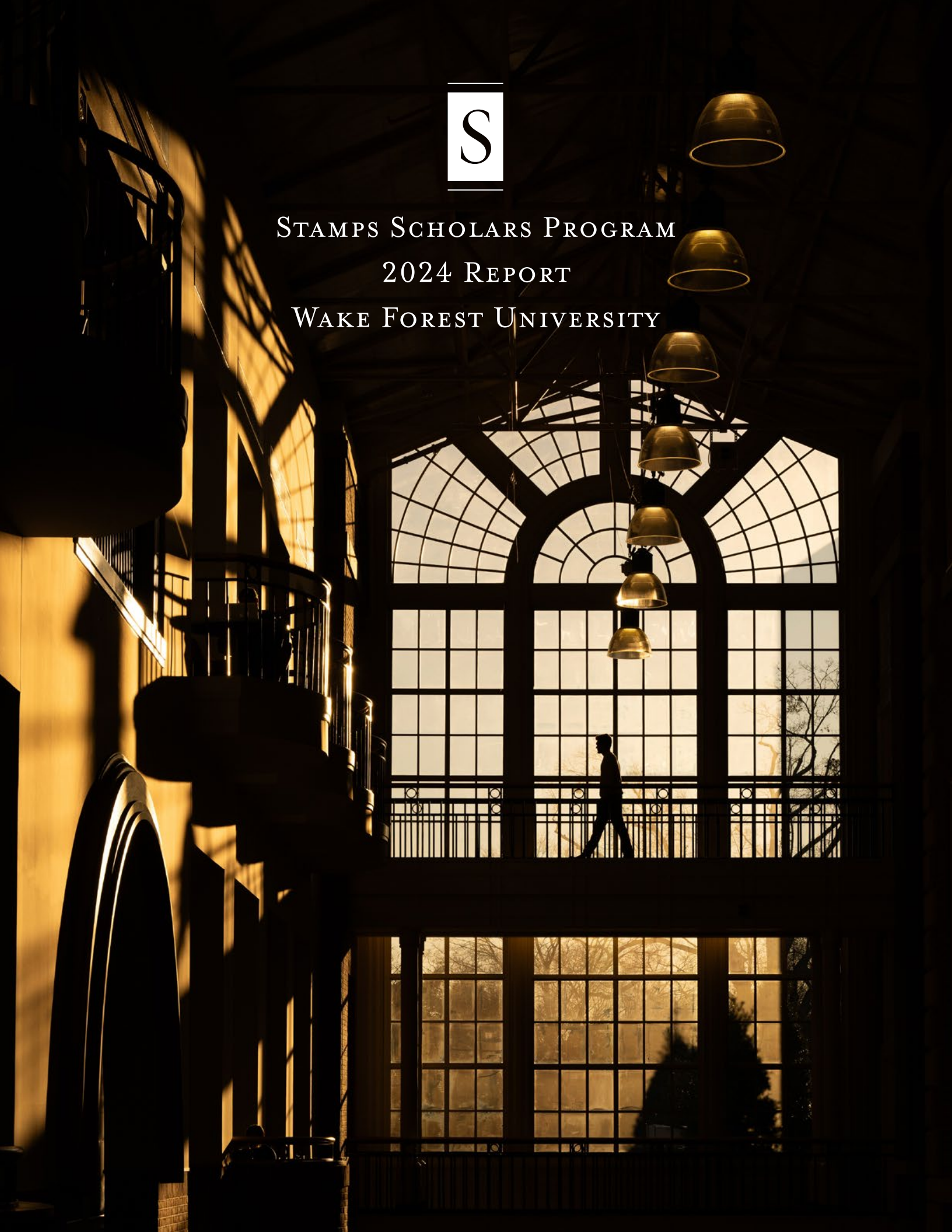




STAMPS SCHOLARS PROGRAM  
2024 REPORT  
WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY



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# Dear Stamps Scholars program,

In the pages that follow, you will find snapshots of our Stamps Scholars at Wake Forest University. They long have been natural learners in and out of the classroom. Our shared mission, thanks to the vision of Mr. and Mrs. Stamps, is that they become lifelong leaders, contributing to the world around them in big and small ways. Together we are incubating them, and know that the snapshots we provide here are but illuminating glimpses of the impactful adults they will eventually become.

Additionally, we are able to share some exciting seeds that we hope will help our Stamps Scholars Program evolve in the coming years. This ritual of pausing, taking inventory of our actions and plans, and communicating those to you is critical for the continued health of our program and helps us contextualize what progress we have made over time. There are obvious updates we have included, such as our expansion of the program to include excellent students of any academic class year, such as Roksanna Keyvan ('26), and the recognition Cassi Hung ('26) has earned as a Goldwater Scholar. And then there are subtle successes or changes that we can at times be too close to see — until we step back to see the trends in our work.

We value your engaged commitment to this program and the relationships that we all enjoy — among students, Wake Forest, other universities, and your team — that animate this work. We are committed to nurturing that sense of connection as we move forward together.



JACKIE SHERIDAN

*Director of the Wake Forest Scholars Program*

Our motto, *Pro Humanitate* (For Humanity), is the driving force for all we do at Wake Forest University. The campus ethos this creates is a perfect fit for the Stamps Scholars ideals — excellence for the benefit of neighbors and the world at large, not just oneself. We talk a lot about our motto because we have seen that it is a helpful sorting mechanism to identify students who want to grow holistically.

When we pair students who feel they were made for more with our programmatic support, we begin to see the Scholars succeed in new and exciting ways. During their four years at Wake Forest, we carefully nurture and challenge them, believing that this combination yields great fruit. This may take the form of additional external accomplishments, such as an additional major or minor, or it may be more private at first, such as improved financial or emotional wellbeing that will positively impact lifelong decisions.

