

## HONORS COLLEGE ODYSSEY FELLOWSHIPS

### Application and Eligibility Information – 2023-2024 Cycle

The Odyssey Fellowships provide an opportunity like no other; students propose to go somewhere or do something to better understand the world and their place in it, and should they be selected as an Odyssey Fellow, the Honors College can provide the resources to help make it happen. These fellowship experiences have changed lives, but many applicants claim that the skills they develop in the application process alone make the experience worthwhile.

The process for most of these begins in a student's second year at Virginia Tech (Patricia C. Perna is open to all class levels). See table at the end of this document for an overview. More detailed information for all fellowships is available on the website: <https://honorscollege.vt.edu/Scholarships/merit.html>

	Standing Junior Fellows	Standing Senior Fellows
Class of 1954	None	None
Class of 1956 Ut Prosim	Ana El-Bogdadi, <a href="mailto:anaelbogdadi@vt.edu">anaelbogdadi@vt.edu</a>	None
Wayne & Claire Horton	None	Landen Furr, <a href="mailto:lafur0187@vt.edu">lafur0187@vt.edu</a>
Patricia C. Perna	Elea Abisamra, <a href="mailto:eleamaria@vt.edu">eleamaria@vt.edu</a>	Liam McMillan, <a href="mailto:mcmillanl@vt.edu">mcmillanl@vt.edu</a>

**To be eligible for consideration, interested applicants must submit a current curriculum vitae and statement of interest to Christina McIntyre. See the Process Timeline for more detailed information.**

#### Application Requirements

1. **Current curriculum vitae**
2. **Personal statement** of 1000–1200 words
3. **Final proposal** for the travel/research experience, including an itemized budget (to include travel insurance if applicable), an experience timeline, and evidence of an established relationship with an organization or institution
4. The Honors College is responsible for obtaining an **endorsement letter from the faculty mentor**

#### Selection Criteria

Odyssey fellows will be selected on the basis of 1) the student's ability to define such an experience and 2) the judgment of the Honors College faculty committee. The committee will evaluate which student will best use these opportunities to pursue academic and personal development in preparation for making a significant contribution to society. Applicants should demonstrate and seek personal development of these qualities:

- **Intellectual curiosity and achievement**
- **Mental agility**—to handle the unexpected and solve problems
- **Questing spirit**—to pursue greater challenges and take risks
- **Moral character**—to establish exceptional standards of personal and public ideals, expectations, and performance
- **Confirmed leadership**—to serve, lead, and receive the recognition of their peer group

Applicants must be current Honors College students in good standing, i.e., meet GPA requirement(s) and have an approved Honors Laureate Diploma plan on file. Students must be planning to remain at Virginia Tech for at least four semesters following their appointment as Odyssey Fellows, with exceptions for students who apply for the Perna Fellowship and students who transferred from another institution and are in their first year at Virginia Tech.

## Selection of a Faculty Mentor

Choosing an effective faculty mentor is essential to the portfolio development process and fellowship experience. Consider previous or current classes. Which professors were inspiring? Good faculty mentors might share an applicant's research or other interests. Applicants do not need to have worked with the faculty mentor in the past, but applicants should be confident that the faculty mentor has the time and interest to advise an Odyssey Fellowship candidate both during the application process and with their future duties as potential winners.

Duties of the mentor include acting as an academic advisor, assisting the student in developing the educational experience for the portfolio proposal, writing a letter of endorsement (a required element of the final portfolio), and being a proponent of the fellowship and the applicant's interests. The applicant is required to plan the experience and create the portfolio, but an engaged mentor should share the journey and dream with the applicant, providing feedback and suggestions where needed.

## Portfolio Requirements

Both the preliminary and final portfolios (application materials) must be submitted electronically as comprehensive PDF files. An applicant's portfolio is a collection of original work and should provide the selection committees with a complete idea of the proposal in relation to the requirements of the selected fellowship. Fellowships are awarded on the basis of a student's character, leadership ability, and intellectual acumen. To illustrate your strength in these areas, your portfolio should contain only work of the highest quality. Please pay particular attention to the portfolio requirements.

