



Whitman student's environmental work nets honor

Elena Gustafson, who developed the local Youth Adventure Program, has been named a Udall Scholar by Congress.

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By AMELIA MICKELSON for the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

WALLA WALLA -- Whitman College sophomore Elena Gustafson was recently awarded U.S. Congress's Udall Scholarship. She is one of 80 college students in the United States to be named a Udall Scholar.

Winners of the Udall Scholarship receive \$5,000 and spend four days in Tucson, Ariz., at a Udall Scholar conference. Udall Scholars are generally those with an interest in environmental conservation or Native American studies.

Gustafson, who is majoring in environmental humanities, has already set herself apart in the way of environmental conservation with her program, the Youth Adventure Program.

"Our mission is to provide outdoor recreation and environmental education opportunities for Walla Walla youth, especially at-risk and low income youth," she said. YAP has already completed six activities, including hiking and kayaking.

The program, which is a club at Whitman, has received money from the school and was also the recipient of a \$1,000 grant from Youth Venture, a program that offers money to up-and-coming community programs. "This money is essential because it allows us to provide 'scholarships' for the youth, so regardless of family income they can come on the programs," Gustafson said.

In terms of the future, YAP hopes "to expand to work with the Juvenile Justice Center and other Walla Walla groups ... (and) create a leader training program for Walla Walla youth," Gustafson said. For her own future, she plans to participate in Whitman's Semester in the West program, which allows Whitman students to travel around the Western part of the United States to expand their own learning.

"I haven't thought that far beyond Whitman, because I have no idea what the world will hold in two years and where my passions and abilities will lie at that time," Gustafson said.

OTHER HONORS

Whitman seniors Joseph Bornstein, Teal Greyhavens and Erik Thor Andersen were awarded the Watson Fellowship award, which offers \$25,000 grants to outstanding students who wish to expand their education and influence beyond the United States. Whitman is the only college to be host to three Watson winners.

Though each of the Watson winners plans to affect the world differently, they all intend to travel. Bornstein, a philosophy major, will go to Central America to jump-start his plan of "Philosophies and Strategies of Sustainable Community Development." Grayhavens, majoring in film and rhetoric, will visit parts of Europe and Asia in order to observe the effects film has had on various cultures. Andersen, who is majoring in political philosophy, plans to see places such as Rwanda and Northern Ireland to observe

public art and analyze how atrocities from the past have affected individual countries.

Juniors Caitlin Schoenfelder and Erica Goad received the Truman award, which selects its winners based on their leadership abilities and their drive for making a change in the world. Each of the 65 national Truman winners can receive up to \$30,000 for their graduate studies.

Schoenfelder is a politics major with a minor in Latin American studies whose accomplishments include participation in "Borders in our Backyards," a study of immigration and reading to local students in the English as a Second Language program. Goad is majoring in biology-environmental studies and has participated in Whitman's Campus Climate Challenge and the Whitman College Outdoor Program, along with numerous other programs with a focus on environmental conservation.

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