

Thank you to the sponsors of the 2017 Student Life Awards



Thursday, April 13, 2017 | 4:00 pm | Student Union Ballroom

Scholarship. Advocacy. Innovation. Service. Pride. Community. Leadership.

UConn

STUDENT ACTIVITIES
LEADERSHIP OFFICE

MISSION STATEMENT:

Guided by its core principles, the Leadership Office facilitates educational and experiential initiatives that challenge individuals and organizations to explore, strengthen, and elevate their character, leadership and ability to contribute as global citizens.

CORE PRINCIPLES:

We commit to be:

- Engaging: interactive programming that provokes critical thinking and action
- Progressive: pushing boundaries in pursuit of continuous growth
- Strategic: intentionally turning big picture concepts into meaningful opportunities
- Authentic: genuine congruence between values and practice
- Unconventional: unafraid to question what is generally used or accepted
- Empowering: guiding our participants in self-actualization

www.leadership.uconn.edu

Leadership Office • Division of Student Affairs • University of Connecticut

2017 Leadership Legacy Experience Students

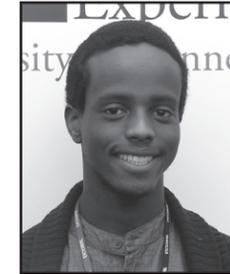
The University of Connecticut is proud to recognize the 2017 Legacy Students as part of the Student Life Awards Program. They represent a rich diversity of leadership experiences, personal accomplishments, and academic excellence. The Leadership Legacy Experience was established to recognize and invite some of the University's most exceptional student leaders to participate in a year-long leadership enhancement experience that builds on their legacy as University leaders, and helps prepare them for a life of commitment and contribution beyond graduation.



Adrianna Antigiovanni



Eric Burfeind



Matthew Byanyima



Amy Cerezo



Elizabeth Charash



Katherine Folker



Maria Grishanina



Odia Kane



Jeffrey Noonan



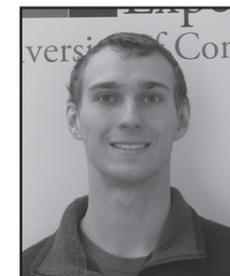
Helen Stec



Kavisha Thakkar



Jordane Virgo



Christopher Zins

Donald L. McCullough Leadership Award

Established in 1979, in remembrance of the former Director of Student Activities, Don McCullough, the McCullough Leadership award is the University's highest student leadership award. This award recognizes individual student(s) who have made significant contributions to the University community through leadership of, and/or involvement in an initiative(s) that has had University-wide impact and is representative of the highest level of

Finalists



Karim Abdel Jalil

Karim is a senior who recognizes the importance of learning both inside and outside of the classroom. During his time at UConn, he has conducted and published research in the field of chemistry and has been accepted to medical school. Karim has been a participant, Teaching Assistant, and Supervising Teaching Assistant for First Year Programs and Learning Communities. He takes a values-based approach to leadership whether he is directing an Alternative Spring Break with Community Outreach, participating in the Muslim Student Association, mentoring younger members of the UConn community, or contributing as a 2015 Leadership Legacy student.



Abigail Raynor

Abigail, a senior Global Health major, has committed her undergraduate experience to learning how to best serve others while engaging with her peers. An active participant in Community Outreach, Abby has attended five and led two Alternative Breaks and is the current Student Coordinator for Alternative Breaks overseeing all of the Alternative Break programs offered by the Office. Her dedication to serve is evident in other areas of campus as well. She is the President of Global Medical Brigades, a published scholar, and involved in numerous programs through the Honors program including the Honors Student Leader Collective and HIPS program, and she was also selected as the student speaker for the 2016 Honors Open House.



Irma Valverde

As a junior Business and Political Science major, Irma cites involvement as a core component to her success as a student leader. During her three years at UConn, Irma has held numerous roles in the Undergraduate Student Government including Senator, Student Development Committee Chair, Vice President, and was recently elected 2017-2018 USG President. Irma is committed to helping future and fellow Huskies find their home on campus through her role as an Orientation Leader. She has used her positions on campus to foster community-building efforts between offices and groups including USG, the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life, Alpha Phi, and the Cultural Centers.

Welcome!

A Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

Part of the thrill of being involved in higher education is the fact that, as professors and administrators, we are able to watch students flourish on this campus in classes, through research and, equally important, through service and campus activities.

