

17 November 2011

TO: Academic Council

RE: Recommendations for the 2012 Faculty Scholar Awards

This year our Committee received **twenty-two** nominations from **fifteen** of the Departments and Programs comprising Trinity College of Arts and Sciences and the Pratt School of Engineering. These nominations were based on four criteria: (1) an impressively high overall grade point average; (2) evidence of truly independent work already completed, in course, or projected for the current academic year; (3) potential for innovative scholarship; and (4) an avowed intention to pursue a scholarly career in an academic setting. Each nomination dossier consisted of an official transcript, at least two letters of recommendation from faculty members familiar with the nominee's scholarly activity and record of independent work, as well as a three-page essay written by the student (a current senior scheduled to be graduated in May 2012) articulating his or her educational and professional goals, and explaining how the student's academic program to date has been designed to achieve these goals.

After carefully reviewing these nominations, the Committee selected **six** semi-finalists for personal interviews. Extended (and often pointed) discussion in the wake of these interviews has led the members of the Committee to a consensus on the names of **two** of these semi-finalists whom we would like to put forward as Faculty Scholars for 2011-2012. These students are:

Vivek Bhattacharya (Economics / Physics)
Daphne Ezer (Computer Science / Biology)

Even in a field of truly remarkable candidates these two seniors – on paper and in person – stand out as an exceptionally impressive duo of young scholars who epitomize the very ideals which this Award was established to recognize and promote. Accordingly, the Faculty Scholar Award Committee asks this Council to ratify these recommendations.

In addition, the Committee would like to put forward the names of **two** students for designation with Honorable Mention. These seniors are **Veronica Ciocanel (Mathematics / French Studies)** and **David Womble (English)**. Both of these young scholars present records of achievement and offer evidence of promise that we think make them richly deserving of this special recognition.

On behalf of the members of the Committee I would like to offer special thanks to all of the Directors of Undergraduate Studies who organized and submitted the departmental nominations, as well as to all of the faculty members who wrote supporting letters and who have given so much of their time and energy in mentoring, supervising, and inspiring these remarkable young scholars. Much gratitude is also due Sandra Walton, of the Academic Council Office, without whose administrative wizardry, patience, and good humor this Committee simply would not be able to function.

I wish to congratulate all twenty-two of this year's nominees. The mere fact of their nomination for this truly special award bears testimony to their unusual and superlative achievement, and the opportunity to review their dossiers and to meet in person with a number of them has been a professor's dream come true. This whole process, especially coming as it does at the beginning of the academic year, serves to reaffirm our fundamental faith in the value of this strange and wondrous enterprise in which we are all implicated.

Finally, I would like to express my great appreciation to my colleagues on the Committee for the energy, thoughtfulness, and sensitivity which each of them brings to this rewarding and important venture. The privilege of serving as Chair has been an unalloyed pleasure.

Respectfully submitted,

Benjamin Ward

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Benjamin Ward', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Chair, Faculty Scholar Award Committee and Professor of Philosophy

Additional Committee Members are:

Tom Ferraro (English)

Joel Meyer (Nicholas School of the Environment)

Louise Roth (Biology)