American Rhodes Scholars-Elect for 2015
(Subject to ratification by the Rhodes Trustees after acceptance by one of the colleges of Oxford University)

District I
NOAM ANGRIST
Massachusetts—Massachusetts Institute of Technology
BENJAMIN D. SPRUNG-KEYSER
Massachusetts—Harvard University

District II
MATTHEW J. TOWNSEND
Connecticut—Yale University
RUTH C. FONG
New Jersey—Harvard University

District III
JOSEPH W. BARRETT
New York—Princeton University
GABRIEL M. ZUCKER
New York—Yale University

District IV
JORDAN R. KONELL
Pennsylvania—Yale University
KATE I. NUSSENBRAUM
Rhode Island—Brown University

District V
FANG Y. CAO
Maryland/DC—University of Maryland, College Park
MAYA I. KRISHNAN
Maryland/DC—Stanford University

District VI
SARAH M. BUFKIN
Georgia—University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
RIDWAN Y. HASSEN
Georgia—Dartmouth College

District VII
AMEEN BARGHI
Alabama—University of Alabama at Birmingham
JANE DARBY MENTON
Florida—Yale University

District VIII
SAI P. GOURISANKAR
Texas—University of Texas at Austin
ABISHEK K. KULSHREETHTA
Texas—Brown University

District IX
JACOB L. BURNETT
Indiana—Wabash College
ALEXANDER F. COCCIA
Indiana—University of Notre Dame

District X
RACHEL V. HARMON
Illinois—Cornell University
REBECCA A. ESSELESTEIN
Ohio—United States Air Force Academy

District XI
DAVID S. MOORE
Michigan—University of Michigan
TAYO A. SANDERS II
Wisconsin—University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire

District XII
ANISHA N. GURURAJ
Missouri—Massachusetts Institute of Technology
ROBERT A. FISHER
Tennessee—University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

District XIII
EMILY ELIZABETH WITT
Colorado—Stanford University
PETER N. KALUGIN
New Mexico—Johns Hopkins University

District XIV
AVEN P. SATRE MELOY
Montana—Santa Clara University
WILLIAM J. RATHIE
Washington—University of Puget Sound

District XV
ELLIOIT H. AKAMA-GARREN
California (North)—Massachusetts Institute of Technology
RACHEL A. SKOKOWSKI
California (North)—Princeton University

District XVI
DAVID R. K. ADLER
California (South)—Brown University
SARAH E. YERIMA
California (South)—Princeton University
From the AARS President:

The Association of American Rhodes Scholars (AARS) is pleased to present this now-traditional newsletter introducing the newly elected Rhodes Scholars to their predecessors, to each other, to Oxford, and to well-wishers and educational institutions nationwide. It is indeed a joy to learn about these fine young people who will follow in our footsteps to Oxford next September.

In addition to introducing our 2015 Scholars, this newsletter reports on the 20th annual Sailing “Bon Voyage” Weekend, sponsored by the AARS for the class of 2014 Rhodes Scholars, which took place in Washington, DC, last September 27 to 30. This BVW, though shortened by one day, allowed the new Rhodes Scholars an ample opportunity to become acquainted with each other before traveling to Oxford and dispersing among the colleges. By hearing from and talking with a wide variety of Scholars of all ages in the course of the Weekend, these young Scholars gained a new understanding of how Rhodes Scholars value academic scholarship, pursue public service, and participate in “the world’s fight.” This was a quadrennial year in the AARS calendar so, in lieu of the usual afternoon departure luncheon, we gathered current scholars for the quadrennial meeting of the association and then proceeded to a gala dinner to welcome our newest members, the Class of 2014. Our keynote speaker this year was Lt. General Michelle Johnson (Iowa and Brasenose ’81), Superintendent of the Air Force Academy.

The AARS fosters intellectual and social fellowship among its members by facilitating events and reunions and through its publications and the website (www.americanrhodes.org). It continues to facilitate the annual transfer of substantial gifts to Oxford, its colleges, and related entities through the American Trust for Oxford University (nearly $25 million since 2010). Additionally, the AARS participates in the appointment of the annual Eastman Professor at Oxford and funds the Professor’s salary as well as the maintenance of Eastman House. The quarterly publication of The American Oxonian brings current information about Oxford, articles of interest to the Oxonian constituency, class letters, and the annual address list.

Both this publication and the Sailing Weekend described herein are sponsored by the Association of American Rhodes Scholars and are paid for by dues and generous annual contributions from its membership. While financially and organizationally distinct from the Office of the American Secretary to the Rhodes Trust, many AARS activities enjoy the cooperation of the American Secretary in service to the Scholarships. Commended to you is this newsletter’s report from the American Secretary, Elliot Gerson.

On behalf of the AARS and its Board of Directors, I thank you for continuing your vital support.

STEVEN A. CROWN, PRESIDENT
(Washington and Queen’s ’80)
David R. K. Adler
(California [South])

Brown University: BA, Development Studies, 2014
Oxford Course: MPhil, Politics (Comparative Government), at New College

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Mexico

Career Aspirations
Continue research and writing on issues of citizen welfare and the government’s role in addressing them

David R. K. Adler is a 2014 graduate of Brown University, where he majored in Development Studies and graduated Phi Beta Kappa with honors in his department. As an undergraduate, he worked as a research assistant at the Centre for Policy Research during a semester abroad at Delhi University in India. He won several awards for his undergraduate research on bureaucracy in India and its effects on urban development. He is now on a Fulbright Research Fellowship in Mexico, where he researches low-income housing and social policy at El Colegio de México. He has written on these topics for several publications, including the Huffington Post and the Latin American News Dispatch. In Mexico, he has collaborated with several think tanks and government agencies, including the Mexican Senate.
Elliot Akama-Garren (California [North])

Massachusetts Institute of Technology: BSc, Biology, 2015
Oxford Course: MSc, Neuroscience, at St. John’s College