It is the students who make our campus vibrant and rewarding and truly give life to our mission as a university. It is so fitting that our student leaders be recognized for their extraordinary contributions to the University of Connecticut, this community and their fellow students.

I feel a great deal of pride in knowing that today's campus leaders – the people making exceptional contributions to UConn and to the lives of others – will undoubtedly go on to do the same for this state, our nation and the world in the years to come.

Please accept my congratulations and best wishes to all those nominated for today's awards. You deserve the recognition.

Sincerely,

Susan Herbst
President
University of Connecticut

A Message from the Student Life Awards Committee Chair

On behalf of the Department of Student Activities, I'd like to welcome you to the 2017 University of Connecticut Student Life Awards – recognizing outstanding contributions to and leadership of the University community! The campus was very much alive this past year with student involvement, service, leadership and pride! The student engagement represented by all of this year's nominations not only created an environment of diverse opportunities and activities but also served to enrich the campus atmosphere and enhance student learning.

The process and work of recognizing all of our outstanding student leaders and bringing everyone together today began at the start of this academic year and has continued non-stop throughout the past eight months. Below is the list of the members of our 2017 Selection Committee, who spent a significant amount of time reviewing nomination material and interviewing finalists. It is also important to recognize the many folks who have played a role behind the scenes in everything that culminates in today's event. Therefore a special thanks to Anna Milot, Shari Latif, Lillian Palacios, Mary Shaw, Karen Provost, Dr. Michael Gilbert, Dr. Christine Wilson and the entire staff in the Leadership Office.

Finally, a note of particular thanks to our donors and award sponsors who have so generously supported this program, and more importantly our students. You are invited to learn more about all of our donors and sponsors on the following pages.

Congratulations to all of the nominees and thanks for making the University of Connecticut a vibrant campus community in which to live and learn.

Joseph P. Briody
Associate Director of Involvement and Leadership Programs
University of Connecticut
2017 Student Life Awards Committee Chair



Student Life Awards Selection Committee

Terrence Abney, *Residential Life*

Joe Briody, *Involvement and Leadership Office*

Kristen Carr, *Involvement Office*

Jamel Catoe, *Fraternity and Sorority Life*

Miguel Colon, *Community Outreach*

Andrea Dennis LaVigne, *Alumni*

Dan Doerr, *Office of the VPSA*

Steve Drasdis, *Club Sports*

Gabrielle Erestain, *Leadership Office*

Mark Flynn, *Leadership Office*

Jessica Glynn, *Leadership Office*

Trisha-Ann Hawthorne, *Athletics*

Kaitlin Heenehan, *Honors Program*

Moriah Hernandez, *Leadership Office*

Shari Latif, *Involvement and Leadership Office*

Kyle Neary, *Programs Office*

Alexis Parrill, *Leadership Office*

Emily Pearson, *Leadership Office*

Eileen Stone, *Wellness & Prevention*

Ashley Vrabely, *Community Standards*

Dana Wilder, *Office of the Provost*

A special thanks to all of the members of this year's Student Life Awards Selection Committee for their time and commitment to recognizing and supporting student contribution to and leadership of the University community.

Martha and Albert Cohen Scholarship for Enhancing Community

This scholarship is awarded to an undergraduate student(s) in good standing on the basis of financial need and evidence of a significant active commitment to eliminating bigotry, prejudice, and discrimination and to foster tolerance and understanding among people in the last academic year. This scholarship was established in 1990 and sponsored by Stephen I. Cohen ('65) in honor of his parents Martha and Albert Cohen.

Recipient



Matthew Brush

Matthew is a senior majoring in Human Rights. Through his work as an advocate for the LGBTQ+ community, Matthew is committed to educating others of the issues and needs surrounding transgender and gender nonconforming students. He hopes to promote inclusion and understanding among the UConn community, which is evident through his commitment to social change and encouraging dialogue. Matthew has worked with the Office of Institutional Equity, VAWPP, and the Connecticut Fair Housing Center to provide educational tools to UConn and the community at large.



Matthew B. Schechter Scholarship

This scholarship is named after Matthew Benson Schechter, who earned a Bachelors of Art in English in 1962. It was established in 1969 to recognize a deserving student(s) on the basis of citizenship, need, scholarship, contribution to the University, and contributions to the causes of human rights and human dignity, civil liberties and freedom of thought.

