



# NAC Internal Release

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July 22, 2020

## **NAC Awards First-Ever Academic Scholarships**

Austin, TX — The National Academy of Construction is pleased to announce that academic scholarships have been awarded to three deserving students. This marks the first time NAC has awarded scholarships, providing two \$5000 scholarships and one \$2000 scholarship for the 2020 academic year.

The scholarships were established, through the generosity of NAC members, to provide funding for undergraduate and/or graduate students who are pursuing a bachelor's or master's degree in construction, or a closely related field, and who intend to pursue a career in the construction industry. The intent of these scholarships is to provide financial support for two semesters for deserving students. To be eligible for consideration the students must have a high GPA, be pursuing a degree in a construction or construction-related program, and demonstrate exceptional leadership as well as participate in extracurricular activities.

"Part of the mission of the Academy is service to the nation," said Wayne Crew, NAC General Secretary. "What better way to do that than to involve our members, such as those in the Scholarship Committee, to seek out exceptional future leaders and reward that excellence. We are happy to honor our three scholarship recipients. We believe this initial effort will become part of what the Academy does annually."

The Scholarship Committee was formed in mid-2019 and has worked extremely hard to establish the scholarship program, solicit student applicants, and gather additional supporting recommendations from NAC members, professors and other university personnel. The committee effort was made even more challenging with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, but the goals and objectives were all met.

### **The Scholarship Recipients**

The 22 applicants for this first-time offering by the Academy were judged to be highly qualified, making the final selection all the more difficult. The committee reviewed the submitted applications, conducted interviews with five finalists, and selected the most deserving candidates as the final recipients. The three recipients of the NAC scholarships were all nominated by Academy members, supported by letters from their professors, and judged to meet or exceed all criteria.

"Once we began receiving the nomination packages, it became obvious that our job reaching a final decision was going to be tough," said Edd Gibson, Scholarship Committee chair. "As a professor and someone involved in the academic world on a daily basis, I can honestly say the candidates were all superb. We believe that awarding scholarships showcases NAC's commitment to future leaders in our industry. I think we're off to a great start in helping these first three scholarship students achieve their goals and dreams."



**Karilin Yiu** is a senior at the University of California, Berkeley, studying civil engineering with an emphasis in construction engineering and management. She is a leader in the Virtual Design and Construction student competition teams, steel bridge competition team, and in her spare time tutors a number of students. She is the current project manager of the UC-Berkeley Sustainable Solutions Competition Team, where her team focuses on resilient infrastructure projects under disaster scenarios. She has interned for Arup and BKF Engineers. Additionally, Yiu

worked for Webcor on the San Francisco Airport new Terminal 1 Boarding Area B. She hopes to attain a master of science in engineering project management.



**Maryam Echreshzadeh** is currently a senior majoring in civil engineering at New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark, NJ. A naturalized citizen, Maryam emigrated to the U.S. in order to pursue her dream of working as a civil engineer in the construction industry. She is president of the NJIT STEM Club, a senator in the student government, and volunteers at both Alzheimer's New Jersey and the VA. She has interned at Neglia Engineering Associates for the past two years, where she has contributed to environmental and municipal projects through CAD drawings, site surveys, mapping, and construction inspection. She hopes to attain a master's degree as well.



**Julia Gravano** is a senior at Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston, MA. Currently studying construction management, Gravano is president of the Construction Management Club at Wentworth among a number of other construction-focused clubs and associations. She has interned at Calnan and Associates in New York City as well as at Consigli Construction, also in New York. Julia was inspired to pursue a career in construction after she visited her uncle's construction company in Tampa. She is a strong leader at Wentworth and serves as a mentor both to fellow students as well as in a student shadow program for high schoolers interested in

construction, facilities management, and commercial real estate.

“NAC is committed to diversity and inclusiveness in the construction industry and this first collection of applicants represented a very diverse group of outstanding students who were all excited about pursuing a career in our industry. Our committee was inspired by many of their stories.” says Gibson. “I would like to thank those who served on the Scholarship Committee during this first year including John Dalton, John Kolaya, Pat Natale, Zorica Pantic, Sarah Slaughter, Bo Temple, Hans Van Winkle, and Mike Vorster. Also, much thanks to the 18 NAC members who nominated this year's applicants along with Wayne, Sam Baker, and Sandy Pittman for their excellent support.”