

Two Macalester Seniors Receive Watson Fellowships

St. Paul, Minn. – Ian Calaway ‘16, of Dubuque, Iowa, and Laura Humes ‘16 of Shoreline, Wash., have each been awarded a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship and are part of the 48th class of Thomas J. Watson Fellows. The fellowship, a one-year grant for international exploration, independent study and travel outside of the United States, is awarded annually to graduating college/university seniors in any field nominated by one of 40 partner colleges (<http://watson.foundation/fellowships/tj/partners>) such as Macalester.

This year's class comes from eight countries and 21 states. They'll traverse 67 countries exploring topics ranging from climate change to incarceration; from technological empowerment to forced migration; from car culture to ethnoentomology.

In high school, **Ian Calaway** found mathematics competitions allowed him to explore his creativity and provided a supportive, intellectual community. He is a double major in Mathematics and Economics.

His project proposal, **“Mathematics: Community Through Collaboration and Competition,”** will take him to Australia, Brazil, China, Russia, and South Africa.

“Receiving the Watson lets me explore my original inspiration for academics, that is, mathematics competitions and the communities they foster,” said Calaway. “My hope is that by searching for my own inspiration, I will better understand how to use mathematics as a tool for inspiring others.”

For his Watson, Calaway will focus on how mathematics competitions foster community through both collaboration and competition and how these competitions help potential mathematicians develop the tenacity and creativity required by pure mathematics.

“Throughout the year I will be attending mathematics competitions, observing mathematics camps, and leading problem solving sessions in order to understand the relationship between mathematics and community,” said Calaway. “My year will close with the 2017 [International Math Olympiad](https://www.imo-official.org/) (<https://www.imo-official.org/>) during which I hope to bring together many of the different mathematicians I will have met throughout my Watson year.”



Ian Calaway

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Laura Humes

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After Macalester, Calaway plans to apply to graduate school for either mathematics or economics, but would like to work outside academics for a few years as well.

“I do anticipate that my Watson year will greatly influence who I am and how I understand mathematics,” Calaway said. “So if I find a different way to combine my love for mathematics and community building, I will certainly welcome it.”

Watson awardees come from select private liberal arts colleges and universities across the United States. From the program's 40 partner institutions, 152 finalists were nominated to compete on the national level from which 40 Fellows were selected. Fellows will receive \$30,000 for twelve-months of travel, college loan assistance as applicable, and a health insurance allowance.

Laura Humes is honored to receive the Watson and looks forward to the opportunity to engage in experiential learning. She is majoring in Environmental Studies.

Her project proposal, “**Reimagining the Refugee Experience: Sustaining Human Development in the Face of Displacement**,” will take her to Germany, Jordan, Rwanda, Tanzania and Thailand.

“The Watson fellowship provides the freedom to explore and engage with global issues in new and innovative ways, and I'm incredibly excited for the journey ahead,” she said.

During her year as a Watson fellow, Humes wants to gain deeper insight about the refugee experience by engaging in dialogues with communities of displaced people in refugee camps around the world.

“Through the process,” Humes said, “I will engage with communities of refugees from Syria, Burundi, and Myanmar to explore how we might reimagine the refugee experience through a deeply human approach.”

When she leaves Macalester, Humes wants to pursue a career in the humanitarian field, working directly alongside communities to enact positive, sustainable, meaningful change in the everyday lives of people.

“There is inherent power in the simple act of human connection, and there is incredible transformative potential in community partnerships,” Humes said. “Through a strengths-based approach, it is possible to imagine new realities in humanitarianism, and I want to be a part of this transformation.”

In 1961 the Foundation was established as a charitable trust by Mrs. Jeannette K. Watson in honor of her late husband, Thomas J. Watson, the founder of IBM.

Over 2,800 Watsons have been named since the Fellowship's founding in 1968. A Watson Year provides fellows with an opportunity to test their aspirations, abilities and perseverance through a personal project that is cultivated on an international scale. Watson Fellows have gone on to become international leaders in their fields including CEOs of major corporations, college presidents, Grammy winners, MacArthur grant recipients, Pulitzer Prize awardees, diplomats, artists, lawyers, doctors, faculty, journalists, and many renowned researchers and innovators.

Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 2,138 students. Macalester is nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism, and civic engagement. Learn more at [macalester.edu](http://www.macalester.edu) (<http://www.macalester.edu/>).

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