

Hail, Fellows

Among the hallmarks of a university's renown is how many of its students and recent graduates become winners in a handful of prestigious international scholarship and fellowship competitions for postgraduate study.

Traditionally, the most competitive awards fund study in the United Kingdom. This year, three recent alumni—**Jyothi Purushotham '13**, **Jakob Seidlitz '13**, and **Anjalene Whittier '14**—won such awards. Each will be pursuing advanced study in some aspect of health and medicine this fall at either Oxford or Cambridge.

Rochester students and alumni have had increasing success in these competitions in recent years, according to Belinda Redden, the director of fellowships for the College, who advises applicants. "I'm not surprised by this year's results," she says, noting that three Rochester candidates won the highly coveted Fulbright student grant to the UK in 2011. "I saw our previous success as a harbinger of things to come."

Jyothi Purushotham '13

Jyothi Purushotham '13 heads to Oxford in the fall, where she'll pursue a master of science degree in the university's Department of International Health and Tropical Medicine. Her focus will be global health and research practices, and her goal, she says, is to "understand how science and medicine and technology can be used in different settings that aren't a traditional well-equipped hospital."



The Medical Sciences Graduate School Studentship that will fund her research is the second major scholarship Purushotham has received for study abroad. After graduation, the Rochester native headed to India on a Fulbright, where her research focused on delivering eye care to marginalized, rural populations.

Upon returning to Rochester, Purushotham joined a new population health lab at the Medical Center, created through a collaboration of the ophthalmology and psychiatry departments, and the Center for Community Health. There, she helped lead a diabetes education project aimed at equipping low-income Rochester residents who have the illness—especially those who are unable to see a doctor regularly—with tools and guidelines to better manage their condition at home.

Jakob Seidlitz '13

The teenage brain has long been ignored by neuroimaging researchers because it is so fraught with changes. As a result, much is still unknown about the neurological origins of mental illnesses that begin to develop in adolescence.

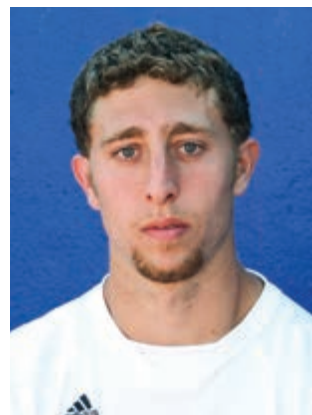
Jakob Seidlitz '13 is tackling the challenges of understanding the adolescent brain by working with researchers at the National Institutes of Health who are pioneering neuroimaging of an often unstable and unpredictable time in human life. He was recently chosen as one of 12 candidates nationwide to pursue

doctoral studies through the National Institutes of Health Oxford-Cambridge Scholars Program. Seidlitz, who will receive his PhD from Cambridge, is the first Rochester student or alumnus ever to win the award.

"The goal of my future research is to understand the trajectory of certain structures in the brain and how they relate to behavior," says Seidlitz, who majored in brain and cognitive sciences. He'll spend two years at the University of Cambridge, and two more at the NIH in Bethesda, Maryland, working with two distinctive data sets to help understand the onset of mood and anxiety disorders and to evaluate treatments.

Seidlitz credits the research experiences he had through his major, as well as a study abroad program at the University College London, for developing his interest in international scientific collaboration. Working with two labs and two data sets for the PhD is "a great way to get a larger-impact PhD, and it's a great way to connect similar science in two places," he says.

He'll also take a translational approach. "My PhD is going to be really clinically focused. I'm a firm believer that if you're not mindful of the clinical implications of some of the processes that you study, it's hard to direct your research."




Anjalene Whittier '14

Anjalene Whittier '14 is a steadfast advocate of disability rights, focused on reducing barriers to care for disabled people and promoting evidence-based intervention for minority youth with mental illnesses and developmental disabilities.

This fall, she heads to Cambridge University, where she'll pursue a PhD in psychiatry on a Gates Cambridge Scholarship. The scholarship, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is among the most prestigious awards for study in the United Kingdom. This year, Whittier was one of 95 scholars selected from a global applicant pool of about 4,000 candidates.

"I will be investigating the intersection of intellectual disability and psychosis," she says. "I hope that my work will allow us to obtain a better understanding of their co-occurrence, and to also promote a high quality of care for those affected by both conditions."

Whittier grew up in Rochester and graduated from the School of the Arts, a specialized middle and high school that's part of the Rochester City School District. After graduation, she studied in Spain with the help of the Joseph P. O'Hern Scholarship for Travel and Study in Europe, funded by Rochester's chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. 



—MAYA DUKMASOVA '12, '13 (T5)