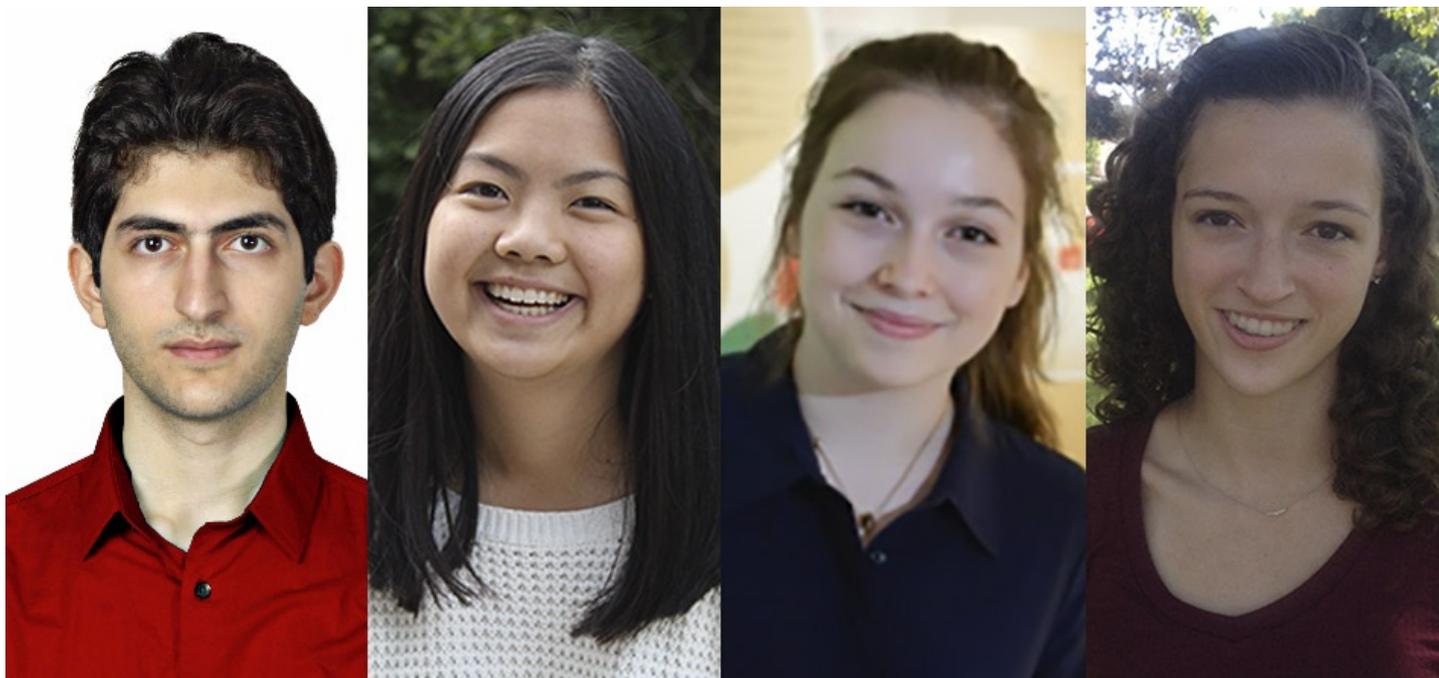


Four Schulich Leaders begin their first year at McMaster

By Wade Hemsworth, September 8, 2016



■ From left to right: Behrad Dehnadi, Kaylie Lau, Emma Mogus, Erin Puersten

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Four students who have already distinguished themselves as academic and community leaders in high school are starting their first year at McMaster with special support and recognition, having been named Schulich Leaders.

The Schulich Foundation has designated four 2016 Schulich Leader Scholarships for McMaster: two in Engineering and two in Science, providing each of them with financial support that allows them to concentrate on their studies and develop their potential as future leaders.

The students, Behrad Dehnadi, Kaylie Lau, Emma Mogus, Erin Puersten, are among 50 Schulich Leaders starting their studies at leading universities across Canada.