Recipient



Katherine Villeda

Katherine, a junior with an individualized major focusing on health and social inequalities, has played a critical role in many campus and community organizations addressing inequality and human rights. She has been passionate and determined in her work, building connections between the Hispanic Federation and Connecticut Students of A Dream regarding access to health care among members of the immigrant community. Katherine was accepted into the Young People for Fellowship Class of 2017-2018, focusing on the leadership development of young progressive leaders dedicated to social justice. Katherine has been a part of BuildOn, MEDLife, Students Without Borders, and an alternative break trip, all revolving around her passion for human rights.



Spirer/Dueker Student Humanitarian Achievement Award

The award was first given in 1994 and was established by Louise and Herbert Spirer and Marilyn Dueker, retired faculty members from the University of Connecticut-Stamford campus. This award honors an undergraduate student(s) for outstanding contributions to public service. Recipient(s) will have demonstrated a concern for others that benefits society and impacts positively on his/her personal and professional life.

Recipient



Morgan North

As a senior majoring in Human Development and Family Studies, Morgan serves at the Coordinator for the Social Services Community of Practice in the Office of Community Outreach (CO), where she led a group of 8 student leaders overseeing various CO programs. This year, Morgan collaborated with the Windham Region No Freeze Shelter and the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness to conduct a statewide count on 'unstably' housed and homeless youth aged 13-24. The purpose was to provide information to the coalitions to advance their goal of ending youth homelessness by 2020. In the role, Morgan worked closely with the coalition to recruit volunteers and to count the individuals affected by homeless. Morgan volunteers weekly with the No Freeze Shelter and has shown passion and dedication to ending homelessness and increasing involvement around the issue.



Edward Victor Gant Scholarship

Established in 1979 and first given in 1987, the scholarship is a gift of the University Of Connecticut Board Of Trustees and the family and friends of Edward V. Gant, former Provost and Professor of Civil Engineering. Edward V. Gant, who also served as the University's acting president for brief periods in the 1960s and '70s, passed away in 1985. The scholarship is granted on the basis of academic excellence, professional potential, dedicated service, and exemplary integrity. The scholarship(s) are awarded to students, graduate and/or undergraduate, who will be continuing their studies at the University of Connecticut next fall.

Finalists



Graduate Nominee: Kelsey Boyne

Kelsey is a senior Physiology and Neurobiology major with a concentration in American Sign Language who will be attending the UConn School of Medicine in the Fall of 2017. Through her work in the Pre-Med/Pre-Dental Office and in the Honors Program, Kelsey has radically streamlined services and started brand new initiatives that have supported countless students through the medical school application process. Kelsey is also involved in several other service and involvement programs including the Special Program in Medicine, shadowing ER physicians at a community hospital, tutoring middle school students in STEM classes, and participating on an alternative spring break to support young children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Her research focuses on how temporal cues are processed in the brain.



Graduate Nominee: Monique Golden

Monique Golden is a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Leadership. Monique serves as the President of the Graduate Students of Color Association, volunteering her time on the Student Fee Advisory and the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Committees, and fostering programs for graduate students such as graduate orientation and the Graduate Student Union. Monique's research interests include the experiences of undergraduate women interested in the sorority recruitment process, student leader stress, and perceived satisfaction among graduate student scholars. Coming from a STEM background, Monique feels a responsibility to use her quantitative analysis skills to disseminate knowledge of student experiences in her field.



Undergraduate Nominee: Matthew Lin

Matthew is a senior majoring in Biological Sciences. He is an engaged student with the STEM community at UConn, who plans to apply for medical school upon graduation. As the Executive Director of the STEM Scholars Community, Matthew oversees outreach programs for a large number of scholars in the program and supports STEM pipeline programs for local CT high school students interested in STEM and UConn. Matthew was selected as a University Scholar and has subsequently founded the Nutmeg/Day of Pride student organization to create community for his fellow UConn scholars. Matthew has been involved with a wide variety of research opportunities at Yale, Pfizer Corp., UConn's School of Pharmacy, and UConn's Department of Physiology and Neurobiology, with his most recent research focusing on studying how liver cancer interacts with genes/proteins in the body.