**The Honors College reserves the right to make cuts before preliminary faculty committee review** if an applicant's final portfolio shows a significant lack of care, is poorly proofread, or lacks clarity or depth of thought. Therefore, frequent meetings with the faculty mentor, consultation with Christina McIntyre, and discussions with previous Odyssey Fellows in advance of final portfolio submission are essential. Candidates are encouraged to work with the [Writing Center](#) on crafting their Personal Statements and Proposals.

## Preliminary Faculty Committee Review

Once final portfolios have been submitted, the applicant may make no further changes. An Honors College faculty committee will review the portfolios and select finalists for each Odyssey Fellowship. There is no set number of required finalists; those selected will be on the basis of the overall application quality. Because the first review is solely of application materials, it is highly recommended that the applicant ensures the quality is top-notch: no spelling or grammatical errors, clear and concise plans, and a convincing argument for why they should be nominated as a finalist. Remember: the committee can only review what is presented in the portfolio. Don't omit pertinent information or present documents with errors.

## Final Selection

Finalists will participate in an in-person interview, consisting of an Honors College faculty committee. Members from outside the community may also be invited. Winners will be selected on the basis of their achievements and their representation of the ideals espoused by the fellowship. The committee's decision is final and will be announced as soon as possible once interviews are complete.

## Process Timeline

- October** Update your curriculum vitae. Prepare a one-page document that addresses this question: Why are you interested in pursuing an Odyssey Fellowship? Include any preliminary ideas you have for experiences (it is fine to think big at this initial stage). Email your updated curriculum vitae and question response to Christina McIntyre ([cmcintyre@vt.edu](mailto:cmcintyre@vt.edu)) by October 31. The Honors College will determine your eligibility to continue with the process based on your curriculum vitae and question response.  
For help with a curriculum vitae, visit [https://career.vt.edu/job-search/presenting\\_yourself/resumes/types\\_and\\_formats/curriculum\\_vitae.html](https://career.vt.edu/job-search/presenting_yourself/resumes/types_and_formats/curriculum_vitae.html)
- November/  
December** Secure a faculty mentor and begin working on application materials  
Meet with previous Fellowship winners and/or Christina McIntyre to discuss ideas and/or ask any questions about the process. **Start early!**
- December** **DEADLINE:** Applicants must declare their faculty mentor online (link to be provided) no later than **Wednesday, December 6. Applicants cannot continue if they do not declare a mentor.**
- January** **DEADLINE:** Preliminary portfolio due by 5:00 p.m. **Tuesday, January 16.** Preliminary portfolio submission is required to continue with the process. Applicants will make an appointment with Christina McIntyre to receive feedback. Submission guidelines will be provided later.
- January/  
February** Continue working with faculty mentor to finalize application
- March** **DEADLINE: Final portfolio is due March 1. No late portfolios accepted. Submission guidelines will be provided later.**
- March** Honors College faculty will review portfolios beginning the week of March 11. Students selected for interview will be notified as soon as possible.
- April** **Interviews will be conducted between April 8-26.** Timeline will be narrowed during the Spring 2024 semester.

### HONORS COLLEGE CONTACTS:

#### **Christina McIntyre, Director of Professional Development, National and International Scholarships**

Please contact Christina to declare your intent to apply and for help discussing your portfolio ideas, your travel plans, personal statement writing, and interviewing skills. Email: [cmcintyre@vt.edu](mailto:cmcintyre@vt.edu)

#### **Russell Shrader, Director of Admissions and Scholarships (Honors College)**

Russell coordinates the administrative process of the Odyssey Fellowships, including interview logistics and approval/dispersal of scholarship funds. Email: [rbshrade@vt.edu](mailto:rbshrade@vt.edu)

## DETAILED SCHOLARSHIP DESCRIPTIONS

**The Class of 1954 Scholarship** provides outstanding Honors students with unusual opportunities extending beyond the classroom during their last two years of undergraduate study. The winner, named a Class of 1954 Fellow, receives funding to be used toward his or her travel experience and university tuition. An excellent, well-rounded education necessitates that students define experiences that complement and elevate their understanding of undergraduate learning. Candidates must seek beyond a simple addition to their disciplinary studies. They are encouraged to reflect on their passions and intellectual interests and then define an experience that embodies these curiosities. The experience must offer them the opportunity to expand a world view, refine a philosophy of life, engage their curiosity, and/or investigate and join a significant intellectual conversation.