As we look toward the next year, these are strategic opportunities about which we are energized:

- We look forward to receiving and analyzing additional applications for walk-on additions to the Stamps Scholars family. As we do so, we aim to formalize the process by which these students are integrated into our Stamps cohort communities.
- A tailored program for first-year Scholars will add a required workshop to orient students to Summer enrichment opportunities. This will occur in November after they have taken a walking field trip together to our Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URECA) Center in September and a Summer Scholarship Showcase in October.
- Opportunities are emerging from our work with Professors Ciaran Evans and Nicole Dalzell, who organize and lead Wake Forest's annual Data Fest in March and April. We are exploring how to invite Stamps Scholars from other campuses to join our Scholars' team.

It is built into our DNA to continually assess how we can improve and grow our support of students. One area we would like to grow in is engaging Stamps Scholar alumni and inviting them to invest in our current Stamps Scholars, as appropriate. As all universities do, Wake Forest University tracks alumni, but we desire a level of detail that is not easily attainable without relational investment in the work. We would enjoy learning the best practices you are seeing. We also hope to explore opportunities to collaborate with others who are seeking to build organizational and programmatic systems for alumni.

# The Wake Forest Stamps Scholars

Program is currently supported by one Associate Dean of Admissions (Paul Gauthier), one Director of the Scholars Program (Jackie Sheridan), and one Scholars Program Specialist (Acacia Fike-Nelson) who supports a number of programs.

In acknowledgement of the significant time and effort that it takes to support our Stamps Scholars to their full potential before and after their arrival on campus, the Dean of the College approved an additional role for our team, an Assistant Director. This position will focus considerable energies on assisting students with post-graduation plans and is filled as of July 2024. This position will also allow Director Jackie Sheridan to better support the Stamps Scholars cohort.

This team has worked to establish traditions unique to Stamps Scholars, and to leverage existing Wake Forest traditions to better serve our Scholars. In recent years we have launched Stamps-specific traditions that include dining with University leadership, traveling to retreats with Stamps Scholars from other campuses, and a Letter-Sealing Ceremony that provides bookend events during matriculation and graduation. Additional information about activities designed to create community among Scholars is detailed in the Orientation/On-boarding section. Our Scholars are also involved in events and traditions open to all students, such as Lovefeast, tea breaks, museum visits to Reynolda House, and Rolling the Quad for athletic and non-athletic victories (such as debate team championships).

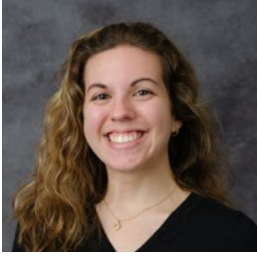
Stamps Scholars are also known across campus for perennially filling vital student leadership roles within student or University governance; during AY 2023-24, Ritt Culbreth served as the student member of Wake Forest's Board of Trustees. While many universities appoint a student trustee, our process at Wake Forest is intentionally empowering as the student holds a voting position that sees all the ins and outs of university/organizational governance. These positions and other successes (shared in greater detail in the Activities section) gave Scholars scaffolded experience in taking initiative, event planning, and leadership.



Stamps Scholar Tahjane Givens ('24) studies for finals in the atrium of the library.



## Class of 2024

**LEANNA BERNISH**

MAJOR: Psychology

MINOR: Health & Human Services

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Advocated Reform for Correctional Clients, Alpha Phi Omega, Anthony Aston Players of Theatre Arts, Campus Kitchen, Club Climbing, Intersectional Feminist Collective, Leadership and Character Program, Outdoor Pursuits, Psychology Club, Wake Radio

**JAE CANETTI**

MAJOR: Applied Mathematics

MINORS: Computer Science and Environmental Studies

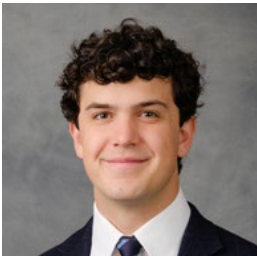
SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Association of Computing Machinery Student Chapter, Leadership and Character Program, Momentum Crew, Screamin' Deacons, Study Abroad: Venice, Study Abroad: Copenhagen, Wake Forest Baseball Analytics, WakerSpace, World Tea Association

**MICAELA CIAMBRONE**

MAJOR: Psychology

MINOR: Health & Human Services

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Delta Zeta, Psychology Club, Research Assistant at Growth Initiative Lab, Student Union

**WILLIAM "RITT" CULBRETH**

MAJORS: Philosophy and Politics & International Affairs

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Leadership and Character Program, Mock Trial Team, Research Assistant, President's Aide, Principled Pluralism Fellowship, Student Marshal, Student Trustee, Theta Chi

**ABIGAIL FISTER**

MAJOR: Health & Exercise Science

MINORS: Neuroscience and Chemistry

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Alpha Delta Pi, Alpha Epsilon Delta Premedical Honor Society, Alpha Phi Omega, Athenas Lifting Club, Best Buddies, Campus Kitchen, CHARGE! Wake Forest Emerging Leaders, Club Ballroom Dance, Club Running, Club Snow Ski, Health Occupation Students of America, Momentum Dance Crew, Neuroscience Club, Outdoor Pursuits, Project Launch, Student Union Member, Wake Academy, Wake Adventure Club, Women in STEM, Woof Forest

## Class of 2024 (CONTINUED)



### EMILY FOLEY

MAJORS: Mathematics and Physics

MINOR: Studio Art

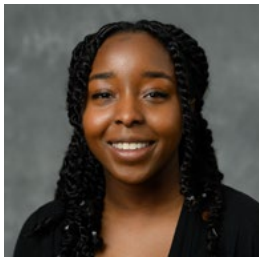
SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Braswell Philosophy Academy, Catholic Campus Ministry, Leadership and Character Program



### ANA GARCIA-VELEZ

MAJORS: Economics and Politics & International Affairs

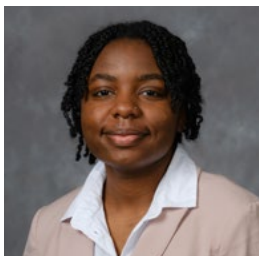
SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Chi Omega, Deacs Decide, Dean's Student Advisory Panel, Intercultural Center Ambassador, Leadership and Character Program, President's Aide