Undergraduate Nominee: Sarina Shafiqan-Rad

Sarina is a Physiology and Neurobiology major with a minor in Molecular and Cell Biology who aspires to become a pediatric dentist. Sarina fills her busy schedule not only in the research lab, where she explores the sensory areas of the brain, but in student programs and organizations as well. As the President of the Iranian Student Association, Sarina coordinates a mentoring program, many complex events, and leads this large organization using her confidence, kindness, and "achiever" mentality. Additionally, Sarina is a Resident Assistant at UConn, fostering community and connection to the campus for the residents in her building. This summer, Sarina will be serving as a genetics Teaching Assistant at Princeton University and attending a mission trip to Guatemala to support a dental clinic.

Student Employee of the Year

This award honors the outstanding contributions and achievements of students who work on-campus or earn their work-study off-campus in community service positions at agencies with an established Federal Work-Study contract with the University. This award was established in 1998 and is sponsored by Student Financial Aid Services.

Recipient



Shayna Sexton

Shayna is a Master's student in the Neag School of Education and works as a Scheduling Manager in the Office of Community Outreach, where she has worked since the Spring of 2013, first as a van driver and later promoted to manager. Shayna is responsible for organizing the vans for 'CO' projects, supervising other student managers, and interviewing potential student employees. Due to her time and experience with the office, Shayna acts as a leader and mentor to other student employees. After taking last year off to be a student teacher, Shayna was asked to come back to 'CO' as a manager. Although she was already taking five classes and held an internship off campus, Shayna took on this additional responsibility and currently commits most of her free time to the office.



Student Employee Supervisor of the Year

This award was established to recognize permanent staff members of UConn who supervise student employees and to acknowledge these staff members and the work they do. This award was established in 2016 and is sponsored by Student Financial Aid Services.

Recipient



Theresa Palacios-Baughman

Theresa works as the Borrowing Coordinator for Document Delivery & Interlibrary Loan in the Homer Babbidge Library. Theresa supervises a cohort of seven to fifteen students who run library paging, borrowing, and shelving services. As a supervisor, Theresa demonstrates respect, compassion, and understanding. Theresa's strongest attribute as a supervisor is in the training of her employees. She has developed a method of training tailored specifically to the challenges of student employment. She uses extensive PowerPoint presentations and dual computer monitors to have job aids available to students on one monitor while they work on the other. She has found that this system minimizes the need to retrain students after winter and summer breaks and, more importantly, is beneficial to new employees who may be overwhelmed with their newfound responsibilities. By keeping the library active and organized, she ultimately benefits the entire UConn community.

Student Organization Advisor of the Year

This award honors an advisor(s) of a student organization who has provided outstanding service and advisement to an organization. This award was established prior to 2002 and is sponsored by The Involvement Office and Student Organization Support.

Recipient



Andy Kelly

Andy, a Manager in the University's Office of Facilities Operations & Building Services, began volunteering as the advisor to Sigma Phi Epsilon in September of 2016. During his time as advisor, Andy has positioned himself as a resource, offering advice and new perspectives that have challenged the group's members to think beyond the status quo. Andy has fostered personal and professional member development opportunities, and supported and encouraged the development of the organization's culture based on its espoused values.



Outstanding Graduate Assistant of the Year

This award recognizes a Graduate Assistant(s) who goes above and beyond their assigned responsibilities by contributing their time, energy, and talents to further the growth and development of undergraduate students on campus. This award was established prior to 2002 and is sponsored by the Graduate School.

Recipient



Timothy Bussey

Tim is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science and teaches a variety of courses offered in the Women, Gender, and Sexuality, Studies Program and the Department of Political Science. Tim has developed a pedagogy that allows students to contribute in a critical way to the class environment. He has spent his time developing his syllabi trying to incorporate a wide variety of diverse perspectives, among other things, by discussing the inclusivity of the curriculum with alumni who have previously taken his courses. Tim intentionally positions himself as a supportive resource for undergraduate students here on campus and has been recognized by his students and peers for his efforts.

Organization Husky Pride Award

This award honors an organization for outstanding external representation of the pride and spirit associated with being a part of the University of Connecticut. This award was established prior to 2002 and is sponsored by the Department of

Recipient



SUBOG

SUBOG has continuously displayed their husky pride and spirit through the events that they host. This year, SUBOG has hosted some of the largest and most successful events on campus, ranging from Homecoming to One Ton Sundae. One Ton Sundae, Homecoming, and Stuff-a-Husky are all long-standing campus traditions, and SUBOG has worked tirelessly this year to implement innovative ideas and improve their programming for UConn students and the surrounding community. Events like these accurately depict the husky pride and spirit that this group embodies; all while serving the student body and enhancing the UConn campus community.



