Rachel Zuckerman awarded global fellowship to study in China

University of Iowa graduate Rachel Zuckerman has been selected as a 2019 Schwarzman Scholar. As part of the program, Zuckerman will pursue a master’s degree at Tsinghua University in Beijing, one of China’s most prestigious universities.

Each of the 142 Schwarzman Scholars chosen from a pool of more than 4000 applicants demonstrates exemplary leadership qualities and the potential to understand and bridge cultural and political differences. They will live in Beijing for a year of study and cultural immersion, attending lectures, traveling, and developing a better understanding of China.

The Schwarzman Scholars Program was inspired by the Rhodes Scholarship, which was founded in 1902 to promote international understanding and peace, and is designed to prepare young leaders for the challenges of the 21st century and beyond.

“I am thrilled that Rachel has earned this well-deserved honor, and am proud of her significant achievements here at the UI that have led to this recognition,” says UI President Bruce Harreld. “Rachel is already an accomplished young scholar, leader, and advocate, and she is ready for this extraordinary challenge. Having worked with Rachel directly, I saw firsthand how effectively she puts her passion for improving people’s lives to work for those in need. Through her Schwarzman experience, I have no doubt that Rachel will continue to improve people’s lives across the globe and strengthen international ties.”

Zuckerman, 22, graduated in May 2017 with highest distinction and University Honors, earning degrees in political science and journalism, as well as a certificate in cultural competence. As an undergraduate, she conducted research on parental leave policies at Big Ten institutions and turning her departmental honors thesis into an opportunity to advocate for more generous paid leave for university professional staff.

“Rachel is a true teacher and leader, working constantly to ensure that every person she is responsible for has an equal chance of success,” says Kajsa Dalrymple, associate professor, UI School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Fueled by her commitment to increasing citizen participation among women, minorities, and young people, Zuckerman represented over 24,000 of her peers as Student Body President and led the UI Student Government to make progress on issues including diversity and inclusion, food and housing security, mental health, and civic engagement.

“Rachel's leadership is informed by relationships with the individuals who will be most affected by a shift (or lack of one) in policy as well as the actors who will be responsible for enforcement,” says Kelly Thornburg, director of Scholar Development, UI Honors. “From elected state officials and organizational advocates to our sororities and fraternities to the janitorial staff in our student union, Rachel made a special mark, creating clearer channels for communication and cultivating real opportunity for shared investment.”

After her year at Tsinghua University, Zuckerman intends to return to the US and her home state of Michigan to help strengthen the emerging relationship between Detroit and China.

“I am beyond humbled to have been given this once in a lifetime opportunity,” Zuckerman said. “It would not have been possible without the supportive and encouraging community of faculty, staff, administrators, and students at the University of Iowa.”

FOR MORE ABOUT THE SCHWARZMAN SCHOLARS:
• View the official release and the full list of 2019 Scholars
• Watch a short video about the Schwarzman experience

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