EXPLORE.
CREATE.
LEAD.

HOLSTER SCHOLAR PROGRAM
VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM

October 6-7, 2020 | 6:00PM-7:45PM

Please join us for this virtual event at honors.uconn.edu/holster-scholars
6:00PM | Caroline McGuire, Welcome & Introduction
Vin Moscardelli, Opening Comments

**BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES | Pathologies & Processes**

**NEAL KRISHNA** | Mentor: Prof. Joseph LoTurco, Physiology & Neurobiology
*Characterizing the Molecular & Genetic Landscape of Supratentorial Ependymoma*

**ERIK CHOI** | Mentor: Prof. David Goldhamer, Molecular & Cell Biology
*The Role of Hormones in Heterotopic Ossification*

**KATIE HOOKER** | Mentor: Prof. Nicole Landi, Psychological Sciences
*Investigating Reading and Language Phenotypes through FOXP2 Genetic Variants*

**BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES | Methodologies & Applications**

**JOSHUA YU** | Mentor: Prof. Xiuling Lu, Pharmaceutical Sciences
*Nanomedicine in Cancer Therapy: Internalization, Intracellular Distribution, & Cytotoxicity*

**PAUL ISAAC** | Mentor: Prof. Rachel O’Neill, Molecular & Cell Biology
*A Sticky Situation: An Investigation of Horseshoe Crab Clotting Factors*

**JEROME JACOBS** | Mentor: Prof. Insoo Kim, Biomedical Engineering & Medicine
*A Wearable Armband Biosensor for Continuous Blood Pressure Monitoring*

**CLOSING REMARKS**

Vin Moscardelli
Jennifer Lease Butts

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7

6:00PM | Caroline McGuire, Welcome & Introduction
Vin Moscardelli, Opening Comments

SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES | Leading & Learning

MUSA HUSSAIN | Mentor: Prof. Mary Bernstein, Sociology
Climate Action vs. Climate Justice: A Case Study of 350NYC

MANDIRA GOWDA | Mentor: Prof. Etan Markus, Psychological Sciences
Utilizing Deep Learning to Analyze a Social Learning Task in Long Evants Rats

CHARLES SCHWARZ | Mentor: Prof. Kristine Nowak, Communication
Exploring Emotional Reactions to Robots

HUMANITIES & FINE ARTS | Popular Culture & the Arts

ELISA SHAHOLLI | Mentor: Prof. Brenda Jo Brueggemann, English
Villians, Heroes, Victims, and Humans: The Embodiment of In/Visible Disability in Film

SARAH MARZE | Mentor: Prof. Kenneth Fuchs, Music
Songs of Salem, 1692

CLOSING REMARKS

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM
CELEBRATING A DECADE OF HOLSTER SCHOLARS

The Holster Scholar Program is a selective enrichment opportunity for curious, first-year Honors students. Inspired by Robert Holster’s own excitement in discovering new paths of learning as a member of the inaugural class of UConn’s Honors Program, this program supports a select number of motivated students who pursue independent research, design, or creative projects during the summer following their first year.

This year, we celebrate the accomplishments of the 10th cohort of Holster Scholars. In its first decade, the program has supported 81 Scholars and 69 different faculty mentors hailing from 34 academic departments spread across eight different schools and colleges. Their work represents the range of disciplinary diversity that exists at UConn and has resulted in patents, publications, art installations, and life-saving community-interventions both here and abroad. In that time, program alumni have gone on to receive numerous prestigious, nationally-competitive scholarships and fellowships, including the Marshall, Mitchell, Truman, Udall, and Goldwater Scholarships, NSF Graduate Research Fellowships, and various grants awarded through the Fulbright U.S. Student Program. Alumni currently populate some of the best graduate and professional programs in the world.

Perhaps most importantly, Holster Scholars past and present constitute a community of scholars. Because the awards go to students at an early stage of their development, the program has an outsize impact on the students and their development. In the process, Holster becomes an identity that shapes Scholars’ experience throughout their time at UConn, and often beyond.

Learn more about the program at honors.uconn.edu/holster-scholars

ABOUT ROBERT HOLSTER

Robert Holster entered UConn in 1964 as part of the inaugural group admitted to the Honors Program. He graduated in 1968 with a B.A. in economics. Mr. Holster then served in the U.S. Army before completing his M.B.A. at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Business, where he was a Bronfman Fellow. He went on to hold leadership positions at several prominent companies. The gift that supports this program was given jointly with Mrs. Carlotta Holster, a 1968 family studies graduate.
Erik Choi | Storrs, CT | Physiology & Neurobiology

Erik Choi, from Storrs, CT, is a physiology and neurobiology and economics double major, with interests in public health and healthcare administration. At Edwin O. Smith High School, he was involved in DECA, Model United Nations, symphonic orchestra, soccer, and served as class treasurer. At UConn, Erik actively participates in KDSAP, UConn Model United Nations, works as a Writing Center tutor, and is a WOW Leader. In his free time, Erik enjoys photography, trying new foods, jamming out on the guitar, and breaking ankles in intramural soccer.