Willis N. Hawley Service and Leadership Award

Willis N. Hawley, (1875-1898), attended Storrs Agricultural College, beginning in the fall of 1895 and soon after graduating in 1898, he joined the U.S. Army, Company H, Third Connecticut Volunteer Infantry. This award recognizes a student veteran(s) who has made significant contributions to the University community through leadership and service during their tenure as a student. This award was established in 2010 and is sponsored by the Office of Veterans Affairs and Military Programs.

Recipients



Camden Craigie

Camden is a junior Electrical Engineering major and a Veteran of the U.S. Navy. He is involved with the Veteran's Center and will continue to be involved when he transfers from Avery Point to Storrs this coming fall. Camden demonstrated his commitment to the success of Veterans and to making their experience better by introducing and facilitating a Veteran's Day Lunch attended by faculty, staff, students, campus leadership and community guests this past year. Additionally, Camden mentors and strives to make a difference in the lives of student veterans.

Individual Husky Pride Award

This award honors an individual for outstanding external representation of the pride and spirit associated with being a part of the University of Connecticut. This award was established prior to 2005 and is sponsored by the Department of Student Activities.

Finalists



Daniel Byrd

Daniel is a senior majoring Political Science and serves as the President of the Undergraduate Student Government. Through his service with USG, Daniel has also been a Senator of Hilltop Dorms and a member of both the Funding Board and External Affairs Committee. This year, Daniel has worked tirelessly on the open source textbook initiative, which provides UConn students with more affordable textbooks. Additionally, he presented on UConn's open source textbook program at COSGA, the Annual Conference of Student Government Associations.



Marissa Carbone

Marissa, a senior majoring in Communications, serves as the President for the Student Union Board of Governors (SUBOG). As the President of this organization, Marissa has aimed to increase the student volunteer base and support her peers on SUBOG as they take on the planning and execution of campus-wide programs. In addition to her involvement with SUBOG, Marissa has participated in HuskyTHON for the past three years, and served as a Morale Captain for HuskyTHON this year.



Marisol Gallo

While a senior majoring in Allied Health Sciences, Marisol has been involved with the Office of Community Outreach as a leader in the Generations Connect program. Generations Connect is a semester-long program that allows UConn students to volunteer at local nursing and rehabilitation facilities in the area. As a Coordinator of this program, Marisol recruited 28 student participants to volunteer at the Mansfield Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. She is passionate about the population she serves through this program, and has an internship with the Mansfield Senior Center in addition to her involvement with Generations Connect.



Marina Lajoie

Marina is a sophomore majoring in Cognitive Science and is heavily involved in both the Disney at UConn Club and the UConn Marching Band. Marina is a double major in Speech, Language, and Hearing Studies and Cognitive Science. As a member of both the UConn Marching Band and Pep Band, Marina is present at a large majority of the sporting events at UConn, showing her support and enthusiasm at every game. Marina also participates in the Husky for a Day program, providing an inviting and enthusiastic presence to prospective students.

International Student Leadership Award

This award recognizes a student(s) who has actively engaged in activities that foster the integration of international students and their experiences and cultures into the campus community in a visible and meaningful way. This award was established in 2010 and is sponsored by the Office of Global Affairs.

Recipient



Yijia Liu

Yijia, a senior majoring in Linguistics/Psychology, has been very involved at UConn encouraging international students to get involved and helping them feel a sense of belonging on campus. Yijia was an International Orientation Ambassador for two summers with HuskyWOW, and later an FYE Mentor. As a mentor, Yijia helped lead classroom discussions and construct lesson plans in addition to focusing on an initiative to help improve the experience of Chinese students on campus. She is also a returning mentor for the Asiantation Mentoring program where she continues to build connections with first and second year students. Yijia is the first international Chinese student to complete the Leadership Legacy Experience, and she hopes to continue supporting the international community by setting a positive example in her own work.



First Year Excellence in Innovation Award

The First Year Excellence in Innovation Award stems from a university-wide initiative to cultivate talent among first year students. This award recognizes a current first year student(s) that has displayed a significant level of innovation and creativity. This award was established in 2015 and is sponsored by the Office of First Year Programs and Learning Communities.