### TAHJANEE GIVENS

MAJORS: Psychology and Politics & International Affairs

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Alpha Phi Omega, American Sign Language Club, Black Student Alliance, Club Rowing, Delta Phi Alpha National German Honor Society, Delta Xi Phi Multicultural Sorority, President's Aide, Study Abroad: Vienna



### MACKENZIE JACKSON

MAJORS: African American Studies and English

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: African and Caribbean Students Association, Alpha Phi Omega, Black Student Alliance, Campus Kitchen, Library Student Worker, Phi Alpha Delta, President's Aide, Service & Social Action Community Involvement, Student Marshal



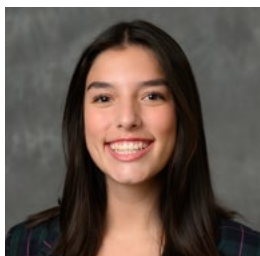
### CATHERINE "CATE" PITTLERLE

MAJOR: Politics & International Affairs

MINORS: History and Russian

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Alexander Hamilton Society, Catholic Community, Club Archery, Club Sport Union, Club Women's Golf, Delta Zeta, Leadership and Character Program, Old Gold & Black, Pi Sigma Alpha Honor Society, Student Government Association, White House Intern, Women in Politics

## Class of 2024 (CONTINUED)

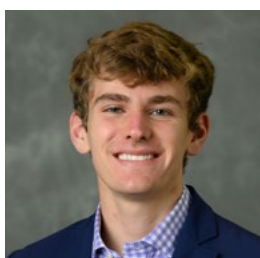


### SOFIA RAMIREZ PEDROZA

MAJOR: Economics

MINORS: Communications and Entrepreneurship

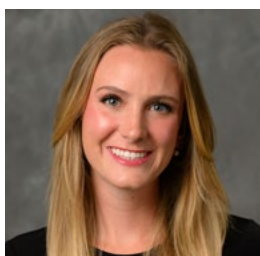
SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Kappa Beta Gamma, Leadership and Character Program, Organization of Latin American Students, Research Assistant in Economics, Women in Economics, Intern at Miami Heat



### MICHAEL "RUCKER" ROBINSON

MAJORS: Biochemistry & Molecular Biology and Spanish

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Club Climbing, Club Swimming, Leadership and Character Program, Young Life College



### CAROLINE SEARCY

MAJOR: English

MINORS: Politics & International Affairs and Sociology

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Club Swimming, Intersectional Feminist Collective, Student Marshal, MeloDeacs, President's Aide, Kappa Delta



### SIDDARTH "SID" SUBRAMANIAN

MAJORS: Biochemistry & Molecular Biology and Spanish

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Alpha Phi Omega, American Chemical Society, Best Buddies, Bioethics Club, Campus Kitchen, CHARGE! Wake Forest Emerging Leaders, E-Sports Association, Habitat for Humanity, Health Occupation Students of America, Hydrating Humanity, Leadership and Character Program, MEDLIFE (Medicine, Education & Development for Low-Income Families Everywhere), Minority Association for Pre-Health Students, Mock Trial, Muslim Students Association, Neuroscience Club, Psychology Club, Red Cross Club, South Asian Student Association, Students Helping Honduras, Volunteer Service Corps, Wake Academy



### NIA THOMPSON

MAJORS: French Studies and Sociology

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Advocating Reform for Correctional Clients, African and Caribbean Students Association, Black Student Alliance, Club Softball, French Club, International Justice Mission, Resident Advisor, Women's Center LEAVE (Leaders who Educate, Advocate, and lift Voices for gender Equity)

## Class of 2024 (CONTINUED)



**JOHN "JOHN HEWLETT" WEST**

MAJOR: Biochemistry & Molecular Biology

MINOR: Creative Writing

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Presidential Aide, Lambda Chi Alpha, Research Assistant, Student EMS



**NICHOLAS "NICK" ZUGA**

MAJOR: Economics

MINOR: Global Trade & Commerce Studies

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Club Water Polo, Philomathean Literary Society (Treasurer), Presidential Scholar, Research Analyst in Economics, Teaching Assistant in Economics, Theta Chi

## Class of 2025



**AIDAN NORRIS**

MAJORS: Engineering and Physics

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Athletics Waste Reduction and Diversion Intern, Club Men's Ultimate Frisbee, Club Men's Volleyball, Leadership and Character Program, Project Launch, Sustainability Leadership Group, The Globe (Wake International Student Association)



**AMANDA PEAKE**

MAJORS: Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies and Physics

MINOR: Mathematics

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Society of Physics Students, LGBTQ+ Center Change Agent, STEM mentor, CAIR (Wake Forest Collegiate Association for Inequality Research)



**ADDISON SCHMIDT**

MAJORS: Environmental Science and History

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Alpha Pi Omega, Climbing Club, Culturality Club, Environmental Editor at the Old Gold & Black



# Class of 2026



**KATRINA HU**

MAJORS: Classical Studies and Medicinal Chemistry

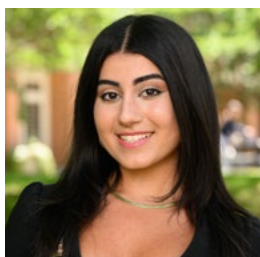
SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Campus Kitchen, Arts for Life, Student Art Exhibitions



**CASSANDRA "CASSI" HUNG**

MAJORS: Applied Mathematics and Statistics

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Association of Computing Machinery Student Chapter, Association for Women in Mathematics, Club Tennis, Fiber Arts Club, Intramural Pickleball, Women in Computer Science, World Tea Association



**ROKSANNA KEYVAN**

MAJOR: Environmental & Social Justice

MINORS: Art History, Environmental Studies, and Philosophy

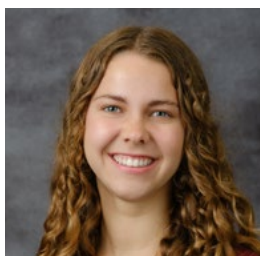
SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Old Gold & Black, ClimaVengers, WakeCycle, Student Art-Buying Trip, Office of Sustainability intern