Launched in 2012, the \$100-million scholarship fund supports 50 undergraduate scholarships each year in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). A similar program is conducted in Israel, where an additional 50 scholarships are awarded annually.

Twenty-five scholarships, valued at \$100,000 each, are designated for students pursuing an Engineering degree. Twenty-five scholarships, valued at \$80,000 each, are designated for students studying Science, technology or math.

Here's a look at McMaster's 2016 Schulich Leaders and their approaches to the next stage of their impressive lives, in their own words:

Kaylie Lau

Age: 18

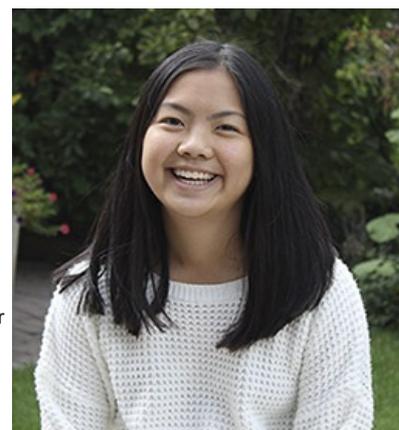
High school: Bishop Allen Academy, Toronto

McMaster program: Engineering Co-Op

About me:

From a young age, I took an interest in maths and sciences. I find biology especially fascinating, so I plan to enter the biomedical and electrical engineering stream in second year and pursue further studies in graduate school. Biomedical engineering will allow me to incorporate biology and medicine and apply it to innovative technology and ideas. Ultimately I hope to do research in the medical field and develop tools for diagnosis, treatment and prevention. I enjoy sports, including competitive curling, cross country and track and field. I also enjoy volunteering with various causes and organizations.

The way I learn:



My approach to learning is always to make sure I do not just memorize what I need to know, but genuinely understand it. I do that by approaching material from various perspectives, drawing connections to real-life examples. I also think it's important to learn through experience, both inside and outside of the classroom. Some of the most valuable learning I've done has been while volunteering in the community.

What it means to be named a Schulich Leader:

To me, being a Schulich Leader is being someone who uses their passions and knowledge to develop innovative ideas and inspire a team to follow through, ultimately benefiting the world around them.

I am extremely grateful to be a Schulich Leader. This scholarship will allow me to pursue my interests, and use what I learn in a way that I hope will benefit society.

What drew you to McMaster?

I chose McMaster because of its tight-knit community and renowned Engineering program. I am excited because I know I'll have the opportunity to learn and grow alongside other like-minded students. I believe the biomedical engineering program, along with the co-op program, will provide me with the necessary tools and skills to make an impact on the world. I am also excited to take part in the co-curricular opportunities offered at McMaster including clubs and sports and innovation, entrepreneurial and leadership opportunities.

Emma Mogus

Age: 17

High School: White Oaks Secondary School, Oakville

McMaster program: Chemical and Physical Sciences

About me:

I am the second eldest of five children. Growing up in a large family introduced me to the importance of sharing, caring for others, volunteering, and collaborating. I am the co-founder of Books With No Bounds, an organization that empowers Indigenous youth worldwide through literacy, and the creator of TiC (Tongue Interface Communication), a tongue-operated mouse which allows ALS patients to navigate a computer.

In my spare time, I play piano and soccer, practice taekwondo, read, figure skate, and enter science fairs. Innovation, science, and most important, their applications for helping people, have always been major interests of mine, and one day I aim to pursue a career as a scientific research and inventor.



The way I learn:

I find myself learning more efficiently when I understand the applications of the material. To me, this is the most important aspect of any knowledge we attain through research or study. When I am able to conceptualize how what I am learning can possibly help others, I push myself to explore the subject even farther.

What it means to be named a Schulich Leader:

To me, being a Schulich Leader means having the tools and resources necessary to continue to work hard and be ambitious on my path towards a STEM career. Personally, it represents a responsibility for inspiring other students to pursue their career goals, and to utilize the scientific knowledge and skills I will attain to make the world a better place. It is a tremendous honour to become part of a nation-wide community of like-minded STEM students.

