

## 2019-20 Presidential Scholars

James Connolly	Lindsey Dressler	Xiane Smith
Victoria Cooke	Elijah Freiman	Emily Toy
Katherine Cotton	Sean McAneny	Scott Williams
Shannon Curley	Brianna Riggio	John Wilson
	Don Rothwein	

**James Connolly** is majoring in International Relations and Spanish with a concentration in the Developing World. He serves as a teacher's assistant for Assistant Professor of Political Science Eunju Kang, and has presented independent research centered on the political economy of Venezuela with Associate Professor of Political Science and International Relations Karleen West. He also has authored an article titled *The Effect of Consociationalism on Democracy in Nigeria* for the departmental journal and presented a paper on minimum wage during Great Day 2018. James, past president of Geneseo College Republicans, has interned in New York's 27th congressional district and volunteered with campaigns for local state candidates. He is a member of the Sigma Iota Rho International Relations honor society and a recipient of the department's Ambassador Apartments Outstanding Junior Award. Among his educational experiences, James has studied abroad in Cadiz, Spain and attended the American Enterprise Institute's Summer Honors Academy in Washington D.C. He enjoys hiking, exercising and spending time with his Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity brothers.

**Victoria Cooke** is pursuing initial teaching certification for adolescence education as a history major with a minor in women's and gender studies. On campus, she has served as president of Voices for Planned Parenthood; founder and president of Her Campus at Geneseo; and head of curation for TEDxSUNYGeneseo. She also has worked as a campus campaign coordinator for Teach for America; a marketing coordinator for both the Office of LGBTQ Services and the Women's and Gender Studies Department; a tutor for the Access Opportunity Program; and a volunteer for the Rochester Young Scholars Academy. Victoria is a member of the Golden Key International Honor Society and Phi Alpha Theta history honor society. Her awards include the First Year Best Paper Prize for History; the Dr. William E. Derby Tribute Endowed Scholarship for History; the Best Creative Nonfiction Award for English; and a summer research fellowship from the Geneseo Foundation to investigate Pre-Stonewall Butch/Femme Lesbianism for her History honors capstone. She will be student teaching this year.

**Katherine Cotten** is majoring in biology with a minor in chemistry to prepare for a career as a research scientist in genetics and microbiology. She has worked on multiple research projects centered on microbiology at SUNY Geneseo and participated in the New York State Department of Health at Wadsworth Center summer research experience for undergraduates. Katherine is an active member of Alpha Phi Omega, a co-ed community service fraternity, and dedicates her time to many service projects throughout the Geneseo and Rochester community. She is also involved in music and dance programs, playing the flute in multiple ensembles, including the Wind Ensemble and Symphony Orchestra, and performing in the Geneseo Dance Ensemble.

**Shannon Curley** is a double major in history and geography with minors in environmental studies and the Edgar Fellows Program. She has presented her scholarly work at a variety of conferences including GREAT Day and the COPLAC Northeast Regional Conference. This past spring, Shannon won awards for her ArcGIS Online Story Map about the West Bank at the Geographic Information Sharing Special Interest Group Conference and for her history paper about Mexican-American children's literature at the Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society's Central/Western New York Conference. She also has completed internships with the USAID Youthmappers program and the Livingston County Planning Department, and served as a teaching assistant for INTD 105. In addition to being inducted into Phi Beta Kappa,

Shannon is a member of the Phi Alpha Theta and Gamma Theta Upsilon honor societies for history and geography, respectively. As the recipient of the James Houston '80 Ambassadorship in Innovation, Shannon studied space and community in Bosnia and Herzegovina this past June. She currently serves as a teaching assistant for Intro to GIS and works as a tutor in the Writing Learning Center and History Writing Center, while also making time to serve as treasurer for the Club Softball Team and the Geography/GIS Club.

**Lindsey Dressler** majors in biochemistry with a minor in mathematics. She is a medical assistant in the procedural suite at Western New York Urology and an EMT for the Geneseo Fire Department. Previously, she spent time volunteering in the Neuromedicine Intensive Care Unit at Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester. Lindsey conducts research on the degeneration of the zebrafish retina under the supervision of Associate Professor of Biology Travis Bailey. She was awarded a summer undergraduate fellowship, the Sorrell Chesin '58 Research Award, and an independent creative research grant to fund her endeavors. Lindsey presented her findings at the Northeastern Conference for the Society of Developmental Biology in Woods Hole, Massachusetts and at GREAT Day at Geneseo. She serves on the Biology Club executive board and is a member of the Tri-Beta Biological Honor Society and the Golden Key International Honor Society. She is currently a teaching assistant for genetics, cell biology, and molecular biology.

**Elijah Freiman** is majoring in geography with minors in environmental studies and urban studies. His research focuses on sustainable food systems within urban settings particularly in deindustrialized, Rust Belt cities. He has presented research projects at the 2018 New York Consortium of Sustainability in Higher Education Conference, the 2018 Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education Conference, the 2019 American Association of Geographers Conference, and GREAT Day 2019. Since sophomore year, Elijah has worked as a teaching assistant in the Geography Department and as an intern for Geneseo's Office of Sustainability. This past summer, he worked in the Office of Sustainability's eGarden where he received a TRAC grant to experiment with growing different crops and to begin construction of a greenhouse that will be used year-round to grow food for use in dining halls or nearby restaurants. Elijah has also been a member of Geneseo's Ultimate Frisbee team since freshman year.

