived and leads the UNH Energy Club, worked as a learning assistant for the Department of Physics, is the treasurer of the UNH chapter of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, collaborates with the Sustainability Institute, serves as an ambassador for the Hamel Center for Undergraduate Research and was recently elected to the Student Senate.

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The stories are written by the staff of **UNH Communications and Public Affairs**.

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