**LYDIA GRACE LOGAN**

MAJOR: Biochemistry & Molecular Biology

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Dance Company, Alpha Delta Pi, Leadership and Character Program



**ELODIE WARDLE**

MAJORS: Medicinal Chemistry and Spanish

MINOR: Biology

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Alpha Delta Pi, Outdoor Pursuits, Wake Forest EMS, Wilderness to Wake Pre-Orientation



**AMAYA WILLIAMS**

MAJOR: Biochemistry & Molecular Biology

MINOR: Bioethics, Humanities, & Medicine

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Black Student Alliance, Leadership and Character Program, Model UN, Philosophy Club, Student Government, Student Budget Advisory Committee, Wake Academy, Women in STEM, Women in Weightlifting

## Class of 2026 (CONTINUED)

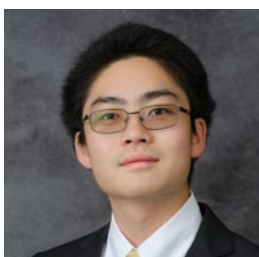


EMILY XIAO

MAJOR: Biophysics

MINOR: English

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Alpha Delta Pi, Club Rowing

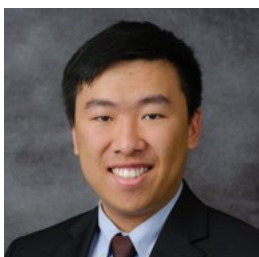


JASON ZHANG

MAJOR: Computer Science

MINORS: Biology, Chemistry, and Music

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: French Club, Leadership and Character Program, Research Assistant, Songbird, World Tea Association



SCOTT ZHAO

MAJORS: Mathematics and Applied Statistics

MINOR: Computer Science

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Club Badminton, Club Tennis, Intramural Table Tennis, World Tea Association

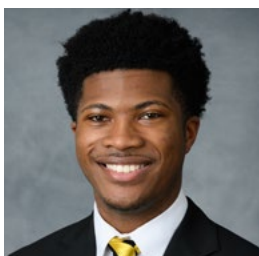
## Class of 2027



HUNNIYA AHMAD

MAJOR: Sociology

SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Ultimate Frisbee, Model UN, Wake Radio, Alpha Delta Pi, Old Gold & Black, Forsyth County Democratic Party Cabinet

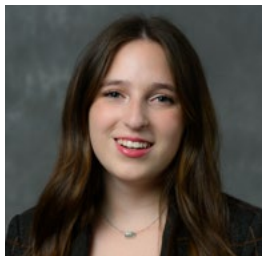


ZINN AMOS

MAJORS: African American Studies and Biochemistry & Molecular Biology

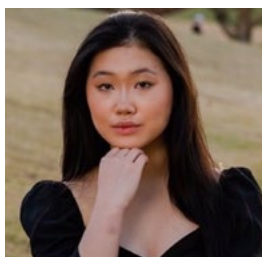
SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Leadership and Character Program, Black Student Alliance, Club Basketball, Alpha Phi Alpha

## Class of 2027 (CONTINUED)



**JULIA FORINGER**

MAJOR: Biochemistry & Molecular Biology  
SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Delta Zeta



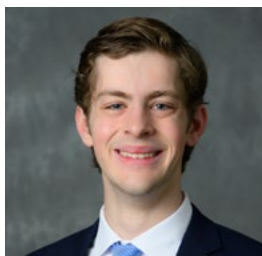
**MICHELLE GONG**

MAJOR: Politics & International Affairs  
SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Delta Zeta



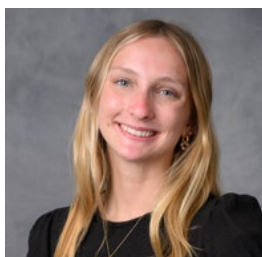
**DAKSH GOYAL**

MAJOR: Economics  
SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Mock Trial, Quiz Bowl, College Fed Challenge



**BENNETT HAARA**

MAJOR: Undeclared  
SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Leadership and Character Program, Theatre



**EDITH "EDY" MACKENZIE**

MAJOR: Physics  
SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Club Soccer, Kappa Delta, Society of Physics, Campus tour guide



**KALINA NAMIKAS**

MAJOR: Biochemistry & Molecular Biology  
SELECT EXTRACURRICULARS: Leadership and Character Program, Ultimate Frisbee

Wake Forest's admissions cycle this year was highlighted by our initiative that allowed students who would be first-generation college students to apply through a newly created Early Action round. This initiative generated excitement and helped us receive a record number of applications. From this record applicant pool, we nominated 20 students for the Stamps Scholarship with the goal of enrolling 10 new Stamps Scholars in Fall 2024.

At the same time, as we enjoyed receiving a record number of applications, Wake Forest also faced the challenge of dropping 18 places on the US News and World Report's Best National Universities list. This drop in ranking may have made recruiting the top applicants nationwide to Wake Forest more difficult, and our overall yield for Stamps Scholars dropped to 25% this year. Although our yield was lower than most years, we are excited to welcome five new Stamps Scholars to our campus because of the intellect and leadership that they will bring. As in previous years, the students who declined our Stamps Scholarship offer had incredibly strong options. Over half of the 15 students who declined our offer enrolled at schools in the Ivy League (3-Harvard, 2-Brown, 1-Yale, Penn, and Dartmouth). Four remaining students enrolled at peer institutions under similar scholarship programs (Morehead-Cain at UNC, Jefferson at UVA, Stamps at Georgia Tech, and a "comparable scholarship" at Washington University in St. Louis). The final three students enrolled at Johns Hopkins, Sewanee, and the University of Rochester (in an early medical scholar program).

We used the Admissions application as our merit-based application and asked that students who wished to be considered for the Stamps Scholarship apply by Nov. 15 (one and a half months before our regular decision deadline). Our Admissions application remains unusual because it contains a supplement that asks thought-provoking questions (such as "Discuss the work of fiction you have read which has helped you most to understand the complexity of the world"). We also provide students the opportunity to request either an optional Admissions interview or submit a video responding to an intriguing prompt. These supplements allow us to learn more about the applicants than a standard application. This year, 35 scholarship finalists either interviewed with the Admissions Office or submitted a video before being selected as a finalist, reinforcing our belief that these are helpful tools.

