2018-2019 H-C Scholars Report from Cambridge

The Perfect Way To Spend “A Year of Grace”

One of the first things Tez Clark, Lt. Charles H. Fiske III Scholar, noticed about Cambridge was its holism. This is bound to happen when your school is your home, and is also a town with approximately 123,900 people (by the last census count). The ugly way to say this is that work bleeds into life. The better, truer thing to say is that one can find inspiration in a coffee shop along King’s Parade, or during a casual brunch in Hall with a medic or literature student one has just met.

Tez’s MPhil research in the History and Philosophy of Science has so far focused on the use of idealized models in science (a topic she is fairly familiar with, as it closely relates to her undergraduate thesis) and on the ethical obligations of scientists researching controversial topics, such as the biological bases of sexual orientation and gender identity (a topic she, until recently, knew almost nothing about). Her department is an exciting, interdisciplinary place where one can attend a reading group on the philosophy of medicine in the morning, and then hear a talk about the literary history of science fiction in the afternoon. The MPhil is truly the perfect way to spend a “year of grace,” not only allowing Tez to develop her interests in philosophy but also pushing her to explore strange and exciting topics.

Outside her department, Tez spends most of her time in Trinity – walking around the courts, hearing the choir at Compline, or checking out A.A. Milne’s original Winnie-the-Pooh drafts in the Wren Library. The centre of graduate life at Trinity is the College’s BA Society, in which Tez has been busying herself. Highlights from Michaelmas include co-organizing a workshop on navigating graduate school as a woman (particularly in a college like Trinity, where the vast majority of students and fellows are male) with the BA Society’s Women’s Officer and BA formal dinners with generous amounts of port every Friday night, followed (much less regularly) by Parkruns on Saturday morning with other members of Trinity. Most worth writing home about: Tez’s team’s first-place win at the Trinity College pub quiz, which netted her a giant box of chocolates. In fact, perhaps the biggest Trinity-related blunder Tez made last term was bringing back a caseload of port as gifts for friends and family over the holidays – a mistake, as the port was so well-received that she’s been enlisted to bring back more at her earliest opportunity.

While the paths (and cows!) of Cambridgeshire have managed to charm even this die-hard city kid, Tez has still managed to explore the non-Cambridge bits of the world. Most frequently, this has meant day trips to London: attending talks, visiting art galleries and bookshops in the East End, and eating plenty of Szechuan food. Tez and her boyfriend recently returned from a trip to southern Spain, where they visited Seville, Cordoba, and Granada. As Cordoba is the birthplace of Maimonides, who provided the epigraph for Tez’s thesis, her visit to the city included an obligatory stop (and photo-op) at Plaza Maimonides. Later trips planned for this year include a short jaunt to Scotland (once the sun starts coming out for more than four hours a day), and to Rome, Vienna, Bratislava, and Budapest – all cities that should provide good opportunities for expanding Tez’s collection of transit maps.

continued on page 2
I wanted a way out, to a place where things might be easier, friendships came slowly, and my studies came slower. This motion at once familiar and foreign. I read from curiosity than picturesque backroads of British villages. Forging new journeys between Cambridge and Oxford on the less

While I refrain from calling myself a ‘rower’ – I only rowed a revelation of why I live that moment. puddles left by my oar strokes. For the first time I think, the sky from beyond the cow fields, refracting in the rhythmic its dark pools of pitch stuck to the clouds. This is the night refuses to yield to any dawn weaker than turpentine, its steps are vaguely familiar and yet novel, warmth over me. The steps are vaguely familiar and yet novel, but I don’t pause to think. Bike ride, unlock the lock, on the shuffle of oars, tighten the gates, push off, arms away, body over, through the legs. Somewhere in the back of my mind I recognize the memory engrained in my muscles by Harvard’s coaches, absentely echoing their voices to myself, relax the shoulders, quicker catches, accelerate to the finish. Harvard’s coaches, absently echoing their voices to myself, relax the shoulders, quicker catches, accelerate to the finish. The steps are vaguely familiar and yet novel, for no reason other than to get to know each other. While these may seem like small steps, they have actually been mountainous for Ellie’s mental health.