**Sean McAneny** is majoring in English. He has worked on digital humanities projects with Professors of English Rob Doggett and Paul Schacht and also has completed a directed study of contemporary psychoanalytic theory and Slavoj Zizek under the supervision of Professor Doggett. Sean works as a tutor in the Writing Learning Center and serves as senior president for Geneseo's chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honor Society. Outside of the classroom, Sean competes as a member of Geneseo's cross-country and track teams, earning All-America honors twice and Academic All-America honors four times. After graduation, Sean intends to pursue a Ph.D. in English literature.

**Brianna Riggio** is majoring in English literature and French with minors in linguistics, musical theatre, and the Edgar Fellows Program. She is a member of Sigma Tau Delta International English honor society, Pi Delta Phi French honor society, and the Golden Key International Honor Society. This fall, Brianna is studying abroad at Paul Valéry University in Montpellier, France. In March 2019, Brianna served as a chair and presenter at the International Sigma Tau Delta Convention in Saint Louis. She also presented two sessions at SUNY Geneseo GREAT Day 2019, including a directed study with English Lecturer Irene Belyakov-Goodman – for whom she serves as a teaching assistant – about the ways that linguistic bias negatively affects non-natively accented immigrant populations in the United States and a paper about female agency in the *Old Testament* from English 382: The Bible as Literature with Professor of English Graham Drake.

**Don Rothwein**, an English adolescent education major, has served as an RA and Resident Assistant for International Student Engagement in the Department of Student Life for two years. Additionally, he has been highly involved in the Rochester Young Scholar's Academy program under the direction of Susan Norman, director of the Ella Cline Shear School of Education's Xerox Center for Multicultural Teacher Education. This fall, Don is student teaching, and studying abroad in Ghana.

**Xiane Smith** is majoring in biochemistry with a mathematics minor. She is currently studying putative RNA methyltransferases in *Trypanosoma brucei* under the supervision of Professor of Biology Kevin Militello. She presented her findings at the 45th Annual Rochester Academy of Sciences Fall Paper Session in 2018, and this year, her poster at the Experimental Biology Conference in Orlando this past April and also at GREAT Day 2019. Xiane serves as a mathematics tutor in the Math Learning Center and was a Supplemental Instructor for Contemporary Biology. She is a member of the Phi Delta Epsilon pre-medical fraternity and also the Beta Beta Beta Biological Honor Society and the Golden Key International Honor Society. She is a Geneseo Multicultural Fellow as well. In her spare time, Xiane volunteers at the Teresa House and continues this work at home, transporting patients in her local hospital.

**Emily Toy** is majoring in biochemistry and aspires to attend medical school. She serves as president of Geneseo's chapter of the Phi Delta Epsilon International Medical Fraternity. At Great Day 2019, Emily presented an independent research project that investigated the over-prescription of opioids and barriers to alternative treatment options for patients with spinal cord injuries. She is now working on a directed study project under the supervision of Visiting Assistant Professor of Organic Chemistry Robert Torregrosa, which examines the oxidation of alcohols to aldehydes for application to medicinal chemistry and pharmacology. Emily also presented current findings from this project at Great Day 2019. Her memberships in academic organizations include Gamma Sigma Epsilon National Chemistry Honor Society, Tri-Beta Biological Honor Society, Golden Key International Honor Society, and Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society. In her spare time, Emily participates in Colleges Against Cancer and volunteers as an EMT with the Geneseo Fire Department.

**Scott Williams** is a dual major in geography and political science, with minors in environmental studies and the Edgar Fellows Program. He is interested in sustainability education, environmental policy, and scientific communication. On campus, Scott is a member of Alpha Phi Omega and serves as a college senator and a teaching assistant in the Geography Department. In his free time, Scott enjoys hiking, tossing a disc, and playing board games. After graduation, Scott hopes to attend graduate school and earn a Ph.D. in environmental policy, and pursue a career with an environmental nonprofit in environmental policy research and advisement.

**John Wilson**, a physics and mathematics double major, has been involved in atomic and low temperature physics research since his freshman year. He has conducted experimental nuclear physics research with Geneseo Distinguished Teaching Professor Stephen Padalino; experimental low temperature/atomic physics research with Jeevak Parpia at Cornell University in the Laboratory of Atomic and Solid State Physics through an REU program; and theoretical physics focusing on plasma physics and quantum optics with John Palastro at the National Laboratory for Laser Energetics. He also presented at GREAT Day during his sophomore and junior years. As a member of the men's varsity swim team, John competes in the butterfly and sprint freestyle events and was on two winning SUNYAC relays in the 2018-19 season. Overall, he has been a part of three consecutive SUNYAC team championships.