Overall, Wake Forest received 18,727 applications for admission in the 2023-24 academic cycle. That represented a 7% increase from our previous cycle and was partly boosted by our new Early Action cycle for first-generation college students. We continue using a holistic review process to select the 48 finalists we interviewed over our two scholarship weekends. Although finalists can impress us in various ways, we always expect our Stamps finalists to be among the best students at their schools, and we primarily measure their academic ability through their strength of curriculum and their class rank. Those students selected as



Stamps finalists also stand out because they excel at their extracurricular activities, embody our *Pro Humanitate* motto, and make a difference at their school or in their community.

Of the 48 finalists interviewed during our scholarship weekends, we nominated 20 students for the Stamps Scholarship. All 20 of those nominees were approved by the Stamps Scholarship Program, leading to the five enrolled as new Stamps Scholars.

To interview, evaluate, and select our Stamps nominees, we used two separate scholarship committees, a combination of Wake Forest faculty, administrators, and alumni. This year, the committees included:

**SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE FOR  
FEBRUARY 15-17, 2024:**

Dawn Calhoun ('99, MA '07), *Senior Associate Dean of Admissions*  
 Susan Fahrback, *Reynolds Professor of Developmental Neuroscience*  
 Nate French ('93, P '23, P '24), *Director of Magnolia Scholars*  
 Jason Parsley, *Associate Professor of Mathematics*  
 Tom Phillips ('74, MA '78), *Associate Dean of College and Director of Wake Forest Scholars, Emeritus*  
 Evan Raleigh ('09, MSM '10), *Assistant City Manager of Raleigh, NC*  
 Jackie Sheridan, *Director of Wake Forest Scholars*

**SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE FOR  
FEBRUARY 22-24, 2024:**

Grey Ballard ('06, MA '08), *Associate Professor of Computer Science*  
 Stan Meiburg, *Director, Graduate Programs of Sustainability and North Carolina State Chair of Environmental Management Commission*  
 Tom Phillips ('74, MA '78), *Associate Dean of College and Director of Wake Forest Scholars, Emeritus*  
 Zahir Rahman ('10), *Vice President, Associate General Counsel, Las Vegas Raiders*  
 Jackie Sheridan, *Director of Wake Forest Scholars*  
 Karen Vargas, *Dean of Admissions*

Each finalist had one 30-minute interview with three to four scholarship committee members.

We will continue to follow a similar selection process next year by holding two scholarship weekends and selecting our Stamps Nominees from students who interview during one of those weekends. We currently plan to nominate up to 25 students for the Stamps Scholarships in order to yield approximately 10 students.

We did not place any students on a waitlist this year, but we will consider using one in future years if we are confident that our finalist pool contains original non-recipients who are still of a strong enough quality to merit being named a Stamps Scholar.

STAMPS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Year	Total Applications	Scholarship Weekend Interviews	Offers	Final Enrollments
2013-14	11,121	22	7	4
2014-15	11,119	23	8	4
2015-16	13,281	24	9	1
2016-17	14,006	24	11	5
2017-18	13,071	42	14	8
2018-19	12,902	47	18	12
2019-20	12,553	54	18	10
2020-21	11,949	51	22	18
2021-22	15,140	48	18	3
2022-23	17,995	49	22	8
2023-24	17,746	52	25	8
2024-25	18,727	48	20	5

**Our recruitment** of Stamps Scholars begins even before the interview process. Each finalist was paired with a current scholarship recipient who contacted the student via Zoom, FaceTime, or phone for an individual or group discussion.

Beyond the actual interview, each finalist also attended a two-afternoon online orientation program that included discussions with current scholarship students (moderated by Jackie Sheridan), a presentation by a representative from our Global Programs and Studies office, and a session with our Leadership and Character Program.

After the Stamps Scholarship program selected and approved scholars, we allowed those students to visit our campus and stay in the residence halls with a current Signature Scholar before our April 5 Campus Day for admitted students.

Beyond hosting many of the Stamps Scholarship recipients on campus, Wake Forest also continued to recruit Stamps Scholars through various forms of contact, including phone calls, e-mail, and standard U.S. mail. Stamps Scholars all have and will continue to receive contact from Associate Dean of Admission Paul Gauthier and other committee members and Scholars on campus.

Although finalists were not required to visit our campus in the 2023-24 cycle, we encouraged each recipient to spend an evening overnight in our residence halls before our April 5 Campus Day. We offered two round-trip plane tickets to each recipient and provided them with social and dining opportunities with the current Scholars on the evening before Campus Day.

We were thrilled that we could host these finalists on our campus, and we believe that we can further enhance their experience by offering the students the opportunity to attend Wake Forest classes next year.

Newly admitted students and their families tour the Reynolda Campus on Campus Day in spring 2024.



**Communications** with incoming Stamps Scholars begin during the Spring before they arrive in Winston-Salem. After Scholars have enrolled at Wake Forest, we begin the process of welcoming them into the Scholars family.

They are put in touch with the current group of Scholars through the sharing of email addresses and cell phone numbers, and with the intentional addition by upperclass Scholars to various group communication threads. They also are highlighted on our website with information about their interests and intended involvement on campus.

Prior to arrival, incoming Scholars will be paired with at least one other Scholar mentor who serves as a connector between older and younger Stamps Scholars. They meet virtually before arriving on campus, and then in person during the first few weeks of campus. In those first few weeks, the Scholars will also participate in a series of events designed to introduce them to ever-widening circles of community on campus:

1. **First-Year Scholars Dinner and Letter-Sealing Activity:** The first-years will join Scholars Program staff for a casual dinner and a tour of the spaces to which they have after-hours access: the Scholars Office and the Barefield Lounge. At the end of the short tour, we gather the group in the Lounge and encourage them to reflect on the growth they experienced in the last four years of their academic career and to think ahead to how they hope to grow in the coming four years. They then write a letter to their future selves, which we seal with wax and will return to them at the time of their graduation.
2. **Fall Scholars Dinner:** A more formal affair, this is the first-year Scholars' "official" introduction to the larger Scholars cohort; they are asked to introduce themselves to the group during this sit-down dinner.

