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Making Waves

The Campaign for St Andrews

Rectors' Fund
2024 Update
Prepared for
The Lucky Club



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Introduction

The University of St Andrews is grateful to The Lucky Club for their generous gifts that continue to support students to pursue summer internships and progress their career aspirations.

St Andrews is committed to creating an environment in which all can flourish and realise their full potential. We recognise that students with limited financial resources can face barriers to gaining vital employability experiences, but the Rectors' Fund helps students overcome such challenges. This year the Rectors' Fund supported a record number of students thanks to the generous gifts totalling £17,000 from the Lucky Club, which were supplemented by residual funds from previous years. Funds were awarded to 77 students to undertake internship projects in a range of fields including conservation practices, humanitarian work, politics, and various areas of research.

I am pleased to share with you a selection of updates from the 2024 recipients of the Rectors' Fund within this report. As the students' words demonstrate, these work-related activities have helped them gain industry knowledge and develop networks and take steps towards their future careers.

This year also marked an exciting milestone for the University with the public launch of *Making Waves: The Campaign for St Andrews*. The Campaign aims to raise £300 million to enhance our status as a world-leading, diverse, digital, sustainable and entrepreneurial centre of learning, teaching and research. Our fundraising goal is ambitious, but it is thanks to donors like you whose generosity has helped transform the University and the experiences of our students, that we have embarked upon this journey with confidence.

We are incredibly thankful for your ongoing support and hope you will enjoy reading the selection of updates from this year's recipients and learning how your gifts are making a difference to our students.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Robert Fleming', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert Fleming
Director of Development

2024 Reports

Denis Chirita

5th Year, MSci (Hons) Computer Science

Equity Risk Engineering internship at Citadel.

I am Denis Chirita, originally from Bucharest, Romania, and currently in my fifth and final year of an Integrated Masters in Computer Science at the University of St Andrews. I have always been fascinated by financial markets, particularly how companies leverage high-speed computer systems to trade at the nanosecond level. My interest in this area has led me to pursue internships at financial firms, including JP Morgan and XTX Markets, where I worked as a software engineer intern. This past summer, I had the incredible opportunity to intern at Citadel, the most successful hedge fund of all time. My goal was to deepen my understanding of how software can address large-scale problems in financial trading, especially when dealing with high-volume transactions that impact the entire market.

During my internship, I was placed in the Equity Risk Engineering team, where I worked on a critical system that provides live pricing and risk data to teams across the firm. My main project was to develop a tool that enhances visibility into the state of this system at any given moment, tracking various metrics to ensure immediate response to any issues. This tool was particularly impactful because it allowed support teams to interact directly with the system – something that was not possible before. Given the high-stakes nature of the firm's trading operations, where any incorrect data could lead to significant market instability, the system's accuracy and reliability were paramount.

This project not only challenged me technically but also allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of financial systems and software engineering. I had a great deal of autonomy, which pushed me to take ownership of the project, make key decisions, and deliver a functional tool with minimal supervision. I was also encouraged to engage with different teams across the company to better understand the broader business context and develop my commercial awareness. A significant part of my role involved teaching business users how to leverage the tool I built, enabling them to answer questions about the system without needing constant support from my team, maximising the impact of my work.

On a more personal note, the internship provided several memorable experiences outside of work. One highlight was a company dinner held at Westminster Abbey, which was an incredible opportunity to connect with colleagues in such an iconic setting. I also had the chance to bond with my team over mini golf, which was a fun way to learn more about my team. Overall, the internship was an enriching

experience that reinforced my interest in this industry, and I am incredibly grateful for the support from the Rectors' Fund.

The Rectors' Fund award had a significant impact on my internship experience. It helped cover my travel expenses from Romania to London, easing the financial burden of relocating for the summer. Additionally, it allowed me to purchase formal clothing, which I lacked and was essential for the professional environment in which I was working. Without this support, I would have struggled to meet the demands of my internship, as appropriate attire was a concern for me. This experience has reinforced my desire to pursue a career in the financial industry, and the Rectors' Fund played an important role in making that possible.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the donors of the Rectors' Fund for their generous support. This award had a significant impact on my internship experience, helping to cover essential costs such as travel and professional attire, which allowed me to focus fully on my work and development. Your contribution made a real difference, enabling me to take full advantage of this opportunity and immerse myself in a role that has shaped my future career aspirations. Thank you for your invaluable support and for helping me realise my potential!

Birte Muller

4th Year, MA (Hons) International Relations

Research internship at the Institute of International Relations in Prague, Czech Republic.

Aspiring to specialise in EU integration and transition into the European think tank space, I was eager to collaborate with Professor Kratochvíl and Professor Laryš at the Institute of International Relations in Prague to explore topics such as identity, authoritarianism, and emotions in European politics and international relations. Prague, as a key EU member state, would provide me with invaluable first-hand insights into the issues shaping European politics, especially during the pivotal period of the EU elections. This experience would enhance my understanding of the EU community and its collective needs, empowering me to advocate for more representative policies in the long term.

During my internship, I conducted in-depth research for the manuscript 'Ultra-Nationalist Hardliners in Nationalist Authoritarian Regimes: Allies or Challengers?' and analysed eight detailed case studies, including the Buddhist militant movement in Myanmar and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Iran. I also wrote a comprehensive 10-page literature review on the unintended consequences of nature

conservation in conflict zones, examining how misconduct by paramilitary rangers in the DRC and Mali exacerbates local grievances and fuels support for rebel groups. Additionally, I presented an analytical report on the role of emotions – specifically resentment – in shaping Russia’s foreign policy.

