



THE COUNCIL OF  
INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **CIC ANNOUNCES RECIPIENTS OF THE 2009 AMERICAN GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS**

#### **Liberal Arts College Grads Receive Fellowships for PhD Study at the University of Pennsylvania and Stanford University**

WASHINGTON, DC — The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) today announced the recipients of the 2009 American Graduate Fellowships: Robert Hoffman, who will graduate from Rollins College (Winter Park, Florida) this spring with a BA in philosophy and English; and Matthew Loar, a 2007 graduate of Washington and Lee University (Lexington, Virginia). Both of these Fellows will receive awards of \$50,000 for a year of graduate study, renewable for a second year. Hoffman will pursue a PhD in philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania and Loar has accepted an offer to study classics at Stanford University.

The American Graduate Fellowships (AGF) program, now in its third year, is designed to promote and support advanced study in the humanities by talented graduates of small and mid-sized, private liberal arts colleges and universities. The Fellowships may be used to support doctoral study at any of 23 leading private research institutions in the U.S., Great Britain, and Ireland. The eligible fields of graduate study include history, philosophy, literature and languages, and fine arts.

A generation ago, small liberal arts colleges prepared a disproportionate share of the country's professional scholars and scientists. In recent years, however, graduate students in the humanities have been drawn increasingly from large research institutions and state universities. Data from a CIC analysis of the Survey of Earned Doctorates (2006) show that in 1980, 28.2 percent of new PhD recipients in the humanities were alumni of independent American colleges and universities that emphasize baccalaureate and master's level education. In 2003, only 22.9 percent of new PhD recipients were graduates of such institutions. In addition, the American Historical Association in a 2005 report stated, "After decades of lowering the barriers of class and privilege, the ranks of new history PhD's are growing less diverse and more likely to draw from a narrow range

of elite institutions.... [Only] a small number of private liberal arts colleges played a critical part in feeding undergraduates into the pipeline of future history PhDs.”

The American Graduate Fellowships support the graduate education of a few stellar graduates of small colleges and also advance two larger purposes: encouraging the best students at small and mid-sized independent colleges to apply for PhD work in the humanities at top-tier private research institutions and raising awareness at leading graduate schools that small colleges are a rich source of future doctoral students. The Fellowships, funded by a generous grant from the Wichita Falls Area Community Foundation in Wichita Falls, Texas, draws attention to the best graduates of small liberal arts colleges who possess the education and ability to excel in the doctoral programs that train tomorrow’s leading scholars. President Teresa Pontius explained, “The Wichita Falls Area Community Foundation continues to be supportive of the important work being accomplished by these distinguished recipients. The small part we play in helping shape lives is very rewarding.”

Robert Hoffman has earned numerous academic honors and awards at Rollins College. He has been active in several service organizations, including Habitat for Humanity and Rollins Relief, an organization that assisted residents of New Orleans adversely affected by Hurricane Katrina and central Florida residents who suffered the effects of a series of devastating tornados. In the field of philosophy, Hoffman is particularly interested in the topics of freedom, determinism, responsibility, and moral psychology.

Matthew Loar graduated summa cum laude from Washington and Lee with a major in classics in 2007. He subsequently completed post-baccalaureate studies in Greek and Latin at the University of Pennsylvania in preparation for his pursuit of a PhD in classics. He is currently completing a master’s degree in women’s studies at the University of Oxford. Loar is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and was awarded the Beinecke Fellowship for Graduate Studies in 2006. While in graduate school at Stanford, Loar plans to study gender and sexuality in ancient literature.

The 2008–2009 AGF competition received applications from students at 31 different institutions across the nation. The applications were reviewed by a panel of distinguished humanities scholars, who selected a group of finalists representing six different fields of graduate study.

**2009 Finalists:**

- Robert Cole, University of Richmond, will study history at New York University;
- Emily Copeland, Hanover College, will pursue a degree in medieval studies at the University of Edinburgh;
- Matthew Hunter, Vassar College, will study English literature at Yale University;

## American Graduate Fellowships – 2

- John Lee Moore, William Jewell College, will pursue a degree in English literature at the University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign;
- Sarah Olsen, Wellesley College, will study classics at the University of California, Berkeley;
- Taylor Walle, Washington and Lee University, will study English literature at the University of California, Los Angeles; and
- Matthew Wellenbach, Williams College, will pursue a degree in classics at Brown University.

Graduate plans are still pending for finalists Christa Johnson, Ursinus College (philosophy); Vanessa Lauber, Wofford College (English literature); and Matthew Lincoln, Williams College (art history).

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The **Council of Independent Colleges** is the national service organization for small and mid-sized independent colleges and universities. It includes nearly 600 independent, liberal arts colleges and universities and more than 60 higher education affiliates and organizations that work together to strengthen college and university leadership, sustain high-quality education, and enhance private higher education's contributions to society. To fulfill this mission, CIC provides its members with skills, tools, and knowledge that address aspects of leadership, financial management and performance, academic quality, and institutional visibility. The Council is headquartered at One Dupont Circle in Washington, DC. For more information, visit CIC's website at [www.cic.edu](http://www.cic.edu).