

4-1-2015

Dominican scholars heading to University of Oxford

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Recommended Citation

Gardner, Sarah and Albee, Dave, "Dominican scholars heading to University of Oxford" (2015). *Press Releases*. 307.

<https://scholar.dominican.edu/news-releases/307>

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Dominican scholars heading to University of Oxford

Four Dominican University of California undergraduate students have been selected through a competitive process to participate in the inaugural year of the Dominican-Oxford Global Scholars Program.

Victor Chan '17, Donovan Hernandez '16, Alexander Pollok '17, and Kylie Walsh '16 will spend a semester studying at the University of Oxford as part of a new agreement between Dominican and [St. Catherine's College](#), one of the University of Oxford's 44 autonomous colleges and permanent private halls.

The program was launched by [a gift from Marin residents the late Thomas and Joanne Peterson](#) in support of The Thomas and Joanne Peterson Endowed Scholarship for Dominican Scholars at Oxford.

"We are delighted to support a program that will allow Dominican students to benefit from the tremendous educational opportunities at Oxford," Mr. Peterson said before his death in 2017. "At St. Catherine's College, the Dominican students will engage with academic work in a way that is both intellectually challenging and hugely rewarding. Their experiences at Oxford will be life changing."

Not long after she arrived at Dominican in 2011, Dominican President Mary B. Marcy embarked on a plan to expand the University's international programming by involving students with meaningful study abroad opportunities. Having earned both her Doctorate of Philosophy and Master of Philosophy from Oxford, President Marcy is aware of the unique educational experience that studying at Oxford will provide Dominican's students.

"The impact of Tom and Joanne Peterson's extraordinary generosity will be enduring," President Marcy said. "The gift not only reflects their long-standing commitment to the University, but also extends Dominican's international reach through an important new collaboration with the oldest university in the English speaking world."

"While at Oxford, our students will strengthen their independent study skills and sharpen their ability to discuss issues critically, evaluate material, and defend ideas. It was at Oxford that I found my own identity and developed my intellectual curiosity. I know this experience will be equally transformative for Dominican's students."

Victor Chan '17 is a sophomore majoring in chemistry within the [School of Health and Natural Sciences](#). Since arriving at Dominican in 2013 from San Francisco's Lowell High School, Victor has embraced the University's focus on hands-on learning by taking advantage of all the opportunities that have come his way.

"The supportive staff and engaging environment has fostered my growth as not only a scientist but also as a worldly scholar," Victor said. "I have presented at national conferences, landed prestigious internships, entered honor societies, and met so many amazing people in between and I am delighted to be selected to attend Oxford. Here comes another opportunity to humbly go out and grow as a leader and as a scholar in this amazing world, which wouldn't be possible if not for Dominican."

Last summer, Victor was part of an NIH funded program, INTREPID, and conducted research in the Penn State Hershey College of Medicine's laboratories on hydrogen sulfide and its effect in vivo, in order to find an antidote for sulfide poisoning.

"My professors in [Dominican's Department of Natural Sciences and Mathematics](#) work to ensure unique experiences in STEM, including one-on-one research opportunities in the Dominican labs on important fields such as breast cancer research and biofuels," Victor said. "When combined with a personally tailored academic plan, this gives me the best chance I can have for my future endeavors."

Victor plans to study inorganic and biological chemistry at Oxford.

Kylie Walsh '16 is a junior majoring in English with a creative writing emphasis within the [School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences](#). Kylie is part of the Dominican Honors program and believes her experiences in the honors courses have prepared to both expand her worldview of literature and succeed at Oxford.

She is looking forward to experiencing Oxford's culture and traditions. "I am most excited for the libraries, the challenging academics, and the opportunity to meet fellow students from around the world," Kylie said.

Throughout her time at Dominican, Kylie has been impressed by the amount of attention professors pay to their students and their willingness to go the extra mile for their students.

"It was through my relationship with my professor and advisor, Judy Halebsky, that I heard about the Oxford program and she nominated me as an applicant," Kyle said. "I am overjoyed to be selected as one of the first Dominican scholars to represent Dominican at Oxford and look forward to my semester abroad."

Kylie plans to study creative writing and modern short stories at Oxford.

Donovan Hernandez '16 is a junior majoring in humanities and cultural studies with two minors in Spanish and business within the School of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and the [Barowsky School of Business](#).

As the first in his family to attend college, Donovan participated in Dominican's First-Generation Peer Mentorship Program and as a student leader in [LeaderShape](#).

Donovan plans to study ancient Greek art and archaeology and anthropological and sociological studies at Oxford University.

Alexander Pollok '17 is a sophomore majoring in history with a minor in business within the School of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and the Barowsky School of Business. Alex has researched and presented on Italian immigration to the Marin History Museum, and his work was broadcasted on local Channel 24.

Alex plans to study the fall of the Byzantine Empire and the history of Ancient Greece and Rome at Oxford.

The Dominican Scholars will study using the tutorial method, a unique and highly personalized style of instruction that is the central feature of an Oxford education. The structure of study at Oxford differs from that of an American university, with more time spent on individual work and on tutorials. Students will prepare discussion papers for tutorials on a weekly basis. They will also hear formal reports by their tutors at the end of their terms, reports that are formally given in the presence of other faculty.

Thomas Peterson served as a member of Dominican's Board of Trustees from 2003 to 2009. The Petersons have been consistent and generous donors to Dominican, donating more than \$1 million in support of scholarships for students in the [Department of Nursing](#), the construction of the science building, the refurbishment of [Edgehill Mansion](#), and the construction of a nursing skills lab in [Meadowlands](#), a historic building currently being transformed into a state-of-the art academic facility.

"I am so incredibly proud of Dominican because it is such an important part of our community," Mr. Peterson said. "Dominican is a University with more than 2,000 undergraduate and graduate students from a wide range of backgrounds. Many of these bright, talented students will contribute to our local workforce. How wonderful for Marin County to have such an important asset in its midst."

Under the terms of the Dominican/St. Catherine's College agreement, applicants must have a cumulative GPA at Dominican of 3.7. Beginning Fall 2015, the Dominican students will take the equivalent of 12 units of pre-selected courses in their major as a visiting student at St. Catherine's College. The students will attend lectures and classes led by members of Oxford's faculty and will have full access to all college facilities and resources.