



Macaulay Honors College
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For Immediate Release

Six Macaulay Honors College Students Win J.K. Watson Fellowships

(April 27, 2017, New York, NY) Macaulay Honors College at The City University of New York congratulates sophomores **Marco Costanza** (College of Staten Island), **Maisha Kamal** (Brooklyn College), **Kaitlin McDermott** (Queens College), **Saif Zihiri** (Hunter College) and freshmen **Alexandra Shoneyin** (John Jay College) and **Victoria Smith** (Lehman College) on winning the [Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship](#). The Watson Fellowship is a three-year program that provides summer internships with leading non-profit, for-profit and government organizations, culminating in an internship overseas. Fellows experience the expectations and challenges of professional-level work, while expanding their personal, cultural and professional horizons.

Marco Costanza is pursuing a dual degree in Psychology and Spanish. In doing so, he aspires to integrate knowledge of human behavior, cognition, cross cultural perspective, and language in medicine to better serve the diversely underserved populations of New York City. With the Watson fellowship, he hopes to intern in either Ecuador or Spain, as it will add to his understanding of the intersection of race and cultural ethnicity in healthcare. Marco is also a 2017 William R. Kenan Scholar.

Maisha Kamal is a Business Economics and English major, with a strong interest in public policy and human rights. She aspires to become a lawyer someday, but hopes to experiment with different fields and learn new skills, looking forward to the transformative experiences that await her as a fellow. "I would not have been able to get this opportunity had it not been for the unwavering support of the Macaulay community, and I am excited to grow under the guidance of the Watson foundation and in the company of my fellow cohorts over the next three years," said Maisha.

Kaitlin McDermott is triple-majoring in English, History, and American Studies, with a minor in the Social Sciences, hoping, eventually, to pursue a Ph.D. in one of those areas. In addition to immersing herself in such diverse fields of study, she serves as the president of the Queens College History Club and editor of the Queens College campus section of *The Macaulay Messenger*. On receiving the Watson, she said, "I am excited to use the opportunities presented by Watson to learn how to be a better, more productive leader getting to know both different work-fields, as well as varying parts of New York City."

Saif Zihiri is a Political Science major with a certificate in Public Policy and Human Rights, with the overarching desire to go into the human rights field as an advocate for both people who need it but also to work on policy reform regarding human rights violations. He currently interns at the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, and hopes to work with similar-minded organizations with the help of the Watson fellowship.

Alexandra Shoneyin is currently undecided in her major, but leaning towards philosophy and English, with an interest in social justice, art, and music. As a Watson fellow, she hopes to intern at organizations that will deepen her activism, and help her create “social change for marginalized groups through unconventional mediums.” On receiving the award, she said, “I was in the middle of my Macaulay seminar class when I checked my email and I just started to scream. My professor and classmates were really alarmed at first, but once I announced the good news to everyone, they all started to clap and congratulate me. It was a really great moment.”

Victoria Smith is technically undeclared, but interested in psychology, Africana studies, and music. An active member of the Macaulay community, Victoria serves as a student ambassador, as well as a member of Humans of Macaulay. “I was ecstatic to learn that I had received this fellowship, [as] I have been working towards this for 6 months. To see all of this hard work come together was an incredible feeling. It made all of this worth it!” she said.

About Macaulay Honors College

Macaulay Honors College at The City University of New York offers exceptional students a uniquely personalized education with access to the vast resources of the nation’s largest urban university and the largest city, New York City. Selected for their top high school records and leadership potential, Macaulay students receive a full tuition scholarship, a laptop and technology support, and an Opportunities Fund to pursue global learning, research and service opportunities. Macaulay students enroll in one of eight CUNY senior colleges: Baruch, Brooklyn, City, Hunter, John Jay, Lehman, and Queens Colleges and the College of Staten Island. For more information, see macaulay.cuny.edu.

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