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Career Aspirations
Physician-scientist

Elliot H. Akama-Garren is a senior at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology majoring in Biology. He began conducting biomedical research while in high school, studying multiple sclerosis in the Stanford Department of Immunology. At MIT he works in the laboratory of Tyler Jacks to study the multiple roles of the immune system in cancer, using genetic mouse models of lung cancer. Outside of the laboratory, Elliot is editor-in-chief of the MIT Undergraduate Research Journal, has designed and taught courses for middle and high school students through the MIT Educational Studies Program, and volunteers at the Harvard Square Homeless Shelter. He is also president and co-captain of the MIT men’s ice hockey team.
Noam Angrist (Massachusetts)

Massachusetts Institute of Technology: BS, Mathematics and Economics, 2013

Oxford Course: MSc, Evidence-Based Social Intervention, at Hertford College

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Gaborone, Botswana

Career Aspirations
Assess, develop, and scale poverty-alleviation programs that work

Noam Angrist graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2013 with majors in Economics and Mathematics. While at MIT, he did economic research for the World Bank, the White House, and the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, as well as on the Affordable Care Act; he also founded an enrichment program combining athletics and academics for low-income youth that achieved considerable success as measured by achievement and college matriculation. As a Fulbright Scholar in Botswana, Noam founded an NGO called Young 1ove, focused on HIV education designed to discourage intergenerational sex (“sugar daddy awareness”). Its success led him to raise the money to extend the program to 343 schools, and he now plans to launch it in four other southern African countries. He hopes to continue to apply his economics acumen to assess and develop poverty-alleviation projects that work.
Ameen Barghi

University of Alabama at Birmingham: BS, Neuroscience and Translational Research, 2015

Oxford Course: MPP

Ameen Barghi is a senior at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, where he majors in Neuroscience and Translational Research and minors in Chemistry. A Goldwater Scholar with a 4.0 GPA, he does extensive research in Constraint-Induced Movement Therapy for patients with multiple sclerosis, stroke, and other diseases, and has many publications relating to his work. Ameen is also active in community programs relating to substance abuse, on a crisis line, and in blood drives and hospital clinics. He speaks Azari and Farsi and has done health-related work in Azerbaijan and Iran. He has also, for five years, worked intimately with the low-income community of Bessemer, Alabama. He is interested in developing clinical imaging systems and software technologies that could allow for earlier diagnosis of progressive diseases and facilitating health-care policy work.
Joseph Walzer Barrett
(New York)

Princeton University: AB, History, 2014

Oxford Course: MPhil, Economic and Social History, at New College

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Career Aspirations
Public policy focusing on poverty, educational equity, and incarceration

Joseph W. Barrett graduated summa cum laude from Princeton University in 2014 with a major in History and a minor in South Asian Studies. At Princeton, Joe was a volunteer tutor and coordinator for the Petey Greene Program, a non-profit that provides individualized academic support to incarcerated people, and a co-founder of Students for Prison Education and Reform (SPEAR), an organization that mobilizes students to address the systemic inequalities and societal costs of mass incarceration. During his senior year, Joe was a co-winner of the Pyne Prize, the highest award given to a Princeton undergraduate, as well as a prize for the best thesis in American History. Before beginning college, Joe spent a year learning Hindi and Urdu and working on literacy projects in Varanasi, India. He has also worked for the Millennium Challenge Corporation in Washington, DC, and Lesotho. Currently, he is working to expand the Petey Greene Program to universities and correctional facilities in Massachusetts.
Sarah Bufkin
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: BA, Cultural Studies, History, 2013
Oxford Course: DPhil, Politics

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Career Aspirations
Practice civil rights law; work in political theory and critical race studies

Sarah Bufkin graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2013, majoring in Cultural Studies and with a minor in Creative Writing. She is now attending Queen’s University in Belfast, Northern Ireland, as a Mitchell Scholar, where she will obtain a master’s degree in Moral, Legal, and Political Philosophy. At Chapel Hill, her research focused on questions of voice, agency, and political action: the interface between civil rights and sentencing in the United States, and the role of the Belfast Group of poets during sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland. As a Morehead-Cain Scholar at UNC, she served as editor-in-chief of a progressive campus magazine, a columnist for the Daily Tar Heel, and a counselor in the university’s student-run honor system. An accomplished poet, Sarah also worked for a labor rights NGO in India, as a politics intern for the Huffington Post during a semester off, and as the communications coordinator for the North Carolina NAACP. At Oxford, she will undertake a project on structural domination, political agency, and critical race theory through a DPhil in Politics.
Jacob Levi Burnett

Wabash College: AB, Political Science, 2015
Oxford Course: MSc, Criminology and Criminal Justice

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Career Aspirations
In the broadest sense, to fundamentally change the concept of justice in our society

Jacob is a first-generation college student from Mishawaka, Indiana. He attends Wabash College as a Lilly Endowment Community Scholar and will graduate summa cum laude with a major in Political Science and minors in Psychology and Rhetoric in May 2015. He has presented his multi-faceted research focused on illegal international adoption, the political psychology of sub-Sahara African leadership, and a feminist critique of Nicki Minaj. He has also conducted field research analyzing Appalachian poverty. Jacob is especially interested in criminal justice, having worked for the Legal Aid Society of Louisville in Kentucky and as an intern criminal investigator with the Public Defender Service in Washington, DC. He’s particularly interested in studying the criminalization of civil rights as well as comparative criminology. At Wabash, he tutored underprivileged children in the community and led the Best Buddies chapter for a term. Jacob actively took part in campus organizations. He acted as president of the College Democrats, worked as news editor for the college newspaper, held numerous positions in student government, and organized campus unity activities. Jacob also worked part-time at a coffee shop. He is gregarious and has a laugh that might break the sound barrier one day. Jacob’s family participates in the Habitat for Humanity program and moved into their new home in the winter of 2014. He will return to the United States after his time at Oxford to attend law school.
District V