What drew you to McMaster?

For the past two summers, I have been a researcher in the Engineering Physics Department with Dr. Ayse Turak and her research group. My work has primarily been focused in Organic Photovoltaics, fabricating solar cells and environmental testing chambers, writing manuals and teaching fourth-year students and interns how to use specific equipment. Through my work, I have grown more familiar with and fond of the McMaster community. Prior to that, I had known of the highly regarded science program at McMaster, so it was a natural choice for me.

Erin Puersten

Age: 17

High school: Clarington Central Secondary School, Hampton, ON

McMaster program: Engineering

About me:

Growing up in a rural community I was well supported by my family who encouraged me to engage in the activities that now form the four pillars of my life: academics and a love for science, musical training and orchestral experience, traditional Japanese Shotokan Karate-Do, and the ability and opportunity to pass on my skills and abilities by teaching children in music and aquatics.

As I move on to this new phase, I am making the choice to learn and grow in a supported community. Looking ahead beyond my time at McMaster I strive to stay as open as possible. I don't know exactly where my passions will lead me, but I can't wait for that "ah-ha!" moment when it all becomes clear.



The way I learn:

It's important to approach learning with new eyes and a fresh perspective every day. You must open up your mind because you never know when the right idea or lesson will strike. Classroom learning is important, but sometimes the best way to learn is by engaging in the world around us. Something you learn in a music lesson may applicable to a physics lecture. Our brain thrives on making mental connections, so I strive to broaden my horizons and learn from as many sources as possible.

What it means to be named a Schulich Leader:

Being named a Schulich leader is very welcome recognition for my leadership in high school and in the community, though I see it as more of a beginning than an ending, since the scholarship provides me with encouragement and opportunities to continue leading. This scholarship has opened doors that allow me to learn and to lead without any worry of financial barriers, at the same time that it connects me to a network of inspiring people.

What drew you to McMaster?

McMaster was one of the first universities I was able to visit, and I fell in love immediately. I absolutely adore the energy and life around Engineering at Mac. There was one specific moment during a Fall Preview Day, when I was still weighing my options, when the presenter said something that changed the way I saw Engineering. I'd always loved problem-solving and applying logic and innovation, but during the presentation it became very clear that the ultimate goal of Engineering simmers down to just one thing: improving the way we live. This resonated with me. I knew then that Mac would give me the foundation and opportunity to improve lives.

Behrad Dehnadi

Age: 18

High school: John Polanyi Collegiate Institute, Toronto

McMaster program: Life Sciences

About me:

I was born in Tehran, Iran, and I immigrated just as I was starting high school. I have always been fascinated by learning new things, so even when I get tired of studying, I usually watch a historical documentary. I am a big fan of classical music, and non-vocal music in general. I follow news and politics a lot, and I enjoy watching debates. It's my goal in life to help as many people as I can.

The way I learn:

I try to not focus on specific points but on the subject as a whole and the ways it connects to other subjects. If I really want to remember something, I usually have a discussion with myself about the questions that arise from the materials I am studying.

What it means to be a Schulich Leader:

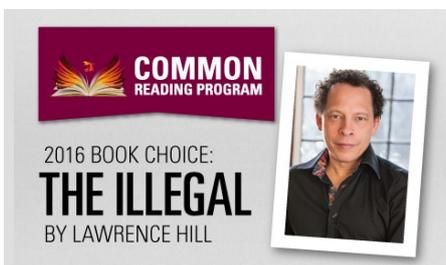
It encourages me to do better. To me, it's a responsibility that means that failure is not an option, I have this tremendous chance and I must not deviate from my path, because people have placed this trust in me. It confirms that there are people who believe in me, and that is very gratifying.

What drew you to McMaster?

My research – mainly polls and statistics – drew me to McMaster. Since I want to go to medical school, it showed that I would have a higher chance and better results studying in McMaster. Friends of mine also recommended McMaster, based on its co-operative environment.



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