

Fulbright Winners

Augsburg is no stranger to the Fulbright Program. Since 2007, 30 Auggies have been selected as Fulbright students based on their academic merit and leadership potential. This year, four Auggies were named Fulbright winners and one was nominated as a Fulbright ETA Alternate in South Korea.

Winnie Godi '17

Fulbright English Teaching Assistant to Rwanda

Winnie Godi, a 2017 graduate in International Relations and Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies, was selected as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant to Rwanda where she has familiar roots.

Currently, Winnie is completing a Princeton in Africa fellowship, where she teaches middle school Geography in Botswana at one of the top schools in Africa. Princeton in Africa offers yearlong fellowship opportunities to young leaders who are committed to Africa's advancement.

Winnie is one of the 50 fellows selected from approximately 430 applicants across the U.S. This experience built on her previous position as a kindergarten teacher in Kenya.

While at Augsburg, Winnie maintained a high grade point average while juggling full-time work and full-time school, while also being integrally involved in the Augsburg community. She was president of the Pan-Afrikan Student Union and a past Peace Scholar.

As an Augsburg LEAD Fellow, Winnie created an online magazine focused on celebrating the African diasporic arts and culture in Minnesota and the surrounding community. She completed Augsburg's 10-week Emerging Leaders Program in 2014 and received the Outstanding Senior Student of the Year award in 2017.

Off campus, Winnie was a 2015-16 Museum Fellow at the Minnesota Historical Society. She was also a finalist for the Humanity in Action Fellowship.





Abdulkadir Sharif '20

Fulbright English Teaching Assistant to Malaysia

Abdulkadir Sharif is part of the Citizens League Capitol Pathways program and just graduated from Augsburg where he studied Political Science and International Relations. He specialized in public policy, international capitol pathways program development, and conflict resolution.

At Augsburg, he was involved with the Pan-Afrikan Student Union, Student Government, and Residence Life. He was also a Bonner Leader Scholar, where he interned with the Minneapolis Public Schools, Trinity Lutheran Congregation, Pan-Afrikan Center, and the Environmental Stewardship Committee. In 2018, he was awarded the Student Leader of the Year at Augsburg.

Through Augsburg's Center for Global Education and Experience (CGEE), Abdul was awarded a David L. Boren Scholarship to study in Tanzania in 2018 and the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship to study in South Africa and Namibia in 2019. While in Namibia, he interned with the Namibia Institute for Democracy as a research assistant focusing on civic engagement and anti-corruption mechanisms in the country.

"What got me to register was my CGEE program. They took us to South Africa, which has a lot of south Asian – especially Malaysian and Indonesian – influence, especially in Cape Town. That's what first got me really interested," says Abdul.

"In both programs, I also met a Fulbright scholar, so that's how I learned the on-the-ground real realities of what you need to be a Fulbright student."

In January 2021, Abdul will go to rural Malaysia as an English teaching assistant to teach secondary school students. As a refugee from Kenya, who speaks multiple languages, Abdul understands the challenges and rewards of learning a second language and is excited to provide his Malaysian students with skills to be change agents in their communities.

"I've always been interested in international affairs," says Abdul. "I came into Augsburg knowing I was going to major in international affairs and political science, but the study abroad opportunity in Tanzania – being in rural Tanzania, learning a language and being with a cohort of other students who were just as passionate about the language and about international affairs – was what really propelled me to take up other opportunities when I returned. I was looking for ways to not only study abroad again, but also keep learning about other cultures."

Most recently, Abdul was a Public Policy and International Affairs Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. He hopes to one day pursue a career in international development, focusing on economic advancement.

Eh Soe Dwe '20

Fulbright English Teaching Assistant to Malaysia

Eh Soe Dwe is an Act Six Scholar, Christensen Scholar, and Interfaith Scholar. She has been Vice President of American Sociological Association (ASA), an AugSEM leader, Karen Interpreter, Personal Care Assistant, volunteer tutor of English for immigrants at Open Door Learning, a member of Psi Chic Psychology Honor Society, and has studied abroad in Guatemala, the U.K., and Slovenia through CGEE.

In January 2021, she will be a teaching assistant in Malaysia, helping plan lessons and curriculum for secondary school students. As a Clinical Psychology student, Eh Soe is looking forward to stepping outside of her comfort zone to serve other communities.

She is also interested in the art culture, being an artist herself.

"I would like to look at any artisans in Malaysia and try to learn some of their more ancient pieces such as kite making – it's a traditional and very old form of art," says Eh Soe. "I'd also like to create a mural with the students at the school."

Eh Soe's connection to Southeast Asia goes deeper than ancestry, extending to her sense of artistry and mission to serve adolescents across cultural boundaries.