Fang Cao
(Maryland/DC)

University of Maryland, College Park: BS, Physiology and Neurobiology
Oxford Course: MSc, Pharmacology, at University College

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Career Aspirations
Physician involved in health-care policy

Fang Cao is a senior at the University of Maryland, where he majors in Neurobiology and Physiology. He is both a Truman Scholar and a Goldwater Scholar, with a 4.0 across many disciplines. Born in China, he emigrated to London at age five, and to the United States at seven. He has done research at NIH, the Children’s National Medical Center, and at a health clinic in Jamaica. Fang founded two tutoring programs to help low-income local high school students succeed in the sciences, and is passionate about solving the national crisis in community health care for the underserved. Fang enjoys swimming, running, and hip-hop music and is an avid reader of World War II history and The Economist.
Alexander Felice Coccia
(Indiana)

University of Notre Dame: BA, Africana Studies, with a supplementary major in Peace Studies and a supplementary minor in the Glynn Family Honors Program

Oxford Course: MSc, Comparative Social Policy

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Career Aspirations
Public service through state or federal government

Alexander F. Coccia graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 2014. He majored in Africana Studies and Peace Studies. A Truman Scholar, Alex is now a Truman-Albright Fellow in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. At Notre Dame, he was the student body president, elected on a platform focused on promoting the passions and interests of all students, including those who felt marginalized. He successfully led the amendment of the student-union nondiscrimination clause to include gender identity, disability, and documentation status; and developed a sexual violence prevention campaign. As a sophomore, he founded a student movement to create a more welcoming environment for students who identify as LGBTQ and their allies, which led to the recognition of the first official gay-straight alliance student organization at Notre Dame. He was also a member of the varsity fencing team, which won the 2011 National Championship.
Rebecca Ann Esselstein (Ohio)

Oxford Course: MSc by Research, Astrophysics, at New College

Rebecca A. Esselstein is from Dayton, Ohio. Fueled by her passion for space, Rebecca studies Astronautical Engineering at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA), where she is currently ranked first in her class academically and overall. She is a member of the Tau Beta Pi and Sigma Gamma Tau engineering societies. Her research experience includes working with the USAFA Physics Department, where she helped with the detection of exoplanets during the fall 2014 semester; she also interned at MIT Lincoln Labs this past summer, where she worked on radar and infrared signatures. Throughout her time as a cadet, she has competed in Division I athletics as a member of the USAFA cross country and track teams, where she specializes as an 800m and 1500m runner. Besides running, her main hobbies include reading and drawing. Upon graduation, she will be commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force. After attending Oxford, where she will study Astrophysics, she will attend Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training at Sheppard AFB, Texas. She hopes to get into Test Flight School, become an astronaut, and work for NASA.
Robert Fisher

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga: BS, Political Science
Oxford Course: MSc, Education (Higher Education), at New College

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Career Aspirations
Higher education administration and elected office

Robert A. Fisher is a senior at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, where he majors in Political Science and minors in History and Africana Studies. A Truman Scholar with a nearly perfect academic record, he was twice elected student body president. He was appointed by the governor as student representative to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and served as a Presidential Fellow at the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress. Robert was chosen by Chattanooga’s mayor to co-chair a task force to develop a vibrant and more inclusive downtown, and by the president of the University of Tennessee system to serve on the University of Tennessee Advocacy Council. Robert has also been a mentor at local schools in Chattanooga. Much of his university and community leadership is focused on issues related to racial inequality in America, and is influenced by his deep interest in black political thought.
Ruth Catherine Fong

Harvard University: AB, Computer Science, 2015
Oxford Course: MSc, Neuroscience, at St. John’s College

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Career Aspirations
Computer science in academia

Ruth C. Fong is a senior at Harvard University majoring in Computer Science. For her senior thesis, which focuses on how computers can intuitively identify and perceive objects in a way that more closely mimics the human brain, she developed a novel biologically informed algorithm that leverages human brain activity recorded in fMRI scans to improve object detection techniques. Ruth is very active in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) community as a teaching fellow for three undergraduate computer science courses and as a founding board member and mentor of the Women in CS club at Harvard. She won a highly competitive scholarship from Apple for her leadership in the community of women in technology, as well as a Tech in the World Fellowship to work on improving procedures for analyzing infectious disease data in Tanzania. Ruth is also extremely involved in the special needs and Asian American communities and directed a “Big Sibs” program in Boston’s Chinatown. She is a member of a dance troupe and enjoys performing both hip-hop and traditional Chinese dances. Ruth also helps organize the intramural crew program for her residential house, while rowing and coxing in two boats. She most enjoys serving as an executive board member and Bible study leader in the Harvard-Radcliffe Asian American Christian Fellowship and processing spiritual questions with others.
Sai Prashanth Gourisankar  
(Texas)  

University of Texas at Austin: BS, Chemical Engineering, BA, Plan II  
Honors Liberal Arts, 2015  

Oxford Course: MSc, Mathematical Modelling and Scientific Computing  

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Career Aspirations  
Academic research and teaching (professor)  

Sai P. Gourisankar, Atlanta, Georgia, is a senior at the University of Texas, where he will graduate in May with a BS in Chemical Engineering and a BA in Plan II Liberal Arts. He also has a minor in German. He is a Goldwater Scholar and was recognized as a Churchill Scholar by the British Studies Department at the university. He is also president of an organization that fosters discussion between the humanities and the sciences. Sai has several publications relating to his work in nanotechnology, particularly relating to work developing targeted agents for cancer diagnosis. As part of Texas 4000 for Cancer, he will be cycling 4,500 miles from Austin to Alaska this summer to raise cancer awareness and money for cancer research initiatives. At Oxford, Sai will do the MSc in Mathematical Modelling. He plans to follow it with the MSc in Mathematical and Theoretical Physics, and then return to the United States to pursue a PhD in Chemical Engineering.
District XII