Recipient



Christina Valera

Christina is a sophomore Physiology major. During her involvement with the Innovation House, she has worked to develop a blood pressure bracelet that automatically tracks blood pressure every two hours and relays this information to an easily accessible app. Christina was inspired by the health issues in her own family and motivated by the fact that many elderly people cannot track their own blood pressure and are alone for long periods of time. The app developed by Christina is able to contact emergency responders if the blood pressure is too high for safe biological function. Christina is also very involved in the Learning Community Innovation Zone through workshops and personal projects.

Emerging Leaders Award

This award recognizes a student(s) that, despite not holding a visible, established leadership position on campus, has actively demonstrated attributes of an emerging leader through his/her actions and character. The recipient(s) will demonstrate attributes of an emerging leader, poised for significant contribution and accomplishment through their future academic work, community service, organizational leadership, issue advocacy, and/or active participation in a campus-wide initiative. This award was established in 2005 and is sponsored by the Department of Student Activities.

Finalists



Xavier Arriaga

Xavier, a sophomore Economics major, participated in an Alternative Break trip to Birmingham, AL and is a mentor and teaching assistant with First Year Programs. This semester, he is co-facilitating a UNIV 1800 class with the Dean of Students on “Privilege and Possibility: the Opportunity of Higher Education in America.” In this role, he has created community among his students by crafting and facilitating meaningful conversations and reflections.



Jiana Baker

Jiana is a sophomore Physiology major. During her first year at UConn, Jiana has already made strides in empowering underrepresented students in the STEM fields. In addition to being a Rowe Scholar, she is also on the Rowe Scholars Executive Board where she is responsible for creating and implementing programming that focuses on developing a supportive community that promotes academic and professional achievement. Additionally, Jiana has participated in microbiology research and is a member of Alpha Lambda Delta, the Multicultural Honors Collective, and the Near-Peer Mentoring Program.



Virginia (Jenny) Blessing

Jenny is a junior majoring in Computer Science. As an incoming student, Jenny participated in the School of Engineering’s BRIDGE program where she first became aware of the lack of diversity within the engineering community. Since that experience, Jenny has dedicated herself to increasing the number of underrepresented students in Engineering. She is a volunteer and webmaster for the UConn Engineering Diversity and Outreach Center, an active member of the Society of Women Engineers, a STEM scholar, and a presenter at the Multiply Your Options Conference. This summer Jenny will intern at Google working on the security team.

Organization Community Service Award

This award honors a Registered Student Organization that has initiated and/or actively engaged in a community service project that offered direct service, as opposed to fundraising or lobbying activities, to a community external to the University. This award was established in 2002 and is co-sponsored by the Office of Community Outreach and The Office of Public Engagement.

Recipient



United Against Inequities in Disease

United Against Inequities in Disease focuses on the health disparities that can be found in the local community and working to help underserved populations in Willimantic, Hartford, and beyond. The group has worked one-on-one with high school females, inner city minority youth, and a variety of other groups, striving to provide oral and dental care to these communities. This project has shown a direct short-term and long-term impact to the individuals and the communities in which they live.



Program of the Year Award

This award recognizes the development and/or execution of an event/program that significantly enhanced the social, recreational, educational, and/or cultural life of students and the general community at this institution. This award was established prior to 2002 and is sponsored by SUBOG (Student Union Board of Governors).

Recipient



MLK Day of Service, Community Outreach

The MLK Day of Service was held this past January and was planned in honor of the National Day of Service, in an effort to make the day a “day on, not a day off”. The students and staff in the Office of Community Outreach offered multiple opportunities to complete service, both on-campus and off campus. Off-campus service sites included five local non-profit organizations while on-campus opportunities included creating literacy kits, and learning how to make blankets for those in need. Over 250 students and staff members participated in volunteering in these activities throughout the day.

Individual Community Service Award

This award honors a student(s) that has initiated and/or actively engaged in a community service project(s). The project may be a single event or a series of activities. This award is intended for those engaged in activities that offer direct service, as opposed to fundraising or lobbying activities. Such service(s) should directly benefit a community external to the University and have occurred in the past academic year. This award was established prior to 2005 and is sponsored by the Department of Student Activities.

Finalists



Benjamin Briskin

Ben, a senior majoring in Sport Management, is involved with Husky Sport, a campus-community partnership working with various schools and after-school programs in Hartford. As a senior, Ben has been involved with Husky Sport since his sophomore year, going to Hartford at least once every week, focusing on nutrition education, physical activity, homework help, and life skills. In addition, Ben also serves as the transportation coordinator for Husky Sport, a role that demands organization, supervision, and responding to various inquiries about the program. In this role, Ben has coordinated over 2,500 hours of community-campus engagement with the North End of Hartford over this past year.



