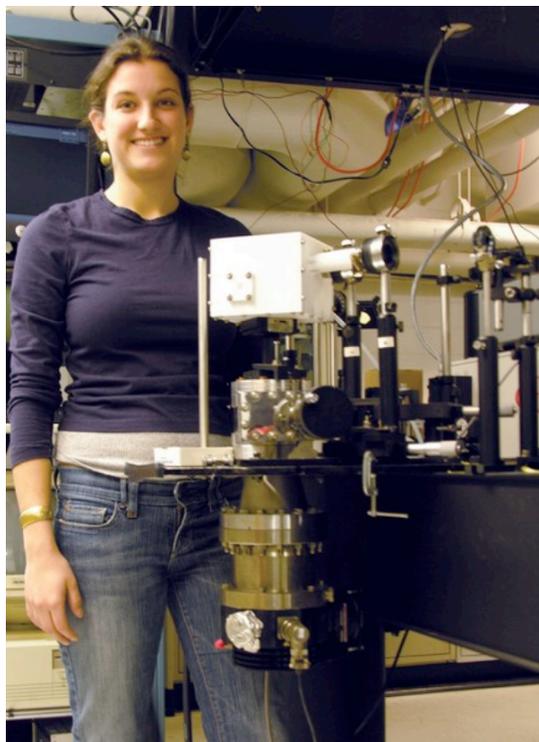


FOUR STUDENTS NAMED GATES CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS

After months of filling out applications and conducting interviews, they waited for the final approval. Last week four Northwestern students got it - and learned they would receive the Gates Cambridge Scholarship. Seniors Rachel Pike and Laura Hughes and graduates Ben Gross and Thomas Johnson III are among the 40 American students who will receive full funding for a year of post-graduate study at Cambridge University in the fall of 2006. The scholarship is only five years old. Some consider it to be as prestigious as the Rhodes Scholarship. More than 550 people applied this year. "I'm so excited, I'm thrilled," said Pike, a Weinberg senior, who found out Feb. 5 about the scholarship. "No way did I think I was going to get it." NU had the second-highest number of Gates scholars this year, behind Princeton University, which had five. Seven NU students have now received the scholarship since its inception. Weinberg senior Laura Hughes said her extracurricular activities helped her in the selection process. "One thing that is really interesting between Rachel and me is that we are involved with things outside our majors," said Hughes, who dances and is a former editor of a student-run scientific journal. Pike is the artistic director of the hip-hop dance troupe, Fusion Dance Company. The application process was difficult and different from other international scholarships, said Chris Hager, assistant director of fellowships. "The people chosen are not people who allow themselves to get lost in academic passions," Hager said.

Faculty members, as well as the Office of Fellowships, helped students with the application process. Since sophomore year, Pike has worked in the lab of chemistry professor Franz Geiger, analyzing trace gases and particulates in the climate. Pike said Geiger has been "a complete inspiration" during the process. Geiger returns the praise. "She's absolutely fantastic," Geiger said. "It was the most involved I've ever been with anyone applying for fellowships."



Many of the students who apply for the scholarship have nearly perfect grade point averages, but Pike said her unique interests made her stand out to the judges. As a chemistry major and African studies minor, Pike said she is something of an anomaly in her department. "Once you're in science it becomes a tunnel," Pike said, and students often don't see the social implications of their work. She said she broke through this tunnel by studying in Tanzania during her junior year. She said she plans to study atmospheric modeling at Cambridge, working toward a Ph.D. in chemistry, and wants to apply her research to environmental policy. The rigorous application process required application to both a graduate program at Cambridge and to the scholarship fund. Applicants were not considered for the award until they had been admitted into their graduate program. On Feb. 3 and 4, applicants were interviewed in Annapolis, Md., as the final step in the application process. Hughes, a winner of the 2005 Goldwater Scholarship, plans to receive a master's degree in chemistry at Cambridge studying theoretical modeling of drug interactions. She will come back to the United States to work toward a Ph.D. in chemistry. Thomas Johnson III, who graduated with a major in biological sciences in 2005, will study for a Ph.D. in brain repair. Ben Gross will study for a master's degree in criminology. He earned a degree in philosophy from NU in 2005.

The Gates Cambridge Scholarship program, started in 2000 by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, provides funding for a graduate program or a second bachelor's degree in all academic backgrounds. It covers tuition, room and board, airfare and incidentals. Nearly 300 students have completed their studies at Cambridge through the scholarship.

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