Anisha Gururaj (Missouri)

Massachusetts Institute of Technology: BS, Chemical-Biological Engineering, 2015

Oxford Course: MSc, Global Governance and Diplomacy

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Career Aspirations
Designing and deploying affordable and profitable health-care solutions around the world

Anisha Gururaj is a senior at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, majoring in Chemical and Biological Engineering and minoring in Energy Studies. Her career interest is to deploy affordable biomedical devices and health solutions for both the United States and the developing world. She conducted various research projects at MIT on health technologies like tissue engineering and diagnostic devices, and she worked at several medical device start-ups. With three student colleagues, Anisha designed a low-cost blood warmer that could save the lives of soldiers who die on the battlefield from hypothermia. She published an investigative report on the experience of trauma surgeons following the Boston Marathon bombings. Anisha performs Indian classical dance and is president of an a cappella group.
Rachel Victoria Harmon (Illinois)

Cornell University: BS, Industrial and Labor Relations, 2015

Oxford Course: MPhil, Evidence-Based Social Intervention, at Hertford College

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Career Aspirations
Policy-based researcher in the nonprofit or academic field

Rachel V. Harmon is a senior at Cornell University majoring in Industrial and Labor Relations. Before college, she was an AmeriCorps volunteer as a reading tutor at an all-black rural elementary school in the Mississippi Delta, an experience which—like some of her own—has fueled her motivation to study social and economic policies and their effects on the well-being of marginalized communities. As a junior, Rachel studied strategies for community-based economic development in western rural Uganda and is continuing that inquiry with a senior honors thesis on strategies for economic justice in the post–Civil Rights Mississippi Delta. She was an intern for the Southern Education Foundation, is a teaching assistant in a maximum-security prison and in a juvenile detention center, and manages a café. Rachel was recently awarded the SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Student Excellence, which recognizes graduating seniors at State University of New York campuses for academic excellence, leadership, and community service; and the Merrill Presidential Scholarship, which recognizes students from the top one percent of each graduating class for their contributions to campus.
Ridwan Hassen
Dartmouth College: BA, Neuroscience (focus in computational neuroscience), 2015
Oxford Course: MPP

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Career Aspirations
To be determined

Ridwan Y. Hassen is a senior at Dartmouth College. Before Dartmouth, he attended Emory University for two years. The child of refugees from Somalia and Ethiopia, he has always worked to help support his large family while achieving a superb academic record and leading many campus and community activities. Ridwan founded a global development project focused on the Horn of Africa, was a volunteer coordinator for the NAACP, and founded Emory’s first AIDS activist organization after studying in Johannesburg, South Africa. He has done neurobiology research at UCSF, where he worked to develop and improve optical clearing methods and studied an implicated gene in Autism Spectrum Disorder (PTEN). He is an active mentor of students and a community activist at South Cobb High School, from which he graduated. He is a member of the Dartmouth endurance racing team and competes in many mid- and long-distance runs. Next year Ridwan will study for the Master of Public Policy at Oxford.
District XIII

Peter Nikolaevich Kalugin (New Mexico)

Johns Hopkins University: BS/BA, Molecular & Cellular Biology and Mathematics, 2015

Oxford Course: MSc by Research, Oncology, at Balliol College

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Career Aspirations
MD-PhD; physician-scientist in the field of pediatric oncology

Peter N. Kalugin is a senior at Johns Hopkins University, where he will receive a BS in Molecular and Cellular Biology and a BA in Mathematics with a minor in Physics. A Goldwater Scholar, and elected to Phi Beta Kappa as a junior, he has worked in basic science labs on cell signaling and immunobiology and completed a thesis on brain tumor biology. He has also worked on statistical analysis of medical data sets at the University of New Mexico. Peter plays the alto saxophone, speaks five languages, and has taught English to new immigrant students, volunteered at orphanages in Mongolia and Nepal, and founded an organization to connect other university students with local NGOs abroad. He is passionate about pediatric oncology and research in cancer cell growth and developmental neurobiology. Peter will do the MSc by Research in Oncology at Oxford, studying under Sir Walter Bodmer. Upon completion of his degree, Peter will return to the United States for an MD/PhD at the Harvard Medical School.
Jordan Konell

(Yale University: BA, Political Science and African American Studies, 2015)
Oxford Course: MSc, Criminology and Criminal Justice, at Keble College

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Career Aspirations
Civil rights lawyer

Jordan Konell was born and raised in Philadelphia and is a graduating senior at Yale University, where he majors in African American Studies and Political Science. Academically, he is interested in the intersection of race relations, community organizing, and urban politics. He wrote his senior essays on the relationship between African Americans and Jews in 1960s Philadelphia (African American Studies major) and also offered a critique of citizen review boards of police in Philadelphia (Political Science). During his summers, he has worked at the Public Interest Law Center in Philadelphia as well as at the American Federation of Teachers. At Yale, he directed Community Health Educators, the largest community service organization on campus, served as student president of his residential college, gave guided tours, and acted as the editor-in-chief of the undergraduate law review. He is also a jazz trombonist and enjoys giving neighborhood tours of Philadelphia. Jordan will pursue an MSc in Criminology and Criminal Justice in his first year at Oxford and hopes to pursue an MPP in the second.
Maya Krishnan

(Maryland/DC)

Stanford University: BA, Philosophy, 2015

Oxford Course: MSc, Computer Science, at Balliol College

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Career Aspirations
Work in philosophy, on the interaction of philosophy and computer science, or in the tech industry

Maya is a Stanford University senior majoring in Philosophy with a minor in Computer Science. She wrote Modern Illuminations, a collection of ten essays on the metaphysics of modern thought about what it means to be human, for which she received Stanford’s annual Deans’ Award. She was elected to Phi Beta Kappa as a junior, and her senior honors thesis examines Kant’s representation of infinity. Maya created POLIS, a Stanford digital humanities website that correlates data sets to provide data visualization about ancient Greece and Rome, and has had her work published in an academic journal. She also developed computational techniques at the Brown Lab for finding ovarian cancer markers in genome sequencing data. Maya was the technology specialist at Horton’s Kids, a nonprofit serving the most at-risk children in Washington, DC, and received the annual DC-area Technology Innovation Award. She is interested in the philosophical issues raised by modern technology. Maya is also an oboist and music fan, loves art and drawing, and is a runner and a dedicated thrift-store clothing shopper.
Abishek Kulshreshtha

Brown University: ScB, Mathematical Physics, 2015

Proposed Oxford Course: Theoretical Physics, degree to be determined

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Career Aspirations
A career that combines physics, education, and policymaking.

