

Graduating senior named 2016 American Humanity in Action Fellow

St. Paul, Minn. - Gage Garretson '16, has been named a 2016 American Humanity in Action Fellow, one of 48 recipients this year out of a pool of 513 applicants from universities and colleges across the United States.

He will join students and recent graduate Fellows from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Poland and Ukraine to participate in the Humanity in Action Fellowship summer programs from May 27 - June 26, 2016.



Garretson, majoring in Geography from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, will be in the Amsterdam, The Netherlands program.

“I’ve had my eye on applying to Humanity in Action (HIA) since I first came to Macalester and signed up with the Human Rights & Humanitarianism concentration,” said Garretson. “At the time, a fellowship devoted to producing dialogue and action in the name of human rights moved me to truly consider how I wanted to remember my Macalester experience. The HIA fellowship brings together world-class scholars and college students from around the globe to motivate how we as individuals can learn and act to produce effective, ethical change wherever we go.”

“Receiving this award was a culminating piece to my undergraduate education and activism, propelling me to continue my passions as I transition out of college,” said Garretson. “It is truly an honor to have been accepted.”

Intensive and demanding, the Humanity in Action Fellowship programs bring together international groups of university students and recent graduates to explore past and present examples of resistance to intolerance, with a goal of encouraging future leaders to be engaged citizens and responsible decision makers.

“I will be participating in the Amsterdam program, looking at a host of minority issues and producing original research on what Amsterdam is currently facing, framed more broadly through situations across the Netherlands and Europe,” Garretson said.

“My greatest hope is to create and foster a lifelong network of friends and colleagues dedicated to protecting human rights around the world,” he said. “I also hope to learn the tools to better translate my passion and education into positive action.”

The Humanity in Action fellowship programs are highly interdisciplinary and feature daily lectures and discussions with renowned academics, journalists, politicians and activists, as well as site visits to government agencies, non-profit and community organizations, museums and memorials. The programs seek to highlight different models of action to remedy injustice relating to diverse societies.

Garretson had two formative experiences last year that shaped his convictions and the direction he is interested in taking after he graduates.

“One was interning in Minneapolis with “The Advocates for Human Rights” in their International Justice department,” he said. “There I researched and drafted policy reports on immigrants and refugees in U.S. detention centers which culminated in a report to the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. My time there impressed upon me the value of translating lived experiences into policy proposals that can hopefully alter institutional responses to difference.”

“I also recently volunteered at the Kara Tepe Camp for Syrian refugee families in Lesbos, which transformed my understanding of the role camps have in humanitarian crises,” Garretson said. “The lack of political will in assisting these and other refugees in the region revealed a fatal flaw in our world’s humanity. Whatever I can do to bring attention to the plight and resilience of these people will never be enough. That is why I intend on continuing research on the issue to eventually pursue a degree in international policy.

Since 1999, Humanity in Action has engaged more than 1,500 Fellows in its transatlantic study programs focusing on human rights and minority issues—past and present—in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and the United States. Humanity in Action Fellows have used the knowledge gained in the programs and inspiration from one another to make a difference in public service, journalism, medicine, law, education, the arts, business and grassroots action.

Humanity in Action’s unique international network of leaders is a valuable resource to policy-makers, diplomats, educators, business leaders and civic-minded individuals and organizations. Humanity in Action supports all Fellows financially for the duration of their programs, allowing for the merit-based selection of diverse applicants.

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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