In Motive At Once Familiar and Foreign

Christian Schacht, Governor William Shirley Scholar, sends this report from Pembroke. “A blurred intrusion draws me out of sleep, and I silence the buzzing alarm. I shiver and question why I’m up, dark seeping through the old panes in drooping pools, the sound of the clock strikes heavy in my stomach, but I know not to examine my thoughts too closely and instead begin the routine of drawing layers of

A Whirlwind of Activity, Friendship, and Travel

From their first moments crossing through the Porter’s lodge and into the gorgeous, pond filled grounds of Emmanuel College, Cambridge has been a whirlwind of excitement, travel, and friendship for Farris Peale (they/them/theirs), the Lionel de Jersey Harvard Scholar. Farris quickly dove into a multitude of activities outside of school, finding new friends and interests. They are serving in Emma’s MCR as the LGBT+ representative and working with several student campaigns. Farris also came to Cambridge excited to devote more time to sports and expected to join Emma’s running club. However, one sunny October afternoon on Jesus green Farris encountered tryouts for the Strange Blues, the university’s varsity ultimate Frisbee team. Farris had not played Ultimate since middle school, but with a toss of the disc fate was sealed. As both an older member of the team and an inexperienced one, their time playing has been outrageously humbling and incredibly joyful. Farris will be heading to the indoor nationals tournament with the team shortly, where they hope to avoid getting beaten by a disc in the face by a disc, a not infrequent occurrence in practice.

Beyond Cambridge, Farris has already managed to visit Barcelona, southern Spain, Lisbon, Paris, and Patras, Greece thanks to Ryan, the fellowship’s generous stipend, and friends with couches to crash on. Of these trips, the highlight was Farris’s visit to Greece, where they stayed with a friend who has lived her whole life in Patras. She brought Farris all over the city – including to her family’s house for home-cooked meals, and an entire unexpectedly enjoyable, Greek dinner. They also explored Athens by metro, visited an aging cliff-side vineyard, and (of course) went to the beach in November, when Cambridge’s weather had grown dismal and a massive open-able window in Farris’s bedroom. Farris also visited friends at Oxford for Halloween and has started exploring London, putting their student rail card to good use.

Outside of sports and travel, Farris spends the majority of their time in the Political Thought and Intellectual History (PTIH) department. Although initially wary of PTIH members’ shared ability to connect any conversation back to Hobbes, Farris has made great new friends in the department. Farris is particularly excited about their term long course, which focuses on crime and punishment, providing a venue to explore theoretical themes that are sure to be useful when Farris goes on to study law. From biking through cow fields to hunting for books in the UL stacks, Cambridge has been a so much more culturally immersive and transformative adventure than Farris could have anticipated. They are grateful not only for the year of grace that this fellowship has allowed, but also for the challenges and accompanying growth it will leave behind.

Expanding Beyond Bounds

Her time in Cambridge has already stretched Ellie Lasater-Gutmann, John Eliot Scholar, farther than she could have ever expected. When she interviewed for the H-C scholarship, she had trouble understanding the “transformative” aspect of the scholarship year. Could it be that different? She’d spent a summer in England before, so could she really get herself to expand that much in one year? The answer is a resounding yes, and it’s only been three months. From seeing her long-time favorite band in concert to failing a course for the first time, Ellie has had one surprising and enriching experience after another. While it sounded cheesy to her at first, she now feels “transformed.” She is forever grateful for this extraordinary opportunity and is working every day to be worthy of it.

Looking forward, Ellie is writing her next paper on whether we are ever justified in making generic social assertions such as: “Women are submissive.” She will end her year with a dissertation on brain death.

Beyond her department, Ellie has recently been selected to present her undergraduate thesis at a conference on scientific approaches to consciousness in Japan. She has also begun learning healthy habits for her mind and body. During college, she felt a pang of guilt anytime she did something outside her coursework. For the first time, she is learning how to prioritize herself and not just her work. She is lifting weights at the gym nearly every day, walking about six miles a day accompanied by podcasts that brighten her mood, and meeting new friends from around the world for coffee and for no reason other than to get to know each other. While all this may seem like small steps, they have actually been mountainous for Ellie’s mental health. In all, Ellie simply does not understand how so little time has passed. While it sounded cheesy at her first, now she feels “transformed.” She is forever grateful for this extraordinary opportunity and is working every day to be worthy of it.
Community: A Note from the Chair

Years of Grace

When you have the privilege of reading the scholarship applications of dozens of College seniors over many years, as our Selection Committee members do each winter, you get an interesting perspective on the changing interests, fields of concentration and prospective career paths of Harvard’s undergraduates. In recent years we have seen more applicants who are fluent or proficient in several languages; more applicants who have already traveled to far-flung places; more applicants who seek a concentration in-area; more applicants who have done a substantial amount of charitable work outside of Harvard; more applicants who seek to study environmental science and computer science; and more applicants who have spent a considerable part of their undergraduate years studying gender-related or race-related issues and themes in many different concentrations.

