

The Class of 1954 University Honors Scholarship  
The Class of 1956 University Honors Scholarship  
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### Scholarship Purpose

The Class of 1954 Scholarship and the Class of 1956 Scholarship provide outstanding Honors students with unusual opportunities extending far beyond the classroom and campus during the last two years of undergraduate study. Recipients of the scholarships receive financial assistance for their travel experience and University tuition.

An excellent, well-rounded education necessitates that the student define experiences that complement and bring a higher level of understanding to his or her undergraduate education. Applicants for the Class of 1954 Scholarship and the Class of 1956 Scholarship must seek beyond a simple addition to their disciplinary studies. The experience must offer them the opportunity to refine a world view, a philosophy of life, and a stronger sense of the nature of moral order. The Scholar will be selected on the basis of the student's ability to define such an experience and estimation of two separate committees concerning the ability of the student to use these opportunities to make significant contribution to society.

### Selection Process

The selection process for the Class of 1954 Scholar and the Class of 1956 Scholar is rigorous. Students applying for the scholarships should demonstrate and seek personal development in these qualities:

1. Intellectual curiosity and achievement
2. Mental Agility – to handle the unexpected and to solve problems
3. Questing spirit – to pursue the greater challenge and to take risks
4. Moral character – to establish exceptional standards of personal and public ideals, expectations, and performance
5. Confirmed Leadership – to serve, lead, and receive the recognition of their peer group.

### Application Process

Every applicant must identify a faculty mentor (a member of the VT *academic faculty*) to assist the application process. The duties of the mentor include acting as academic advisor to the student, assisting the student in developing the proposal for the educational experience component of the scholarship, serving as

a proponent during the selection process, and providing a written endorsement of the applicant's candidacy. (See section below, "Selecting a Faculty Mentor.")

The Class of 1954 Scholarship and the Class of 1956 Scholarship seek to identify students with outstanding ability and the capacity to make a difference in the world in which we live. Applicants must be in good academic standing at the University and with University Honors (have at least a 3.50 cumulative GPA and be actively pursuing an Honors diploma).

Application is made through the development of a portfolio. The portfolio is a collection of the work and ideas of the student and, properly done, should provide the selection committees with a portrait of the applicant. The portfolio for the Class of 1954 and Class of 1956 Scholarships remains a work-in-progress until the Scholar graduates.

Students must be planning to remain at Virginia Tech for at least four semesters following their appointment as Scholars.

***PRELIMINARY*** application portfolios must be submitted no later than 12:00 PM Monday, November 30, 2009.

***FINAL*** application portfolios must be submitted no later than 12:00 PM, Monday, February 1, 2010.

The portfolio, limited to no more than 25 pages (front only), must contain the following, *in this order*:

1. An endorsement from the faculty mentor, specifying why the applicant is a viable candidate and how the applicant's scholarship plans meet the spirit and requirements of the scholarship
2. A statement signed by the applicant that all work in the portfolio is that of the applicant
3. Updated, current Curriculum vitae
4. Personal Statement of 1000-1200 words
5. Detailed proposal for the travel/research experience
6. Documentation of work completed by the student\*

(Change for 2010 scholarship competition: The cover letter has been omitted from the portfolio, replaced by a thorough, thoughtful endorsement letter from the faculty mentor.)

\*The portfolio should include documentation of work completed by the student. Please note that the presentation should provide insight into character and beliefs. The committees seek to gauge the extent of the applicant's knowledge, the manner in which the applicant makes decisions, and the motivation of the

applicant to improve his or her intellectual life. It may take the following forms:

- Papers written by the student
- Artistic works by the student
- Photographs of the work of the student
- Notes from applicant's journal or diary
- Letters or other evidence documenting the work of the student. If in doubt about whether to include something, please ask.

**\*\*NOTE:** By default, students apply for both the Class of 1954 Scholarship and the Class of 1956 Scholarship with portfolio submission. Applicants should remember to reference both scholarships throughout the process.

### **SELECTION OF A FACULTY MENTOR**

Students also ask the following question: "How do I select a faculty mentor?" Hopefully, you have established a relationship with at least one faculty member during your first year at Virginia Tech. Think about classes you have had previously. Which professor(s) inspire you? Which professors share your research and other interests? Who could you see working with for the next two years?

Your faculty mentor must be willing to be an advocate for you, and should you be selected as the scholarship recipient, willing to assist you with your future duties as the Class of 1954 Scholar or Class of 1956 Scholar. Administrative duties of the mentor include attending the final selection dinner with you if you are a finalist, helping you with the preliminary committee in your junior year, and being a proponent of the scholarship and your interests. But most importantly, he or she should want to help you develop and grow in your plans. Your mentor cannot write the portfolio for you or plan your trip, but an engaged mentor will want to share the journey and dream with you, providing feedback and suggestions where needed. Do not select a mentor who seems disengaged and/or unwilling to assist you with the required portions of the portfolio development and scholarship selection.

### **JUDGING THE PORTFOLIO**

The required documents should contain only work of high quality. *Do not* "pack" the portfolio (include materials just to "beef up" the portfolio). The Class of 1954 Scholarship and the Class of 1956 Scholarship are awarded on the basis of the quality of the student's character, leadership ability, and intellectual acumen.

When the applicants have submitted their preliminary portfolios, members of University Honors review them. The review is for the purpose of checking the portfolio. Applicants will be notified of problems and will be permitted to correct

the portfolio and submit the final application by the published deadline. Once this process is complete, the applicant may make no further changes.