Mandira Gowda | Queens, NY | Physiology & Neurobiology

Mandira Gowda is a STEM scholar from Queens, NY majoring in physiology and neurobiology. In high school, she was a member of her school’s Model UN team, National Honor Society, and Foreign Culture Club. She grew interested in research by studying different preservative techniques for high molecular weight DNA at Rockefeller University. At UConn, she is an undergraduate researcher at Dr. Markus’ Lab and is a member of the Pre-med society and the Red Cross Club. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, listening to music, and reading.

Katie Hooker | Guilford, CT | Molecular & Cell Biology

Katie Hooker, from Guilford, CT, is a Nutmeg Scholar majoring in molecular and cell biology. She graduated from Guilford High School, where she was president of the Women in Science club and a member of the National Honor Society. She also served as a head coach for Girls Coach Girls Run, a local peer mentoring program designed to promote healthy lifestyles in young females. She developed a strong interest in genetics and language through her senior capstone project on the FOXP2 gene and its importance in the human acquisition of speech and language. On campus, Katie is a UNIV facilitator, an active member in the UConn Irish Dance Team as Secretary and Treasurer, and you can also find her in the Buckley Office working as an Honors Guide for Peer Success.
The 2020 Holster Scholars

Musa Hussain | New Haven, CT | Undecided

Musa Hussain, from New Haven, CT, became interested in climate change activism and social movements by attending protests and reading about Occupy Wall Street. He graduated from Wilbur Cross High School, where he was captain of track and field and volunteered as a reading tutor. At UConn, he is a member of the club running team and Fridays For Future. He enjoys listening to music by the Strokes and Kanye West, and hopes to one day receive a PhD.

Paul Isaac | Storrs, CT | Molecular & Cell Biology

Paul Isaac, from Storrs, CT is a STEM Presidential Scholar majoring in Molecular and Cell Biology and minoring in Bioinformatics in the Special Program in Medicine. He graduated from E.O. Smith High School in Storrs where he was captain of the varsity swim and dive team and involved in chamber choir, jazz band, robotics, and science quiz bowl. At UConn, he continues his musical interests as part of Husky Hungama, UConn's south-asian fusion a capella group, and is a member of the Kidney Disease Screening and Prevention club. Paul was first introduced to the world of research through Dr. Sok-Ja Janket at Boston University by investigating the role of the gut microbiome in immunity and hopes to continue research on microbial immune responses.

Jerome Jacobs | Vernon, CT | Biomedical Engineering

Jerome Jacobs, from Vernon, CT is a Rowe Scholar, majoring in biomedical engineering. He is interested in studying how technology can improve, and even save, lives. In high school, Jerome was a member of the National Honor Society, Spanish National Honor Society, and National Society of High School Scholars, where he served as a National Ambassador. For over a decade, Jerome was a competitive swimmer. He is also an avid cellist who played in the Connecticut Youth Symphony and the Connecticut All-state Orchestra. As a member of the Pre-Med Society at UConn, Jerome participates in various campus-wide community service projects.
Sarah Marze | Canton, CT | Vocal Performance

Sarah Marze, from Canton, CT is a Vocal Performance major also studying Music Composition. She graduated from Canton High School. She is a lover of art song and all things opera. She has taken voice lessons for ten years, has sung in choirs for thirteen years, and was honored to be a Fellow at the Ensign Darling Vocal Fellowship with the Bushnell theater in Hartford. Recently, Sarah was selected to work with the Craft Ensemble string quartet for the Women Composers Festival of Hartford. At UConn, she sings with Chamber Singers and Concert Choir, and she dances with the Swing and Blues Club. It is her lifetime goal to become the Lin Manuel Miranda of the opera world.

Charles Schwarz | Beacon Falls, CT | Engineering Physics

Charles Schwarz, from Beacon Falls, CT, is a STEM scholar and Engineering Physics major with a concentration in materials science. He graduated from Woodland Regional High School, where he enjoyed competing on cross-country, track and field, and quiz bowl teams. He was also a Boy Scout and captain of the school math team as they made it to their first state championship. At UConn, Charles is a member of Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society, quiz bowl, and the club track and field team. He is interested in the development of modern robotics, computing, and aerospace technologies, and he hopes to understand not only how these systems physically work, but also how they may interact with broader social structures.
The 2020 Holster Scholars

Elisa Shaholli | Wolcott, CT | Economics; Public Health & Disability Policy (individualized)

Elisa Shaholli, of Wolcott, CT, is a Stamps Scholar majoring in English and pursuing an individualized major that combines her interests of public health, worldwide disability policies, and global studies. Currently, Elisa serves on the Executive Board of Huskies for Refugees and UConn's Act in Miracles, an organization aiming to aid nonprofits in Turkey. Elisa hopes to combine her interests of advocacy, outreach, and cultural competency for a future career in global health and disability. In her free time, you can find her watching one too many period dramas, fangirling over anything DCEU, or knitting.

Joshua Yu | Frederick, MD | Molecular & Cell Biology

Joshua Yu, from Frederick, MD, is a Molecular and Cellular Biology major in the Special Program in Medicine. During his time at Urbana High School, he interned at the National Cancer Institute, where he studied self-assembling nanoparticles for cancer drug delivery. He was also brass captain in the marching band and a member of the school’s Science Olympiad, FTC robotics, and Model UN teams. Alongside his interest in medicine, he is also a passionate tubist who has participated in county and state level bands throughout Maryland. At UConn, Josh is a dedicated member of the Kidney Disease Screening and Awareness Program, Symphonic Band, and PATH.

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