Abishek K. Kulshreshtha is a senior at Brown University, where he majors in Physics. His research currently involves the classification of topological insulators, and he hopes to conduct more research as to their applications to quantum computation. Abi is president of Brown’s Model United Nations and co-founder of the Providence Public Schools Model United Nations. He is also a peer advisor, a pianist, a cyclist, and a teaching assistant and mentor in local schools. He has strong interests in improving educational opportunity and community health. Abi plans to study Theoretical Physics at Oxford.
Jane Darby Menton

Yale University: BA, History and Global Affairs, 2015

Oxford Course: MPhil, Modern Middle Eastern Studies, at St. Antony’s College

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Career Aspirations
Journalist/foreign correspondent

Jane Darby Menton is a senior at Yale University double majoring in History and Global Affairs. Jane Darby aspires to be a foreign correspondent and spent most of her college career reporting. She worked for the Yale Daily News and was elected managing editor her junior year, in which capacity she was responsible for all of the newspaper’s print content. During her tenure, the Yale Daily News won the highest national prizes for college newspapers. Jane Darby is interested in journalistic history and won a Thoroun Prize to research embedded journalism during the Iraq War. She wrote her History thesis on how John Hersey’s Hiroshima shaped American nuclear consciousness. Jane Darby was also a member of the Yale International Relations Association, where she organized international IR conferences and planned a student trip to Greece to study the country’s financial crisis. For her Global Affairs senior project, she worked for the National Counterterrorism Center studying the endurance of violent extremist organizations. Last summer, she interned for Anderson Cooper 360 at CNN, where she will return this summer. At Oxford, Jane Darby will pursue an MPhil in Modern Middle Eastern Studies with a language concentration in Arabic.
David Scott Moore

District XI

(Michigan)

University of Michigan: BS, Mechanical Engineering, 2014;
MS, Mechanical Engineering, 2015

Oxford Course: MSc, Environmental Change and Management

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Career Aspirations
Start or lead a company in tech product design that
aims to design and implement innovative
technology to solve some of the
world’s greatest problems

David S. Moore received his bachelor’s degree in Mechanical Engineering at the
University of Michigan in May 2014, and remained there for his master’s in Me-
chanical Engineering. He won the top award in Engineering in both his junior
and senior years. In his design and manufacturing work and courses, he has cre-
ated a mechanism that allows wheelchair users to more easily use a backpack and
has developed a new needle biopsy device. He was captain of the Michigan men’s
varsity swim team, which won the 2013 National Championship and four Big Ten
Championships. He was also the community service chair for the Student Athlete
Advisory Council and organized the swim team’s community service activities.
Kate Nussenbaum (Rhode Island)

Oxford Course: MSc by Research, Experimental Psychology, at New College

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Career Aspirations
Academia; cognitive neuroscience research

Kate Nussenbaum is a Brown University senior majoring in Cognitive Neuroscience as well as Science and Society. As a research assistant in Brown’s Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience Lab, she has focused much of her academic work on the interactions between attention and memory processes throughout development. She is particularly interested in how early environmental experiences impact learning trajectories, and she aspires to harness advances in neuroscience to develop interventions that boost learning and memory in at-risk groups. Kate also served as both a science editor and a senior editor of the Brown Daily Herald, a peer adviser, a teaching assistant, and a math tutor at a local high school. She enjoys thinking about science communication, education policy, bioethics, and popular culture.
Billy Rathje is a senior at the University of Puget Sound, where he double majors in Computer Science and English Literature. His interests extend across theater performance, poetry, musical performance and composition, the sciences, and applied science. He is a Goldwater Scholar and junior member of Phi Beta Kappa who has done research in proteomics, biochemistry, and computer science. Billy also cofounded a literary magazine for new plays and has developed four iPhone apps. He also composed a full-length musical that was performed by a professional cast in Portland as well as three ten-minute musicals. He is a contributing writer to USA Today College and has a peer-reviewed publication in computer science. Billy is presently developing curriculum materials for his university’s digital humanities program, contributing to a book chapter on computational methods for authorship identification, and editing the computational biology issue of a national computer science magazine. He has been recognized by the Computing Research Association, and he works as both a writing adviser and a computer science tutor. Billy will do the DPhil in Computer Science at Oxford.
Tayo Aliake Sanders II  
(Wisconsin)

University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire: BS, Materials Science, 2015  
Oxford Course: DPhil, Materials, at Corpus Christi College

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Career Aspirations  
Professor

Tayo A. Sanders II, Neenah, is a senior at the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire, where he majors in Materials Science. A Goldwater Scholar, he has done extensive research, with many publications and presentations, particularly in nanotechnology, and has presented at the spring meeting of the American Chemical Society, where he will present again in 2015. He has also done research in the nanomaterials lab at the University of Strasbourg in France. Tayo is a mentor and leader in the Wisconsin Alliance for Minority Participation, and does community outreach for STEM careers. He is also a triathlete and co-captain of a triathlon team. Tayo has been accepted to Corpus Christi College and admitted to the Materials department at Oxford where he will read for a DPhil. This fall, he will work with Professor Harish Bhaskaran on flexible electronics enabled by novel functional materials and new manufacturing techniques.
Aven Satre Meloy
(Montana)
Santa Clara University: BS, Political Science and Environmental Studies, 2013
Proposed Oxford Course: MSc, Environmental Change and Management