Caity Miller

A senior majoring in Molecular and Cell Biology, Caity serves as the Student Coordinator for Community Service Days (CSD), a program in the Office of Community Outreach. In her role, Caity volunteers her time to help community partners, while also overseeing other students who volunteer with Community Service Days. Within the last year, Caity has developed the program into its own Community of Practice in the office, developing more infrastructure and support for future CSD volunteers and coordinators. In a completely new position, Caity has taken on additional responsibility to make the program more efficient and meaningful for all participants and community partners. Caity is a graduating senior hoping to attend medical school.



Rachael Reed

This past year, Rachael, a senior majoring in Human Development and Family Studies, served as the group leader for Stafford Teen Night, a volunteer organization that met every Friday night providing programming and events for local teens. In her 3.5 years with Stafford Teen Night, Rachael developed close relationships with the kids, her community partner, and the other student volunteers. When the program ended in December of 2016, Rachael was selected to lead the 4-H program in Vernon. Although it has been a new set of challenges and a big learning curve, Rachael has taken on the new role in her final semester in the hopes to make it the best it can be.



Kristian Schif

A senior majoring in Management and Engineering, Kristian was elected philanthropy chair and community service chair in his fraternity, Alpha Kappa Lambda. In this role, Kristian developed new partnerships in the town of Mansfield for his organization to complete a wide range of community service work, including shoveling snow, collecting trash, spring-cleaning, and more. Additionally, Kristian developed a service-focused culture within his organization, and in doing so, positively impacted relationships with the town of Mansfield. Kristian now serves as the President of Alpha Kappa Lambda, and he still works to help instill a desire to serve others in his fraternity brothers.



Ryan Tran

A senior majoring in Chemical Engineering, Ryan currently serves as a Team Leader with the Community Outreach program Jumpstart, working with language and literacy development with preschoolers coming from low-income families. In this position, Ryan is tasked with leading a group of his peers through classroom curriculum, reviewing pertinent information, and planning for upcoming sessions. Ryan has shown great strength in the connections he makes and the motivation he provides other Corps members. He has demonstrated sincere positivity, consistency, and responsibility in his role, even when the preschoolers are having a hard day. Ryan has also stepped up to help support an additional team of Corps members who needed more volunteers. Ryan has left a lasting positive impact on the classroom and the community.

Learning Community Leadership Award

This award recognizes a current Learning Community student(s) that has displayed a significant level of, either formal or informal, leadership within their Learning Community while supporting the overall mission of the Learning Community Program, which prides itself in the holistic education of students in an academic environment while supporting significant opportunity for co-curricular engagement. This award was established in 2015 and is sponsored by the Office of First Year Programs and Learning Communities.

Recipient



Haley Palmer

Haley is a junior Civil Engineering major and a floor mentor for the Engineering House. She has quickly emerged as a leader, helping many Engineering House students along the way. Haley has helped plan, coordinate, and assist in several events such as a school wide event with the School of Engineering for the Make a Wish Foundation where a replica of Fenway Park was built in a little boy's backyard. Haley mentors other floor mentors and has been a role model for other female residents and classmates. Haley is very involved in her Learning Community and looking for ways to bring more events, awareness, and opportunities.



Student Organization Advocacy Award

This award honors a Registered Student Organization for the achievement of a remarkable goal or completion of a major project that significantly impacted students through advocacy or awareness initiatives during the past academic year. This can include, but not be limited to, increasing awareness about a particular issue across campus or taking a leadership role in the advancement of an issue or cause on campus. This award was established in 2005 and is sponsored by the Leadership Office.

Recipient



Sisters Inspiring Sisters

Sisters Inspiring Sisters is focused on discussing issues on campus affecting all women of color, whose larger mission is to enrich the lives of black women on campus while also educating all students about marginalization and social justice. Founded in the Spring of 2015, the organization has been committed to making substantial change for black women and women of color. In December 2016, Sisters Inspiring Sisters led a Women's Leadership Experience to Washington, D.C. to expose UConn students to further issues of race, ethnicity, and gender equity. During this trip, participants engaged in conversations with leaders and speakers in D.C., helping develop strategies and commitments to bring back to campus.