3. **Ice Cream Social:** All Scholars on Wake Forest's campus are invited to this open-air event to mingle across their different disciplines with one another and with various "friends of the Scholars Program," including key faculty members, staff from Admissions and the Scholars Office, and University leadership.

While there are other events that take place in the Fall to help knit our new Scholars closer into the existing fabric of our community, these are the ones that are primarily designed to orient new students to the program and campus.



Provost Michele Gillespie chats with students at the Scholars ice cream social.



# One-on-one advising

 continues to be the primary way that we interact with our Stamps students.

Given the diverse nature of their backgrounds and interests, these sessions allow us to discuss topics and address any issues specific to each student. Director Jackie Sheridan meets with each student individually at least once a year. Many meet more frequently for a variety of reasons, including check-ins/catching up, specific questions, or working together on applications for external opportunities. While scheduled for 40 minutes, these sessions often run over time. Additionally, students often pop in for a quick chat when the door is open.

Drop-Ins are a popular way for students to meet with the Director — and to chat with one another. These are held weekly for two-hour windows and often result in multiple students sharing space in the Director's crowded office or on picnic blankets outdoors when the weather is nice. Because they are scheduled around lunchtime, some Scholars bring food and spend their time with us. These sessions have continued to grow in popularity.

The Barefield Lounge is a gathering place for students, as well as a quiet study space after hours.



We continued offering successful events including: multiple evening events for first-years, the Scholars Hike, Scholars Pitches, a dedicated dinner with the Provost and the Dean, and movie nights.

We are also working to integrate new activities as appropriate to meet the needs of each cohort, including scavenger hunts or service days. We did plan to use Spirit Funds to pilot our first Day of Service in 2023-24, but the event was canceled due to inclement weather. We hope to successfully launch this activity in AY 2024-25.

In addition to program-organized events, Spirit Funds were utilized to assist some of our students with travel expenses for a trip to Virginia. Four Stamps Scholars from Wake Forest coordinated with Virginia Tech's Stamps cohort to participate in the President's Tailgate in advance of attending the Wake Forest-Virginia Tech football game together — even staying with one of their fellow Stamps Scholars while in Blacksburg.

Wake Forest takes pride in our ability to create community and foster experiential learning. As such, our deans and administrators regularly interact with all students, and especially those who are excelling in the classroom and leading outside the classroom. In addition to Ritt Culbreth regularly interacting with the Board of Trustees and the Cabinet members, additional Stamps Scholars engaged with leadership as officers of Student Government (Amaya Williams) or student organizations (Zinn Amos, Mackenzie Jackson, and others). Additionally, some have even served alongside campus leadership through Wake Forest's student EMS service (John Hewlett West and Elodie Wardle) or Campus Life initiatives (Cate Pitterle recently joined Dr. Shea Kidd-Brown on her podcast).





**Our Scholars** make use of their enrichment funds for a variety of experiences that are as diverse and unique as their interests. Many choose to dedicate the majority of their funds to self-designed summer projects; conference participation is another popular use of funds. A few others design short-term projects or enhancements to support the development of their research or thesis.

We prime Scholars to begin thinking about their enrichment funds before they even arrive on campus by sharing the project proposals of current Scholars with them. This plants the seed early for how big they can dream!

After their arrival, they're given a brief session on how the funding works and are later invited to a Scholars Showcase where their peers share more about what they did over the previous summer. This is doubly helpful in that older Scholars can serve as mentors to younger Scholars, particularly those who are interested in similar topics and/or majors. "Inside tips" about great labs and faculty members are often shared at this session, too. Students are encouraged to apply for other university funding opportunities if additional funds are needed for their projects.

We share here a few unique cases to display the breadth and variety of how our Scholars used enrichment funds this past year:



#### EMILY FOLEY

Science Undergraduate Laboratory Internship, Department of Energy  
Los Alamos National Laboratory, New Mexico

Emily did research with the applied and fundamental physics group doing simulation and analysis work for the laser calibration system of the deep underground neutrino experiment (DUNE).



#### LYDIA GRACE LOGAN

Independent research, "A Comparative History of Austrian and American Ballet"  
Vienna, Austria

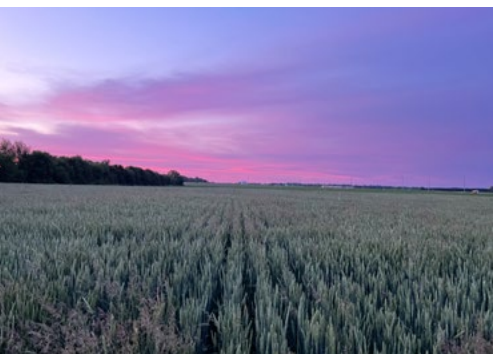
Lydia's chosen career will be in medicine, but she has been a ballet dancer her whole life, and she used the summer enrichment opportunity to design and conduct international research on a passion project.



## SOFIA RAMIREZ-PEDROZA

Email Marketing and Data Automation Internship, Miami Heat  
Miami, Florida

Sofia was part of a team that outlined, devised, and proposed a series of four cultural nights to help the Heat engage their diverse fan demographics. Her responsibilities included utilizing existing data to consider all economic, risk, and longevity components of the proposal.



## SCOTT ZHAO

NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU), National Center for  
Supercomputing Applications  
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Scott's research focused on predicting habitat suitability for midwestern bird species, while learning about machine- and deep-learning models and their implementation in popular AI technology.