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Career Aspirations
Climate change mitigation and adaptation; sustainable development

Aven Satre Meloy graduated from Santa Clara University in 2013 with BS degrees in Political Science and Environmental Studies and a minor in International Studies. His academic interests focus on the social, political, and economic challenges posed by environmental change. He wrote his honors thesis on the natural history of Baja California Sur during two kayak expeditions there his junior and senior years. Aven won the graduation award for the top male graduate in academic performance, personal character, and leadership as well as the university’s award for outstanding work in applied ethics for developing Santa Clara’s first university-wide honor code. While at Santa Clara, he served as chief justice of the judicial branch of student government, worked at the Center for Sustainability, and led campus efforts to raise awareness about sexual violence. After graduating, he won a Fulbright Scholarship to Turkey, worked as a fellow for a clean-energy start-up in Oakland, and interned in the White House Office of Energy and Climate Change. Currently, Aven is on a temporary assignment in the Santa Clara University Office of the President.
Rachel Athena Skokowski (California [North])

Princeton University: AB, French and Art History, 2015

Oxford Course: MPhil, Modern Languages, at University College

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Career Aspirations
Museum curator, transforming museums into more innovative institutions in today’s world

Rachel Skokowski is a senior at Princeton University from Palo Alto, California, majoring in French and Art History with a certificate in Humanistic Studies. She has a deep commitment to making the arts more relevant and accessible in the modern world. Elected early to Phi Beta Kappa, she has explored interdisciplinary research across the humanities and has worked to forge strong connections between art museums and local communities, especially to expose underprivileged children to museums and the beauty of art. Rachel has interned at the Morgan Library and Museum, the Princeton Art Museum, and the Santa Fe Arts Commission, and she is a member of the Princeton Art Museum Student Advisory Board and a Behrman Undergraduate Fellow. She most recently organized an exhibition at Princeton of art made by children with developmental disabilities, called UnrulyArt: the Creativity of Exceptional Children. She is also a three-season (year-round) varsity cross country and varsity track athlete and hopes to continue competing while at Oxford.
Benjamin Sprung-Keyser (Massachusetts)

Harvard University: AB, Economics, 2015

Oxford Course: MPhil, Economics, at St. John’s College

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Career Aspirations
Economist working at the intersection of academia and public policy

Benjamin D. Sprung-Keyser is a senior at Harvard University concentrating in Economics and minor ing in Math. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa as a junior, and his primary interests lie in labor and public economics. He is research assistant to Professor Larry Summers and to Professor Jim Poterba, the president of the National Bureau of Economic Research. A longtime debater, he won the 2014 World Universities Debating Championship, and in 2013, he was the youngest national champion ever of the American Parliamentary Debate Association. He has used his debate experience to organize a program that teaches debate skills to disadvantaged students in Boston. (That program has been expanded to work with students in China.) He was also a 2012 winner of the Young Playwrights Inc. National Playwriting Competition.
Matthew Johnson Townsend  (Connecticut)

Yale University: BS, Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology, 2015

Oxford Course: MSc, Medical Anthropology, at Balliol College

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Career Aspirations
Academic medicine, focusing on obesity and obesity-related disease

Matthew J. Townsend is a senior at Yale University majoring in Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology. Elected as a junior to Phi Beta Kappa, Matt has complemented his work in medical sciences with deep interests in the psychology of health, the history of disease, and the social networks that affect health. He has a particular interest in the socio-cultural, environmental, and biological roots of obesity-related diseases, and has done research on the cellular mechanisms of obesity. A three-year starter on the Yale varsity basketball team, Matt was named the Capital One Academic All-American of the Year for Division I men’s basketball, a Senior CLASS Award candidate, and a finalist for the NCAA’s Walter Byers Scholarship. He has also served as a volunteer in several pediatric hospital departments and as co-coordinator of Yale’s food-rescue project, Bringing Relief Every Day. Before going to medical school, Matt plans to do the MSc in Medical Anthropology at Oxford.
Emily Elizabeth Witt

Stanford University: BA, Human Biology, 2015
Oxford Course: MSc, Neuroscience, at Magdalen College

District XIII

(Colorado)

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Career Aspirations
Physician-scientist

Emily is a Human Biology major, with honors, at Stanford University, minoring in Psychology. Her passion for neuroscience has led her to pursue a variety of research projects studying the immunomodulatory mechanisms of vitamin D in multiple sclerosis, the use of hyperscanning as a method to understand social cognition, and the potential of neurofeedback as a therapeutic intervention for autism. As a junior, Emily received the Kirsten Frohnmayer Research Prize, which honors students who exhibit “academic excellence, true altruism, and the potential to make a difference in society through research.” A passionate human-rights advocate, Emily is copresident of Stanford Amnesty International and has worked throughout her college career to promote equitable health-care provision in resource-limited communities in Central America. She spent this past summer in rural Guatemala, investigating the social determinants of chronic malnutrition as a Stanford Global Student Fellow. In her free time, she volunteers as a Spanish interpreter for a free health clinic in Northern California, serves as a student advisor for her major department, and enjoys cycling, running, and kayaking.
Sarah Elaine Yerima  (California [South])

Princeton University: AB, Sociology, 2015
Oxford Course: MPhil, Politics (Comparative Government), at New College

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Career Aspirations
Enroll in a JD/PhD program and become a legal historian

