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Ryan Gayman Receives Humanity in Action Fellowship

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Ryan Gayman

University of Pittsburgh senior Ryan Gayman, a University Scholar, has been selected to receive a 2012 Humanity in Action (HIA) summer fellowship. Gayman, an anthropology and urban studies major in the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, will participate in the European program this summer in Paris.

This is the seventh consecutive year that Pitt has competed successfully in the HIA Fellowship program.

Based in Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Poland, the HIA European Programs focus on European issues of historical and contemporary importance, among them immigration, the integration of underrepresented groups, and the formation of international human rights doctrines.

Gayman, from Newburg, Pa., has worked extensively with the nonprofit organization Amizade Global Service-Learning, which empowers individuals and communities through worldwide service and learning. In spring 2010, he visited the Navajo Nation, a semiautonomous Native American-governed territory, to attain a better understanding of the site and culture. That following summer, he traveled to Karagwe, Tanzania, where he worked with a local women's rights nongovernmental organization (NGO), Mavuno, to collect ethnographic data on Tanzanian women. He also helped to install water-harvesting systems in rural villages and constructed a tree nursery for local farmers.

In summer 2011, Gayman traveled to Jukwa, Ghana, where his community needs assessment and feasibility study resulted in the construction of a maternal care wing to a clinic. While in Ghana, he worked as a youth conflict-resolution volunteer for Peace Humanity, a Ghanaian NGO that connects volunteers across the world to Ghanaian communities. Gayman also served as a volunteer in Buduburam, a refugee camp near Accra, Ghana, where he helped to create peaceful conflict-resolution programming for Liberian youth in the camp.

At Pitt, Gayman's service includes working as a steering committee chair for Keep It Real, a student-initiated organization devoted to tutoring and mentoring refugee children. In that organization, he cocreated Real Saturdays Refugee Boys Club, a weekend program that focuses on the development of social and personal skills of Somali Bantu refugee boys. In spring 2010, Keep It Real board members received the University's Outstanding Organization of the Year and Outstanding Educational Programming of the Year awards.

Gayman's other leadership experiences include his appointment as a student representative to the Property and Facilities Committee of the Pitt Board of Trustees and as a student representative to the Pitt University Honors College Student Advisory Board, as well as his election as a Student Government Board (SGB) member for the 2011-12 academic year. As an SGB board member, Gayman served on the Student Community Service Council and helped coordinate student volunteer opportunities in conjunction with Pitt's Student Volunteer Outreach program.

In addition to working as an executive assistant in the Student Organization Resource Center, which provides service to more than 400 undergraduate and graduate student organizations, Gayman is also an active member of Pitt's Anthropology Club and Plant

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to Plate, a student organization that teaches students about sustainable agriculture and connects them to their food through urban gardening.

Participation in the HIA's core programs provides the foundation for further involvement with the HIA. Upon completion of summer fellowships, participants may proceed to international internships to continue their training in human rights issues. Past fellows have used their experiences with HIA to further careers in such fields as education, civil service, journalism, law, and art.

HIA was founded in 1997 to guide student leaders in the study of human rights. Fellows are selected on the basis of high academic achievement, evidence of leadership ability, and demonstrated commitment to human rights issues.