A sample of Stamps Scholars' ambitious plans for summer 2024 include:

- Policy work on fishery regulations with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Research on philosophical concepts in traditional Moroccan art in Marrakech
- Research internship with the Environmental Protection Network
- Lab research on Organic and Polymer Electronics at Princeton University
- Clinical Research internship on polygenic scores at Vanderbilt University Medical Center
- Cancer research applications of biostatistics and data science methods at the University of Michigan's Big Data Summer Institute



# Our students express great satisfaction with their undergraduate college careers and their ability to embark on the next phase of their life, whatever it may be.

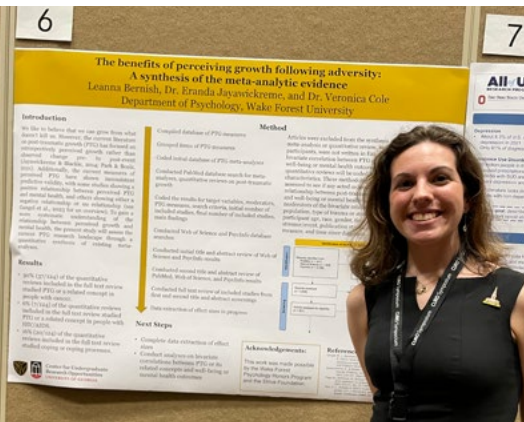
It is difficult to overestimate the value of knowing one’s skills and passions, and our Scholars are well-practiced in both of these areas. They are also well equipped to identify their own needs and ask for help, as our Scholars often rely on our Office, each other, and various on-campus resources to achieve their goals. We’re glad to have helped them practice these kinds of skills, which they can take with them anywhere.

We did face unusual difficulties connecting as deeply with the Class of 2024; this is likely due to the social isolation they experienced during 2020, their first year. This was not unique to the Stamps Scholars, and colleagues across campus noticed similar trends. Fortunately, Wake Forest’s small size allowed us to more easily reconnect students as they matured, but there was still a sense of lost quality time we all worked to overcome. This has only served to reinforce and remind us of the value of first-year programming, which is why we are integrating occasional mandatory events and inviting the students’ ideas for activities as well.

In recent years we have made progress encouraging the Scholars’ individual successes and better connecting them with each other and with the national Stamps community. We have participated in existing programs and have forged new ones with partner schools. Alongside Stamps Scholars from other universities, Leanna Bernish was invited to present her research at the Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities Symposium hosted by the University of Georgia in April. We would like to continue this type of work and appreciate your feedback as you see relevant opportunities.

It is always rewarding when Scholars continue to do well securing post-graduate roles, whether in fellowship programs (such as the Fulbright), graduate and professional schools (including Vanderbilt University, Georgetown University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology), or in careers (doing consulting, legal, and postbac research work, for example). Tahjane Givens stood out as an exceptional success story this year, securing multiple awards as a student, and two prestigious post-graduate opportunities from Fulbright and the NIH.

Because Scholars’ interests change from year to year, we primarily focus on whether Scholars find that they can attain the particular next step that best suits them, all the while setting exemplars before them. We anticipate continued success in this arena as our new Assistant Director increases our capacity to respond to Scholars’ individual interests.



Top: Leanna Bernish presents her research at UGA in April.

Bottom: Stamps Scholars from multiple universities presented at the symposium.

The Stamps Scholars program is shared in several ways as a recruitment tool. In addition to being heavily featured on the [Scholars Program](#) website, Wake Forest highlights the Stamps Scholars program in [Signature Scholarship Programs](#) in the student financial aid website.

With the newest expansion at the program, Stamps information is also shared via the financial aid page on [Scholarships for Continuing Students](#). We also continue to highlight the program in our annual search piece, a foldable brochure provided to prospective students at college fairs and high school visits. In addition, we make certain that guidance officers are aware of the Stamps Scholarship by covering it in our individual high school visits and sharing via email newsletters.

Once Stamps Scholars arrive on campus, they are frequently featured on the larger Scholars Program Instagram account ([@wfu\\_scholars](#)). Posts highlight Stamps students as they attend events throughout the school year, participate in summer programs, and receive recognition and awards. The Scholars Program account has also recently begun posting alumni profiles, including those of Stamps Scholar graduates. This account has seen a 100% increase in content interactions and increased reach by 518.3% since July 1, 2022. Additionally, Stamps Scholars' campus involvement and many achievements are often shared via Wake Forest University's social media posts and news releases.

📷 Stamps Scholars and their accomplishments are frequently featured on the Scholars Office Instagram account.



# Our Stamps Scholars

continue to stand out in a myriad of ways, both on- and off-campus. Among traditional measures of academic progress and success, Stamps Scholars lead the field at Wake Forest University.

One available metric to assess our students' progress is through GPA. Stamps Scholars from all classes averaged a 3.933 GPA in 2023-24, and two of our graduating class members maintained a 4.0 throughout their college career. What's more impressive is that they did this while achieving double majors at nearly twice the rate of their non-Stamps peers.

Retention and graduation rates are also strong, with 98% of Stamps Scholars graduating on schedule; only one student has ever left the program. Of the most recent graduating class, 100% of Stamps Scholars earned Latin honors, while this is only true of 30% of the entire Class of 2024.

We are proud of these academic accomplishments. However, a perfect 4.0 is not the best goal for every student. We encourage our students to stretch themselves in an unexpected way or challenge themselves to push to the very edge of their abilities. While it is possible to do these things and still maintain a perfect academic record, our goals for our Stamps Scholars are larger.