### **THE CAMPUS COMMITTEE**

A committee of faculty and Class of 1954 Honors Scholarship and the Class of 1956 winners appointed by University Honors will judge the portfolios. The committee will make its decisions on the following bases:

- Does the applicant demonstrate the qualities listed above?
- Does the applicant propose a significant educational experience?
- In the judgment of the committee, will the applicant complete the experience in a manner appropriate to be designated a Class of 1954 or Class of 1956 Honors Scholar?
- Does the applicant provide evidence of the promise of a life of accomplishment and service?

On the basis of their judgments, the faculty committee will select applicants for interviews. The committee will interview the selected applicants and will, at their discretion, pick the finalists. Everyone interviewed will receive feedback concerning their interview.

Applicants can expect questions concerning any item in the portfolio as well as current world, national, or state events, and their educational experience.

### **THE CLASS OF 1954 AND CLASS OF 1956 HONORS AWARD COMMITTEE**

Applicants selected as finalists will undergo one more interview to determine the Class of 1954 and Class of 1956 Honors Scholars. This committee may consist of Virginia Tech faculty and citizens from outside the University community. They will be selected on the basis of their achievements and their representation of the ideals espoused by the scholarship. Following the interviews with the applicants, the Committee will select the Class of 1954 Scholar and the Class of 1956 Scholar. Their decisions will be final and will be announced as soon as the committee adjourns.

### **THE OBLIGATIONS OF CLASS OF 1954 AND CLASS OF 1956 HONORS SCHOLARS**

The Class of 1954 and Class of 1956 Honors Scholar Program is intended for those students who wish, based on their talent and leadership, to make a significant contribution to the society. They are expected, in the term of their active participation in the program, to seek ways of improving the lives of others.

These expectations take the following forms:

- During their Junior and Senior year, winners are expected to participate fully in the selection process for the new Class of 1954 and Class of 1956 Scholar.
- Each Class of 1954 Scholar and Class of 1956 Scholar must give a presentation to the campus community concerning the educational gains of his/her experience upon return from the experience.
- University Honors will host these presentations each year. Special visitors will be invited to these events.

### **INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH HONORS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

Students who are interested in applying for the scholarships must schedule an appointment with Russell Shrader, Assistant Director of University Honors, to discuss their candidacy and project ideas. Students failing to schedule a meeting will be ineligible to compete for the scholarship.

Additionally, students should meet periodically with Mr. Shrader to discuss their progress. History shows that the most successful applicants have worked diligently on their portfolio development. There is much intrinsic value in the development of the portfolio, whether or not you are the ultimate “winner” of the scholarships. Care must be taken to develop the portfolio; in other words, do not wait until the last minute to develop a portfolio. See the calendar of events area of this document for suggestions as to when certain parts of the portfolio should be completed. In particular, personal statement and trip proposals take time to nurture and develop. You will want several drafts of these documents in order to make yourself as competitive as possible.

Finally, please remember that your faculty mentor can provide a wealth of information, feedback, and other tips. Use him or her as you develop your project and portfolio!

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### September 2009

16 – Information meeting concerning the Class of 1954 and Class of 1956 Scholarship

21 - - October 2 – Schedule appointment with Mr. Shrader to discuss application process. You may email Mr. Shrader to schedule.

### October

2 – Deadline to declare intent to apply for scholarship

16 – First draft of personal statement (suggested). Please consult with your advisor and/or the University Honors staff for assistance. You are welcome to discuss your personal statement with any member of University Honors. However, please keep Mr. Shrader up to date regarding your progress.

21 – Presentations by former sophomore scholarship winners. This year's presenters will be John Helveston and Tory Smith (Horton), Jennifer Lamb (Cloyd), and Rehan Dawood (Gough). Presentations will begin at 6:00 p.m. in the Hillcrest Dining Room (Hillcrest 143).

30 – First draft of trip proposal and ideas. Again, meet regularly with your faculty advisor. Talk with Mr. Shrader as necessary. Feel free to talk with other Honors staff or past scholars.

### November

13 – Second draft of personal statement. Begin visualizing your finished portfolio.

20 – Complete updated curriculum vitae.

Over Thanksgiving Break – Look at your progress. Re-read drafts of personal statement. Think about extra information you wish to include in the portfolio.

30 – First draft of portfolio due by 12:00 p.m.

### December

11 – By this date, you should have met with any faculty/Honors staff you wish to assist you in final portfolio development.

### February 2010

1 – Final portfolio due by 12:00 p.m.

2-5 – Faculty on interview committee to review portfolios

8-12 – Preliminary interviews.

15-19 – Students will meet with Rose Filippell, John Hoffman, and/or Mr. Shrader to discuss their candidacy.

26 – Dinner for all sophomore scholarship finalists at 6:00 p.m.

27 – Final Scholarship Selection. Recipient announced at the end of interviews.

The following students are recent winners and finalists for sophomore scholarships. Feel free to contact them for suggestions regarding portfolio development, trip ideas, etc.

Class of 1954:

Paige Gardner, 2009 finalist, [pgard07@vt.edu](mailto:pgard07@vt.edu)

Jessie Gemmer, 2008 winner, [jgemmer@vt.edu](mailto:jgemmer@vt.edu) (away from Blacksburg campus this year)

Mallory Brangan, 2008 finalist, [brangan@vt.edu](mailto:brangan@vt.edu)

Caitlin Cossaboom, 2008 finalist, [caiti88@vt.edu](mailto:caiti88@vt.edu)