Building Community Award

This award honors a student(s) that has initiated and/or actively engaged in an activity that has significantly contributed to the sense of community on campus. This project may be a single event or series of activities. The project should also have been significantly advanced during the past academic year and it should directly enhance the sense of community among various members of the campus community. This award was established in 2005 and is sponsored by the Department of Student Activities.

Finalists



Pierre Fils

As a first year student, Pierre was an Eco House member and the following year became a floor mentor to aid the program's growth. He continued his work with learning communities as an LC Ambassador, promoting the positive experience and benefits of the overall Learning Community Program, and he later became the FYE mentor for SchOLA2RS House. In all of his work Pierre has focused on creating meaningful connections, mentoring, and promoting student involvement on campus. During his time at UConn, Pierre, now a senior majoring in Civil Engineering, has also been involved with the SSS program as an office assistant, and a summer resident assistant where he has continued to promote community among his students.



Aiden Ford

Aiden is a junior majoring in Physiology and Neurobiology with a focus in Neurodevelopment and Health. She first used her passion for STEM as a mentor in the Women in STEM (WiS) Mentoring Program, and this year has stepped into the role of program coordinator. Aiden is responsible for recruitment, mentor training, and holding monthly meetings that bring 65 women together. She also initiates discussions among group members to encourage personal and professional development, with topics such as the intersectionality of the identities of the women in STEM and activism within their professional practice. Aiden also holds leadership roles within TEDxUConn and the Pre-Medical Society.



Sarah Goldberg

Sarah is a junior nursing student and is co-founder of the College Diabetes Network chapter at UConn. She has focused on creating a support network among other students with diabetes by providing a space to communicate and socialize. Her continued involvement in this organization has promoted leadership development among other members. Moving forward, Sarah hopes to increase membership and continue fundraising efforts to assist diabetics in less resourced places.

Student Leader of Character Award

This award recognizes individual student(s) who have demonstrated exceptional character in the course of holding a leadership position within the Division of Student Affairs. This award was established in 2017 to provide scholarship support to University students and is sponsored by the J. Peter & Jennifer Natale Student Leader Scholarship.

Finalists



Amy Bortey

For the past two years, Amy has served as the Editor-in-Chief of Nutmeg Publishing, the fee-funded organization responsible for the UConn Yearbook as well as quarterly magazines. Amy is a senior Biology major and despite a background in science, she has thrown herself into learning the creative and design software and skills necessary to develop yearbook and magazine material. During her past four years with Nutmeg, she has also served as a page editor and assistant editor-in-chief. Throughout that time, she has inspired a strong sense of collective identity in the organization with integrity, dedication, and emotional devotion to the group.



Hayley Rowe

Hayley is a junior Communications and Sociology double major with a minor in Africana Studies. She is a member of HOLDUP!, a former FYE mentor, participant in the Impact Delta workshop series, and currently serves as the Lecture Chair for SUBOG. In this role, she has worked to provide diverse and engaging educational opportunities for the UConn community to learn about important topics and be exposed to new ideas such as Yuletide from different cultural perspectives, an event on Islamophobia, and Afro-Latinx week events. Hayley believes in the power of storytelling to help understand others and programs events that will inspire inclusivity and social justice.



Christian Spaar

Christian is a senior Communications major, has been a Resident Assistant for two years, and currently serves as the Vice President for Policy in SUBOG. After transferring to UConn, Christian joined SUBOG three and a half years ago in order to be involved with the traditions of the University. Since then, he has been involved with the Concert Committee, Outreach, and currently the Policy Council, which serves as student representatives to the Student Union. Through this role, he has learned how to support and motivate a group of students to implement positive changes and manage setbacks. He has served in this role with honesty, humility and depth, and learned to leverage his skills as a 'behind the scenes' leader to shine.



Olivia Wilson

Olivia is a senior Psychology major engaged in research at Hartford Hospital and has served as an Alternative Break Trip Director for a public health trip to Atlanta, GA and a rural poverty trip to West Virginia this spring. For four years, Olivia has worked in the Student Activities Involvement and Leadership Office, first as a student administrative assistant and for the past two years as a Student Involvement Ambassador. In this role, she facilitates organizational leadership workshops and offers advice to student organizations. In all of her roles and responsibilities, Olivia has lead with integrity and a calming positivity that supports and empowers her peers to succeed.