The Cambridge colleges and graduate programs change too: more programs on topical global subjects; more emphasis on minimum GPAs; more Cambridge scholarships and fellowships awarded to graduating seniors at Harvard than ever, making it a little tougher for the scholars who win our one of our scholarships to stand out. Change at the top, too, not only of senior tutors but also of masters: in October Dame Sally Davies will become not only the new Master of Trinity but also the first female to assume that position (after 473 years), and with Professor Ian White stepping down as Master of Jesus this spring, Jesus College should be appointing a new master soon too.

Each year the Governance Committee that oversees our scholarship administration has to respond to change. In recent years, we have had to deal with numerous first-time situations: a scholar-elect who is a citizen of the EU, not the US, requiring different fees and immigration standards; a scholar whose program extends into the early part of the summer, requiring additional funds we have not in the past offered; a brilliant math scholar-elect who is not accepted into any of the graduate programs she wants to complete his senior thesis. Trinity C. of Cambridge more generally; and from the Trinity Fellows Garden, raucous runs on the Cantabrigian Hash House Harriers, and summer paloozas with the Cambridge Tolkien Society. Further afield, she traveled for a night-half marathon and, by bicycyle, to Stonehenge. Her academic journey which began with the poetic prophecies of William Blake and soon led to the discovery of an intense, years-long friendship between American and Englishwomen, Anne Gilchrist—was also memorable. Spohn plans to write up her findings as a narrative history and may use Gilchrist as a launching point for her senior English thesis. Michael Turkiewicz’ work in the lab of Dr. Tuomas Knowles was to pursue biological applications of a rapidly growing research method that could advance understanding of neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer’s and Huntington’s. Turkiewicz’s group was focused on developing new, more efficient and less costly ways to sequence single-cell RNA. Outside the lab, Turkiewicz spent much of his free time biking around Cambridge. A favorite destination was Wimpole Estate, with its wide, rolling grounds and many cows. Other favorite spots included King’s College Chapel and the Downing College lawn.

Justin Walthier ’21 found Cambridge to be a “phenomenal place” to conduct his senior thesis research in the Classics. Beyond the grandeur and beauty of the surroundings, Walthier appreciated the “flexibility and self-determination” of working with his mentor, Dr. Stephen Oakley, and the vast resources of the Classics and University libraries. Walthier recommends that future H-C fellows engage with British pub culture “early and often” and take advantage of the region’s myriad travel opportunities. He particularly enjoyed “exploring diversionary areas” which featured a ghost tour and some very unique aspects, as well as excursions to London, Dublin, and Amsterdam.

Harvard-Cambridge Scholarships

Summer Scholars Summary

Brian Cami ’19 calls his summer at Trinity College the “most rewarding” of its time as a Harvard student. He was highly supported but relatively hands-off advisor, he was free to explore new topics in his research on conspiracy theories, such as the “logic of popular propaganda.” He returned with a greater clarity about his central argument and had set up to complete his senior thesis. Trinity College itself was “the best,” as he was looking to the locals, watching England’s World Cup to practice the most cheap and convenient opportunities to travel all over Europe.

Ana Georgescu ’20 worked at the Institute of Astronomy with Dr. Simon Hodgkin and Ed Gillen to find new transiting exoplanets and eclipsing binary star systems. She also mentored a student, who gained database management and coding skills, enjoyed lively debates about the future of astronomy, and was encouraged to pursue an academic career. Other summer highlights include the Harvard Club of United Kingdom Annual Dinner, experiencing the art scene through Kettle House and numerous galleries and museums, and trips to London and Brighton.