Sarah E. Yerima is a senior at Princeton University, where she concentrates in Sociology. She is also earning certificates in American Studies and African American Studies. Her academic interests include critical race theory, American legal history, and black diaspora feminism and writing. Her senior thesis, “Myopic Justice: A Brief Intellectual History of Colorblind Law and Justice, 1880–1896,” explores the complicated origins of colorblindness as a constitutional principle in American jurisprudence. At Princeton, Sarah has served Rockefeller Residential College as a peer academic adviser and tutor as well as a residential college advisor. She is also a member of the Behrman Undergraduate Society of Fellows and the Princeton Women’s Mentorship Program. She spent a semester abroad at Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where she studied the role of social, economic, and political factors in the emergence and transformation of Rio as a modern city. She will pursue an MPhil in Politics (Comparative Government) at Oxford, where she plans to engage in comparative research on the racialized elements of policing policies in the United States and the UK.
District III

Gabriel Zucker

(Yale University: Music (Intensive) and Ethics, Politics & Economics, 2012
Oxford Course: MSc, Applied Statistics

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Career Aspirations
Social policy, in some capacity

Gabriel M. Zucker, Brooklyn, graduated from Yale in 2012 summa cum laude with majors in Ethics, Politics and Economics and in Music. He won many major awards for character and service as well as for scholarship. After Yale, he worked at the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty “Action Lab,” conducting fieldwork in Pakistan and Indonesia. For the past two years, he has been associate director of the Connecticut Heroes Project, a campaign to end veteran homelessness in Connecticut. He had run Yale’s Hunger and Homelessness Action Project as an undergraduate. Gabriel is also a highly accomplished musician and composer. He is a professional pianist, bandleader, singer-songwriter, and producer. He played the piano at Carnegie Hall, and a work he composed for symphony orchestra and big band premiered at Carnegie Hall in 2012.
The Sailing “Bon Voyage” Weekend, September 27 – 30, 2014

IN THE spirit of continuing innovation and building on past success, AARS slightly downscaled its 2014 Bon Voyage Weekend—the orientation and sendoff for Scholars on their way to Oxford—from four and a half days to three and a half. There were other changes as well. Instead of inviting Rhodes Scholar alumni to meet Scholars-elect at a Wednesday Sendoff Luncheon, an event that some employed Scholars find difficult to attend, the BVW Committee began the festivities with a Welcome Reception and Dinner on Saturday night. Scholars-elect from the United States, Bermuda, the Caribbean, and Jamaica met and mingled with Rhodes Scholar alumni and guests in the Mayflower Renaissance Hotel in Washington, DC. The new schedule worked: there were 168 attendees, and 138 stayed for dinner—significantly more than have attended recent luncheons. In fact, the reception was so well attended and the conversations so lively that the AARS Quadrennial Meeting, which the Board had scheduled to take place early on in the reception, was all but inaudible. (That part of the program will be revised in future.)

At dinner in the Mayflower, Sir Peter Westmacott, KCMG, LVO, British Ambassador to the United States, gave the Scholars-elect a gracious early welcome to the United Kingdom. The keynote speaker was Lieutenant General Michelle D. Johnson (Iowa and Brasenose ’81), Superintendent of the US Air Force Academy. (“Superin-
tendent,” she explained, is the title appropriate to the head of a college that is also a military institution; she is both president and commander.) Johnson delivered an inspirational talk on leadership, responsibilities, and the path she herself has taken.

The next day began with the traditional Women’s Breakfast, in which alumnae and Scholars-elect discussed issues including the treatment of women in Oxford, career strategy, and balancing career and family. After seminars on “Happiness and Purpose” and “Leadership and Power,” led by George R. Keys (Maryland/DC and Balliol ’70) and Neil R. Brown (Iowa and Merton 2002), as well as lunch with the AARS Board of Directors, the Scholars-elect participated in a conversation with *New York Times* columnist Nick Kristof (Oregon and Magdalen ’81). The day ended with small-group dinners hosted by local Scholar alumni.

On Monday morning, the Scholars-elect heard a panel discussion on “Fighting the World’s Fight” that included Scholar alumni with connections to the World Bank, the NAACP, and the Mandela Rhodes Foundation. In the afternoon, before a seminar on “Fighting the World’s Fight,” they toured the State Department and met with Scholar alumni in the federal government. The day ended with a conversation with Elliot Gerson (Connecticut and Magdalen ’74), American Secretary of the Rhodes Trust, and a dinner he hosted with his wife, Dr. Jessica Herzstein.
The final events—the traditional Capitol Hill brunch and visit—took place on Tuesday, with retired Senator Paul Sarbanes (Maryland and Balliol ’54) conducting one of his legendary Capitol tours.

The 2014 Bon Voyage Weekend Committee was led by Neil Brown, Emelia Probasco (Maryland/DC and Wolfson 2002), and Noorain Khan (Michigan and St. Antony’s 2006). Thanks are due to all BVW Committee members, to those who hosted various events, to the small-group dinner hosts, and to Rhodes alumni participants and guests—all of whom helped to extend the AARS’s welcome to the new class of Scholars.

This year’s Sailing Weekend is scheduled for September 24–27, 2015, again in Washington, DC. The Sailing Weekend and the Welcome Reception and Dinner are sponsored by the AARS and are supported entirely by the contributions of its members.

At Elliot Gerson’s house
From the American Secretary

It is a great pleasure to introduce the United States Rhodes Scholar class of 2015. They were elected last November from 16 districts across the country—all with similarly sized pools of students (averaging about 60)—following rigorous endorsement reviews by 305 colleges and universities. A number close to twice that size sought but did not obtain their institution’s endorsements. This year’s class will do at least 23 different degrees and, as I write this, are spread among 10 colleges at Oxford, with two Scholars still to confirm their degree and 11 awaiting college placement. Like all the classes before them, they combine outstanding academic ability with character, publicly directed ambitions, and capacity for leadership. They will enrich Oxford as surely as they will the many communities they will contribute to thereafter.