Her desire to teach specifically in Malaysia comes from her personal experience meeting an international student on Augsburg's campus.



"My friend is an international student from Malaysia and we immediately clicked. I found out we had a lot of similar food in our cultures, so we'd cook together and eat together. I would bring homemade food from my parents and share with her. We'd talk about how different her home is from America," says Eh Soe.

"When picking a country, I was torn between South Korea and Malaysia. I always wanted to go to South Korea and I know a lot about their pop culture and their media, but I remembered my international friend and how different that culture is from Korea and I thought it would be really interesting to go to a country that I'm not familiar with."

Eh Soe has taught ESL to recent immigrants to the US. Since so many of her students come to the US to learn, she feels it is her turn to contribute abroad, adding to her many experiences overseas.



Natalya Arevalo '20

Fulbright English Teaching Assistant to Honduras

In January 2021, Natalya will go to Honduras to teach English and American Studies to students of a variety of ages, including college students.

“A big part of my role will be working with Access Microscholarship Program, which is a scholarship for underprivileged students, particularly of the lower sociological economical class, who are trying to learn English. I’ll be tutoring them one-on-one, helping them navigate the U.S. culture and Honduras culture, how are they similar and how they are different.”

Natalya transferred to Augsburg as a sophomore after spending her first year of college at Bethel University.

“It wasn’t the right environment,” she says. “I didn’t feel like it was a place where I could grow professionally and personally. So I decided to transfer to Augsburg and I’m really glad I did.”

Natalya learned about the Fulbright opportunity while applying for the Harry S. Truman Graduate Fellowship with Dixie Shafer, the Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research and Graduate Opportunity (URGO). Natalya was interested in new experiences to break up her time between graduation and going to graduate school.

While Natalya was learning about Fulbright, the Central American Migrant Caravan was in the news daily.

“I was more interested in seeing the reality instead of the political bias news we read every day,” Natalya says. “To be a part of the community and be with them one-on-one instead of feeding into the news we read.”

Part of the program requires Fulbright scholars to volunteer their time. This can be through independent research, starting an organization, or working with a local club. Natalya’s project is to start an organization.

“Herm@s del Barrio is the name. It’s a Big Brother and Big Sister type program, for kids who suffer from separation of families,” Natalya says.

Her organization’s goal will be to build relationships with these children and the community, connecting children to mentors they haven’t had access to before.

Under normal circumstances, Natalya would travel to Honduras early to spend time with the current Fulbright scholar and learn more about the local program. However, she cannot travel to Honduras early because of the COVID-19 pandemic. But she has been watching YouTube videos and studying the program on her own to prepare.

“Something I’m looking forward to is building connections cross-culturally. My family is Ecuadorian so I’m familiar with Ecuadorian and South American culture and traditions, but I’m excited to learn more about Central American – particularly Honduras – what are typical foods, what is their slang, favorite dances, stuff like that, to see in what ways are our cultures similar and where do they sway differently.”

Following the completion of her program in Honduras, Natalya will be doing another teaching abroad in July 2021 in Ecuador. This second teaching abroad is with Punte Cultural, an outside grant advertised through Augsburg’s Latinx Student Services. It’s a newer program and designed with much more independence. Natalya will be in charge of teaching multiple classes and volunteering.

“I’m excited to just be away” she says with a laugh.

Natalya is a Political Science and Philosophy major, an Education Policy Fellow, and is a recipient of the Sabo Scholarship, the CGEE Student of Color Scholarship, the Honoring Outstanding Latinx Students Leadership Scholarship, and the Norma Noonan Scholarship, and is an Interfaith Scholar. She was also a finalist for the prestigious Harry S. Truman Graduate Fellowship in 2018.

Natalya has worked as an intern with Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio (CLUES), the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs, and the Minnesota House of Representatives. She is co-founder of Augsburg Women for Political Change and has taken on many other student leadership roles.



FULBRIGHT AT AUGSBURG

In February 2019, the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs listed Augsburg University among the [top 5 producers of Fulbright students at master’s level institution](#). This is the sixth time Augsburg has been ranked on the list. Since 2007, Augsburg has had 30 Fulbright students selected for their academic merit and leadership potential.

The Fulbright Program is the U.S. government’s flagship international educational exchange program. The Fulbright Program provides participants — chosen for their academic merit and leadership potential — with the opportunity to exchange ideas and contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns. Over 1,900 U.S. students, artists, and young professionals are offered Fulbright Program grants to study, teach English, and conduct research abroad each year.

The Fulbright U.S. Student Program operates in over 140 countries throughout the world.