Our Stamps Scholars' achievements in leadership and involvement are equally as important as those for their academics, and we are pleased to share this selection — an incomplete list — of recognition of their work in and out of the classroom:

- Dean's Student Advisory Panel (Jae Canetti, Ana Garcia-Velez)
- Departmental Outstanding Graduate awards (Nia Thompson, Leanna Bernish, Ritt Culbreth, Cate Pitterle, Tahjane Givens, Emily Foley, Nick Zuga, Sid Subramanian)
- Fulbright Scholar (John Hewlett West and Tahjane Givens\*)
- George J. Mitchell Scholar Finalist (Cate Pitterle)
- Global Programs & Studies Global Ambassador (Tahjane Givens)
- Goldwater Scholar (Cassandra Hung)
- NIH Intramural Research Training Award (Tahjane Givens)
- OCCE Civic Scholar Service Award (Sid Subramanian)
- Old Gold & Black student newspaper Editor (Addison Schmidt)
- Omicron Delta Kappa Leadership Honor Society (Leanna Bernish, Jae Canetti, Emily Foley, Cate Pitterle)

*\*Tahjane Givens declined her Fulbright award in order to pursue the NIH Intramural Research Training Award*

Achieving Latin Honors:

Stamps Scholars:  
100%

WFU Class of 2024:  
30%



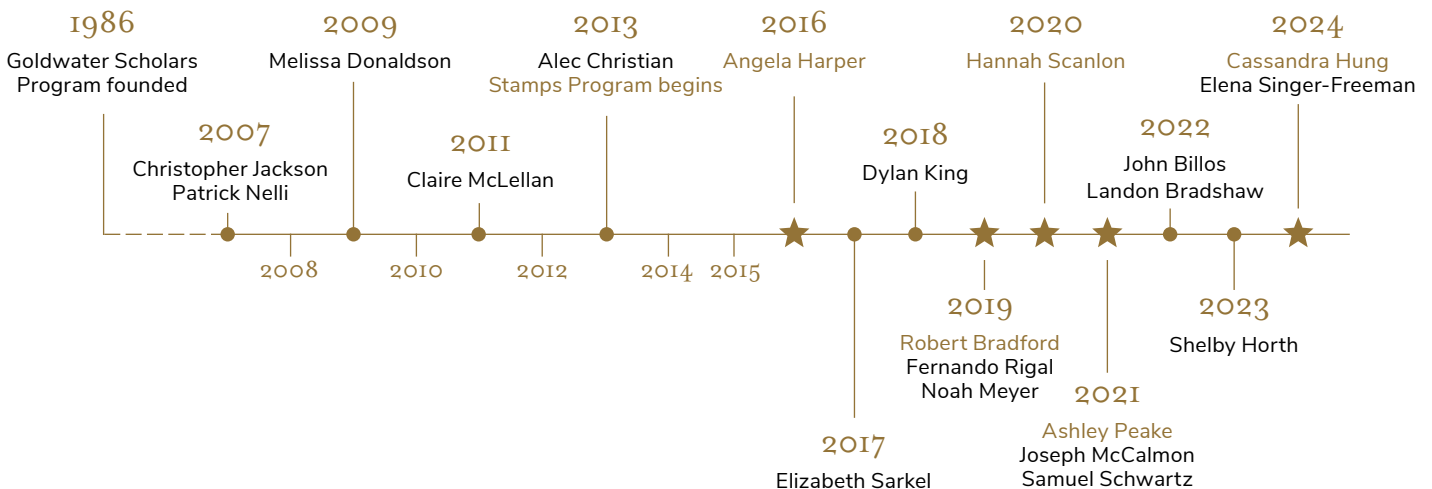
- Phi Beta Kappa (Emily Foley, Tahjane Givens, Cate Pitterle, Rucker Robinson, Sid Subramanian)
- President's Aide (Ana Garcia-Velez, Tahjane Givens, John Hewlett West, Amaya Williams)
- Senior Orator (Jae Canetti)
- Student LGBTQ+ Leadership Award (Hunniya Ahmad)
- Wake Forest Fellow (Leanna Bernish and Ritt Culbreth)
- Yale Conservation Scholar (Roksanna Keyvan)



In particular, Cassandra Hung's selection as a 2024 Barry M. Goldwater Scholar illustrates a trend that we are noticing: Since the inception of the Stamps Scholars Program at Wake Forest, premier awards to Wake Forest students are rapidly increasing. As an example, Wake Forest students earned six Goldwaters in the first three decades of the award's existence. Five Stamps Scholars have been awarded Goldwaters since 2013.

Goldwater Scholar & Stamps Scholar Cassandra Hung ('26) meets with professor Veronica Cole to discuss her research.

## Wake Forest Goldwater Scholars





As part of our Signature Scholars cohort, the Stamps Scholars are already a “known” quantity on campus. Faculty members look forward to speaking with them, having them in class, and inviting them into their labs for undergraduate research opportunities. The Scholars benefit from the early connections made during their selection process and the confidence that comes with knowing other students before they arrive.

Stamps Scholars interact with our on-campus partners at very high rates, particularly with Campus Life, our Global Programs and Studies team, and the Leadership and Character Program. Through the Stamps Scholars program’s home under the purview of the wider Wake Forest Scholars Program, Stamps students also have built-in access to national scholarship advising and are often the first to hear about unique opportunities.

University leadership welcomes engagement with our Scholars. Their leadership acumen shows in their representation on advisory councils for the Dean, the President, and the Board of Trustees. This year, the Stamps Scholars had two private dinners, one with the Dean of the College, Jackie Krasas, and one with the Provost, Michele Gillespie.

We are excited about the upcoming Stamps Scholars National Convention, which will be our students’ first or second chance to gather with Stamps Scholars from around the entire country and world. We anticipate even more robust exchanges among Wake Forest and all Stamps Scholars at the 2025 SSNC as we introduce this opportunity to first-year and walk-on students. In addition to our fruitful partnership with Virginia Tech, we anticipate partnerships with other institutions to grow as our students see opportunities for collaboration, especially within specific fields of study.

Our program leads also continue to learn, grow, and improve through better relationships with other Stamps Scholars programs. Opportunities for more cross-campus collaborations in the future have been identified, and learning how Stamps programs run on other campuses has led to ideas about how to navigate our own campuses, too.



Stamps Scholar Jason Zhang ('26) performs before the Leadership and Character Program initiation ceremony in fall 2023.

Our primary source of funding for the Stamps Scholars Program matching funds is the Porter B. Byrum Scholarship Fund. Mr. Byrum's legacy is and will continue to be our matching fund for most Stamps Scholarships.

Stamps Scholar Mackenzie Jackson ('24) lights the Advent Candle during the traditional annual Lovefeast in 2023.





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