Hannah Hess ’19 used her time at Trinity to research the evolution of marriage norms in Saudi Arabia over the last half century. Working with Dr. Sruya Iyer of the Economics Department, Hess drew on the abundant resources of the Cambridge library system, while sometimes returning to her room to collect data throughout the summer. Through interviews with Saudi women, interactions with other Harvard fellows and Trinity undergrads were enlivening and led to new friendships, while “reflective evenings” in the peaceful surroundings of the summer highlights: punting after dinner at the pub, and making the most of cheap and affordable after dinner at the pub, and making the most of cheap and affordable system. With their mentorship she gained a greater clarity about his central argument and well set up to complete his senior thesis. Trinity College was “the best,” as he was looking to the locals, watching England’s World Cup to practice the most cheap and convenient opportunities to travel all over Europe.

A Note from the Chair

With enough continuity to assure consistency, the benefits of experience, and a sense of tradition, change is good for organizations, and leadership change is especially good.

In 2021 we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first scholarship we awarded—the Fiske. As we celebrated the 90th, the century mark will likely once again be celebrated with an event in May at the Century Club in Manhattan. You will be receiving a “Save the Date” before too long. Change is constant. Tradition endures. The community of former Harvard-Cambridge scholars, now numbering around 175, marches on.

Marc Granetz
March 2019

* A report from summer scholar Mitchell Polyak ’19 was not available at press time.
Memories of Cambridge
A Line of Symmetry by Kerri Xiang (June 2017)

Sending love from Cambridge, I wrote in every email home when I moved to Jesus College in October 2017. A resident of Cambridge for 22 years, I found a simple, beautiful symmetry in never会员 to the subject line. My friends and family, once so far away, were now just a few feet and a few hundred yards away. I marvelled at the magical and unexpected resources to learn my Chinese-Cambodian home – only to move to another Cambridge, for a degree in Contemporary Chinese history.

Memorials were also on a great start. I loved my home atop Little Trinity, filling it with Mauoms and sometimes impressive succulents to love or to prepare a feast at sunset. I made wonderful friends, developed championship-winning trouser-throwing reunion's goals; and found a kind and generative thought partner in my supervisor. Looking back, I might only change two things: I bided on the right (or wrong; cough, side of the road for weeks and consistently failed to separate my laundry from my whites. (A colorful mistake my nearby mother had always shielded me from in undergrad.)

By the end of the term, however, I realized I was falling into old routines and a familiar Harvardian mindset: signing up for every extracurricular, over-structuring my time, and anticipating next steps without reaping the moment. Present.oving, napping, and readings – not quite the RMs I’d planned on. As 2018 rolled around, I realized the rest of my time could easily slip away in the same fashion. A weeklong adventure through Marrakesh and the Atlas Mountains reminded me of the merits of escaping this new (or, rather, Cambridge).

In the remaining eight months, I quit (gasp!) several extracurricular activities. I released an original pop/R&B album and immersed myself in term papers and my dissertation on Beijing’s 798 Art Zone (which I submitted with pride in August), but did not let these projects get in the way of travel and other learnings. Reflecting on my H-C year, I am filled with gratitude for several lifelong lessons. Two of the most important, I might distill as follows: Learning is portable. I did not need to be within view of the River Cam to get the educational year I wanted. With only seven hours of class per week, I booked cheap flights and train rides to London, Paris, Porto, Barcelona, Tenerife, Prague, Budapest, and more. With a bit of planning, I borrowed the books I needed and completed my coursework on friends’ futons and hostel bunk beds abroad – or neglected my work when play called. Learning on my own terms, in a way that fit naturally into my daily thinking and wandering, away from day-to-day distractions, resulted in better and deeper thinking.

The second lesson is more personal. I discovered that time away could actually make me feel closer to home, deepening familial bonds and my own cultural understanding. I had an inkling that switching from pondering semiotic dimensions of EeM placed Math concepts to studying Chinese contemporary history and art would help me better understand my heritage. But I had no idea of the extent to which I’d employ resources beyond my readings.

As I bounced through the modern Chinese literature canon, contemporary political history, and China’s post-Mao art scene, my calls home grew longer. My parents’ stories of displacement, of working in communes, living on Sichuan restaurant and my parents shared a heartwarming (and heartbreaking) revelation: “We’ve never been able to participate in Kevin’s education, until now.” This was the first time they’d communicated with a teacher of mine in their native language. In other words, I left home to learn from Cambridge’s educational Chinese – only to later find that the true experience of learning Chinese is as varied as practiced at Cambridge post its second-largest ever margin of victory over Oxford in the 101st staging of The Boat Race. Monks is often seen riding above all fur a bounding and irrepressible energy, so much so that when his scholarship year was almost up, the Trinity don offered some part-time career advice: “You won’t find fulfillment as a professional historian,” he told Monks. “You’re too lively – do something else!”