A highlight of my experience was attending the Prague European Summit, my first conference, where I engaged with over 500 policymakers and participated in thought-provoking discussions. This inspired me to travel to Berlin the following weekend for a conference on cyber security at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs. Interacting with fellow interns from across Europe was equally enriching, broadening my understanding of diverse perspectives on ‘Europeanness’ and our most pressing issues.

The Rectors’ Fund made it possible for me to undertake this internship. As an unpaid position, which is common in the European think tank sector, I needed funding to cover essential expenses like accommodation, transportation, and groceries, especially since I was not a resident of Prague. Receiving this financial support allowed me to concentrate fully on my internship and immerse myself in the city's rich cultural and professional environment, rather than juggling a part-time job. As a result, I have built valuable connections with academics in my desired field and gained a clearer understanding of the skills and experiences necessary to excel in this career path.

I want to express my gratitude for your generous support, which made my internship at the Institute of International Relations in Prague possible. Your contributions allowed me to focus entirely on my internship, alleviating the challenge of securing funding to cover essential expenses.

Your support not only facilitated my immersion in this vibrant cultural and professional environment but also helped me build valuable connections in my desired career field. Thank you for believing in students like me. Your generosity has made a lasting impact on my academic and professional journey.

Ellie Trace

4th Year, MA (Hons) Economics with Russian

Supply Chain Strategy and Sustainability Consultancy internship at Deloitte.

I am a current Economics with Russian student who loves problem solving, so consultancy was a natural route but ending up with supply chain was almost by chance! I am a very practical person, so working somewhere where I was able to actively contribute was important to me. I do lots of admin work with the

Students' Union but one area I am particularly passionate about is volunteering. I have dedicated a lot of my time at university to helping bring back the voluntary service and develop volunteer recognition and retainment strategies which meant I was particularly drawn to Deloitte's 5 Million Futures programme which aims to help five million people in the UK overcome barriers to education, skills and employment. As part of my internship at Deloitte, I was even able to go volunteer on one of their placements and had the opportunity to talk to pupils in a school just outside Brighton about university and my future career path.

I worked within the Supply Chain area of the consulting business and as such got to work as part of an incredible project team, but also with other parts of the business development, culminating in my final presentation discussing the importance of data in decision making processes as well as the little bits of advice I'd picked up from working with such a wide range of new people.

Coming from studying Economics, I already had a lot of analytical, spreadsheet and data handling skills but what I really gained was a viewpoint of the entire data lifecycle within a business. I worked with everything from defining what decisions are being made; what information can be used to inform them; how to collect, extract and interpret that data; and then actually extracting and building a sustainable data reporting and analytics system. I am sure lots of changes have been made to it after I have left, but the amount that my project team trusted me to accomplish allowed me to rethink the way I approach problems. I look at things with a new sense of initiative and have the confidence to tackle issues I previously thought I could not.

Aside from my project I also got to help with different side projects other consultants had going on including looking at supply chain best practice, sustainability and building the supply chains of the future. It allowed me to look at other aspects of not just the business but the whole industry and gave me a lot of perspective about the problems that modern supply chains face.

The real highlight of my internship though was without a doubt the people I got to work with. Having the opportunity to be around so many incredibly clever but still lovely and supportive people allowed me to really focus on my self-development in a way I had never let myself before. I could not have asked for a more inspiring group of people to learn from.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to take on this internship, which without the funding would have been difficult to make the most of. It allowed me to understand that consultancy – specifically within supply chain – is absolutely somewhere that I would thrive, and I would love to spend the rest of my career working, but even through my short time working with the company I managed to volunteer and encourage even more young people to look at a future in economics.

Thank you for your generous support of my career and future. The ability to take part in this internship has opened so many doors and provided so many opportunities for my personal growth and development. I am so grateful for your belief in my potential and future and cannot wait for all I will go on to do after graduation!

Khinley Trott

3rd Year, MA (Hons) International Relations and Philosophy

Internship at La Voix de La Femme Amazighe; an NGO in Morocco which aims to empower local women.

I am passionate about intersectionality and human rights, which stems from my background in International Relations. Having lived in Africa, Asia, and Europe, I've always been drawn to multicultural history and advocating for marginalised groups. This internship allowed me to apply my academic knowledge while supporting Amazigh women in Morocco.

Throughout my internship, I engaged in meaningful work that highlighted the power of grassroots activism. I spent my time reconnecting the NGO with foreign embassies, particularly the Korean and British embassies, to secure office resources and financial support. A major highlight was organising the Pan-North African Amazigh Women's Conference, where I planned the speakers, logistics, and a four-day agenda. This project was both challenging and rewarding, as I had to manage cultural and logistical barriers. Another unexpected challenge was navigating gender dynamics; being a man, I found that I was unable to participate fully in fieldwork, which gave me greater insight into the nuances of gender roles in this context. I also used this opportunity to improve my language skills by learning some Arabic, which helped me connect with the local communities. Overall, the internship was a learning experience that deepened my understanding of intersectional advocacy.

The Rectors' Fund award allowed me to cover some of my expenses particularly once I got to Morocco. This financial support enabled me to focus on organising the event effectively. I plan to continue working in human rights, particularly in intersectional advocacy. This has had a profound effect on my module choices for third year as I am very keen to work in the field of human rights – I have taken two human rights modules in International Relations and Philosophy respectively.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the donors of the Rectors' Fund. Your generosity made it possible for me to organise an impactful event for Amazigh women, fostering collaboration across North

Africa. This experience has been transformative, and I deeply appreciate the opportunity to contribute meaningfully.

I believe the Rectors' Fund not only supported my personal and professional growth but also contributed to advancing the cause of marginalised Amazigh women. I hope to maintain contact with the women and organisations involved, as I feel this is just the beginning of a larger movement towards gender equality in North Africa.



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