I am often asked by older Rhodes Scholars how Oxford has changed since their time there, or how the Scholarship experience has changed. The largest difference in the Oxford experience this new class will have—compared with all but the five or six immediately before it—relates to the central roles now played by Rhodes House. And those roles expand and deepen each year. Rhodes House has become a social and intellectual hub, complementing the rich experiences of college, department, community, university, team, musical group, club, and political or social or interest association. It has added in the last year specially designed seminars for Rhodes Scholars, relating to leadership and values and to questions of career, service, and personal fulfillment. I have been privileged to participate in some, and can attest to the richness of the discussions—and to some regret that we didn’t have similar opportunities in our days. And Rhodes House will increasingly become a leading convener of world leaders from all spheres, benefitting Rhodes Scholars in residence of course, but also the wider university.

Another difference relates to the self-identity of Rhodes Scholar cohorts. During our tenures at Oxford, for the most part, we thought of ourselves as American Rhodes Scholars first—and probably many of us didn’t get much further than that, other than perhaps to include the Rhodes Scholars from other countries who might have shared our Middle Common Rooms. While there is no risk that national (or even regional) identity will vanish, the Rhodes community now sees itself as global first. And strikingly that identity is assumed now even before matriculation. Each year, I urge members of the new class of American Rhodes Scholars to create a listserv or Facebook page or similar, so they can begin to get to know each other before their “sailing” weekend and Oxford orientation. This year—without my suggestion—
this class established such a group but defined it globally and not nationally. So as they learn about their department and college admissions, they share their news not just with their US classmates but with those from other Rhodes constituencies as well.

Let me add a few words about that admissions process. I have mentioned this in this annual letter before, but the days are long past of near-certain admission for Rhodes Scholars to their choice of one of a relatively small number of courses. In my day, the choice for most of us was among four or five BA courses (with senior status, so it was possible to complete them in two years) and a half dozen or so taught two-year masters degrees (then called BPhils, and now, except in philosophy, called MPhils). Today, the choice of taught degree courses is exponentially broader, with many being one-year master’s courses (MSc or MStud), which increase in number and variety each year. (Rhodes Scholars who do them are strongly encouraged to continue to another one-year course in their second year, or progress to a doctorate—and we are pleased that extremely few leave Oxford after just one year.) And more go straight to DPhils than they did in decades past.

But with many of these new options comes much greater difficulty of admission. Most of these courses are limited to a small number of students, and demand from outstanding students worldwide is intense. As many do not get admitted to their first-choice degree, we advise most Rhodes Scholars-elect to prepare back-up applications for their second- and even third-choice course options. Given the breadth of most Scholars’ interests, and the relative luxury afforded by US higher education, which almost uniquely postpones most specialization until graduate school, this situation leads to little if any unhappiness.

A final and obvious difference, and one made more important by the global self-identity of Scholars today, is that these US Scholars will join fellow Scholars from a wider range of countries and regions. In their first year, this class will be joined by students graduating from United Arab Emirates universities—students who may come from any country of the world—and, in their second year, they will be joined by the first Rhodes Scholars from China. Other countries will follow as our global footprint grows.

Elliot F. Gerson
(Connecticut and Magdalen ’74)
American Secretary to the Rhodes Trust
The Rhodes Scholarships were established in 1902 by the Will of Cecil Rhodes, the British philanthropist and colonial pioneer. Rhodes hoped that the Scholarships might improve “the lot of humankind through the diffusion of leaders motivated to serve their contemporaries, trained in the contemplative life of the mind, and broadened by their acquaintance with one another and by their exposure to cultures different from their own.” Rhodes intended that his plan of bringing able students from throughout the English-speaking world and beyond to study at Oxford University would “aid in the promotion of international understanding and peace.” (See further Oxford and The Rhodes Scholarships.) Each year, 32 Americans are among approximately 80 Rhodes Scholars selected world-wide to take up degree courses at Oxford.

Cecil Rhodes wrote that Rhodes Scholars should “esteem the performance of public duties as their highest aim” and outlined four criteria of selection: 1) literary and scholastic attainments; 2) fondness for and success in sports; 3) truth, courage, devotion to duty, sympathy for and protection of the weak, kindliness, unselfishness, and fellowship; and 4) moral force of character and instincts to lead, and to take an interest in one’s fellow beings.

Interested applicants are encouraged to consult the fellowship office of their own college or university, or the American Secretary of the Rhodes Scholarship Trust: Elliot F. Gerson, 8229 Boone Blvd., Suite 240, Vienna, VA 22182. Phone: (703) 821-5960. Fax: (703) 821-2770. E-mail: amsec@rhodesscholar.org. Or visit the web site at: www.rhodesscholar.org.

About the Association of American Rhodes Scholars

The mission of the AARS is to bring Rhodes Scholars in the U.S. together in support of the Rhodes Scholarship and Oxford University through events, publications, networks, and the web. We provide the social, intellectual and professional outreach to reflect on our shared experiences and extend our current opportunities. We promote exchange and goodwill among the peoples of the diverse countries from which Rhodes Scholars and other Oxonians are drawn.

AARS plans and supports several activities including national and class reunions, regional events, and the Bon Voyage Weekend/Orientation for new Scholars. The Association publishes an annual newsletter, The American Rhodes Scholar, as well as the quarterly journal, The American Oxonian, which includes articles, book reviews, class letters and the annual Address and Occupations List of American Rhodes Scholars and other Oxonians. It also hosts the website www.americanrhodes.org. It administers the Eastman Professorship Trust and the American Trust for Oxford (ATFO). AARS members pay modest dues annually; many members also make generous additional donations. AARS does not receive funding from the Rhodes Trust nor does it have responsibility for the Rhodes Scholar selection process in the U.S.

For membership and further information, contact Nicholas W. Allard, AARS Secretary, c/o AARS, 8229 Boone Blvd., Suite 240, Vienna, VA 22182. Or visit the AARS link on the internet from: www.rhodesscholar.org or directly at: www.americanrhodes.org.