**The Class of 1956 *Ut Prosim*** provides outstanding Honors students with unusual opportunities extending far beyond the classroom and campus during their last two years of undergraduate study. The winner, named a Class of 1956 Fellow, receives funding to be used toward his or her travel experience and university tuition. An excellent, well-rounded education necessitates that students define experiences that complement and elevate their understanding of undergraduate learning. The Class of 1956 *Ut Prosim* Fellowship seeks to identify students with outstanding ability and the capacity to make a difference in the world in which we live, through volunteerism or service.

**Wayne and Claire Horton** established their fellowship to provide assistance to outstanding honors students in the College of Engineering. Wayne Horton was a graduate of Virginia Tech's College of Engineering, and Claire Horton was an anthropology professor who taught at Marshall University. They lived in Huntington, West Virginia.

The purpose of the fellowship is twofold: first, to provide an outstanding Honors Engineering student with the resources to design and complete a major educational experience that gives focus and direction to his or her undergraduate efforts, and second, to ensure that the Horton Fellow obtains significant experience in the humanities and social sciences in addition to his or her degree in Engineering. Applicants must be in the College of Engineering but must also have significant experience in the humanities and social sciences and demonstrate significant engagement in a foreign language and the performing arts. Upon graduating, the Horton Fellow will possess broad knowledge of world affairs and contemporary social and political issues, all of which is intended to inform and enhance his or her work in the field of engineering.

While Honors students in all areas of engineering are encouraged to apply, special attention will be given to students who are interested in fields of engineering that confront issues of energy and alternative energy sources. The Horton Fellow will receive funding for an experience that:

- Requires international travel
- Demonstrates awareness and knowledge of cultural and social differences
- Attempts a project of meaning to both the student and the host country
- Develops a program to internationalize the engineering education of the student

Once awarded, Horton Fellows must complete three courses introducing the idea of the social sciences, including STS 2054: Engineering Cultures and two tutorials focusing on Social Science to be determined in consultation with Honors, and must also earn a degree in the College of Engineering.

**The Patricia C. Perna Fellowship** was created by the Perna family in honor and memory of the family's matriarch, Patricia C. Perna, who passed away in 2006 following an extended battle with cancer. The fellowship allows students interested in medical occupations or management to design an experience to explore and research quality of life issues associated with healthcare treatment and equipment. Priority will be given to experiences involving the care of patients and families affected by cancer, terminal illness, or injury. Through participation in the fellowship, students will develop opportunities to acquire hands-on field experience that can inform solutions to specific challenges associated with medical processes, equipment, facilities, or care. Funding will support the proposed learning experience.

## Fellowship Information Table

	Year Eligibility	Field Eligibility	Summer Experience	Award <sup>i</sup> (Up to...)	International Travel Required?
<b>Class of 1954</b>	Second-year (traditional sophomore)  First-year (transfer)	Open to any major	After third year	\$10,000	<b>No</b>
<b>Class of 1956 <i>Ut Prosim</i></b>	Second-year (traditional sophomore)  First-year (transfer)	Open to any major (volunteerism and service)	After third year	\$10,000	<b>No</b>
<b>Horton</b>	Second-year (traditional sophomore)  First-year (transfer)	College of Engineering <sup>ii</sup>	After third year	\$10,000	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Perna</b>	First–fourth <sup>iii</sup> (current & transfer)	Open to any major	Not specified	\$5,000	<b>No</b>

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<sup>i</sup> We will award *up to* the listed amount. Part of creating an effective proposal is creating a streamlined budget. We encourage you to think of how you would manage your award money well. Many times, the best experiences are the most cost effective.

<sup>ii</sup> Applicants must be in the College of Engineering but must have significant experience in the humanities and social sciences and demonstrated engagement in a foreign language and the performing arts.

<sup>iii</sup> A fourth-year senior may apply only if they will have at least two more semesters at Virginia Tech after winning the award.