

Carleton Fellowships

Fellowships took Carleton students all over the globe last year, from a Peruvian fishing village to the New York City public school system to the Trans-Siberia Railway. Some grappled with national dilemmas; for example, Lindsey Waters '17 created a project to examine the historic entanglement of elite higher education institutions in the Northeast with American slavery. Others included more introspective goals: Il Shan Ng '17, designed a project to volunteer at three family-run organic farms to improve his speaking skills, immerse himself in Japanese culture, and learn about small, organic agriculture.



Essentially, fellowships award money for independent work, says Director of Student Fellowships Marynel Ryan Van Zee. These may be research-based or experience-based; they may include travel or stay local, and some are strictly discipline-based while others are more exploratory. What they all have in common, Ryan Van Zee says, is that the learning is completely driven by the student. Students come up with an idea for a project they are interested in pursuing—often as pre-comps research—and apply for funds.

“Fellowships offer a level of independence, intellectual development, and creativity that isn’t available through other opportunities,” Ryan Van Zee says. “My goal is to make sure fellowships are high on the list of things students decide to try when they come to Carleton.”

Ryan Van Zee’s office is designed to help students become aware of fellowship opportunities and work through the often lengthy application process. To apply for fellowships, students need to be in good standing with the college and then meet the criteria for each individual fund (for example, some are limited to upperclassmen, some are specifically for projects in Asia). There are fellowships internal to Carleton as well as external, national ones that students may apply for.

Even the application process is beneficial, Ryan Van Zee says. Students learn how to conceptualize a project and present themselves and their academic goals. “Fellowships are a really effective way to support students’ confidence and intellectual growth at Carleton,” she says.

Fellowship Profile:

Almeda Moree-Sanders '16, Larson International Fellowship
Gretchen Fernholz '16, Kelly International Fellowship

The woods were growing dark. Almeda Moree-Sanders '16 and Gretchen Fernholz '16 had been wandering for hours, lost near the Donskoi Monastery, a 16th century Orthodox cathedral that under the Soviet Union had been converted into an execution site, crematorium, and clandestine burial ground.

They were a little scared. But they didn't let that bother them. They called their new acquaintance, Moscow author Lidia Golovkova, and explained their plight in fluent Russian. Soon they were connected with the site's director, who helped talk them out of the woods—also in Russian.



Little more than three years ago, neither Moree-Sanders nor Fernholz spoke a single word of Russian. They both began classes as freshmen at Carleton and soon fell in love with the language.

Moree-Sanders and Fernholz were in Moscow on fellowship, continuing their study and translation of Golovkova's book, *Where Are You?*, which exposes how the Bolshevik government introduced cremation in the Soviet Union and used it as a means to dispose of political opposition. The walls of the Donskoi, the students learned, are now full of ashes. The two Carls became interested in Golovkova's book during their comps project last year and decided to study these historic sites for themselves.

"It's really important to me that these vanished people have a voice," Fernholz said.

The two drafted a proposal, submitted an application, and were awarded Larson and Kelley international fellowships. This allowed them to spend a month in Moscow interviewing Golovkova, visiting the sites in her book, and building a website that brings this history to light.

"There's really not a lot written about this—in English or Russian," Moree-Sanders said. "One of our goals was telling people about this aspect of history that they've never heard of before."

Beyond experiencing Russian history firsthand, the two women say the biggest takeaway from their project was developing life skills. Riding suburban trains, interviewing strangers, and navigating foreign forests all tested them in ways they hadn't expected. Fellowships, they say, are an incredible experience.

"The idea of receiving funding just to learn was so special," Moree-Sanders said. "There probably won't be any other time in my life where I'll get to do something like this."

Moree-Sanders and Fernholz hope to publish their translation of Golovkova's book. Their work is also available at <http://go.carleton.edu/smoke>.



Carleton