Those words, as much as anything else from his time as a H-C scholar, stuck with Monks. And in the end they helped him decide for a different path from academia – a path that has led, over the course of a long and dizzyingly varied career, to states as a federal judge, ambassador, political scientist, venture capitalist, and entrepreneur. Along the way Monks has held several high-level posts in the federal government, authored or co-authored dozens of articles and ten books (including a novel), and won an array of awards and accolades. But the vocation that has made him famous (and, in some quarters, infamous) is better captured by words like “maverick” or “crusader.” Today Monks is best known for his pioneering work on the subject of corporate governance and for his tireless efforts over many decades to press for corporate change through informed shareholder activism.

The problem Monks identified is rooted in the immense power of large corporations and in the fact that this power is concentrated increasingly in a few hands or even across that of governments is generally untethered from accountability to broader considerations of public or social good. In theory, oversight by the boardroom and the firm’s directors and officers ought to act as a check on corporate behavior. But these levers aren’t enough or they’re not working. From excessive CEO pay to corporate decision-making that prioritizes short-term profits over long-term stewardship, it’s clear that corporations often take actions or use their influence in ways that many of their own shareholders wouldn’t endorse. Monks has led the fight to empower shareholders, particularly large institutional owners, and founded a company, Institutional Shareholder Services, that hires a leader in corporate governance consulting, now advises shareholders with assets in excess of $1 trillion worldwide.

At 86, Monks sees progress in many areas but he’s also frustrated by all the ways in which progress has stalled. “I need another 35 years,” he jokes. Much may have changed since he left Cambridge in 1955. Clearly his energy hasn’t.

In Memoriam:
In 2018, we lost two members of the H-C family, the Honorable John C. Culver (Emmanuel, 1954-55) and Mr. Charles W. Ufford, Jr. (Emmanuel, 1958-59). Described as an “influential liberal” who “wore praise across the political spectrum for his independent,” Culver was confirmed by five terms in the U.S. Senate during the Vietnam Era. After leaving office, he practiced law in Washington and maintained ties with the Harvard Institute of Politics, as its interim director in 2010 and a member of its advisory board. Mr. Ufford, a lawyer and talented athlete, had served as chairman of the New York State Bar Association Trusts Law Section in 1984 and was a Fellow of the American College of Trusts & Estates Counsel.
On Commencement Day 2018, Robert N. Shapiro (’72, J.D. ’78) was one of three distinguished alumni to receive the Harvard Alumni Association’s Harvard Award for “extraordinary service” to the University. Described as “a deeply committed and loyal Harvard University citizen,” Shapiro — who is also a long-time member and former chair of the Harvard-Cambridge Scholarships Committee — has served the University in numerous capacities. He was president of the Harvard Alumni Association (HAA) from 1991 to 1992 and president of the Harvard Law School Association from 2000 to 2002. In 1996, Shapiro received the HAA Alumni Award in recognition of his many years of leadership and service to alumni and the HAA. As a member of the Harvard Board of Overseers from 2006 to 2012 and vice chair of the board from 2011 to 2012, Shapiro served on 12 different visiting committees. He was an Overseer member of the Harvard Corporation’s governance review committee in 2010 and served on the subsequent search committee for new Corporation members. Currently, Shapiro serves on the Dean’s Advisory Council for the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study and on Harvard Divinity School’s Leadership Council.

Shapiro’s law career began at the Boston firm Ropes & Gray in 1979. A partner in the private client group from 1987 until 2016, Shapiro is now CEO of Ropes Wealth Advisors. He is also president of the trustees of the Peabody Essex Museum.

We invite you to share your updates with the H-C community!
Please e-mail hcscholarship@gmail.com with news for next year’s newsletter.

Robert N. Shapiro (Trinity, 1972-73) receives Harvard Award

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Two Big ‘Firsts’ for Trevor Cox (Trinity, 2002-03)

The last year has been eventful for Cox: He argued a case in the U.S. Supreme Court and became a father — both in the same 24-hour period! His new daughter is named Sarah Russell and Cox suspects he might have thought of this pairing (“Russell” is a family name) thanks to meeting former scholar Sarah Russell (Trinity, 1999-00) during the H-C interview process.