



THOMAS J. WATSON FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship Advising and Study Abroad Office (FASA)



Caltech

Overview/Synopsis & Eligibility

- Candidates must devise their own study program. This independent study program should provide substantial contact with another culture or cultures. This year should not involve extended foreign study at a university. Rather, the applicant's proposal should be one that fosters independence and be of personal significance.
- Applicants may be **U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or foreign nationals.**
- Applicants must be graduating seniors attending one of the approximately forty colleges whose students may apply for a Watson, including Caltech. However, the application process will begin your junior year.
- No specific grade point, language skill or specific major is required, applicants must be able to develop a creative, interesting, and feasible proposal for a year of independent “study” and travel.
- Each year, about 41 students are selected nationally as Watson Fellows and awarded \$40,000 to travel world and pursue their project.

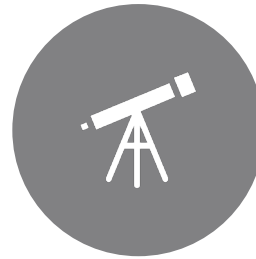
WHY APPLY?



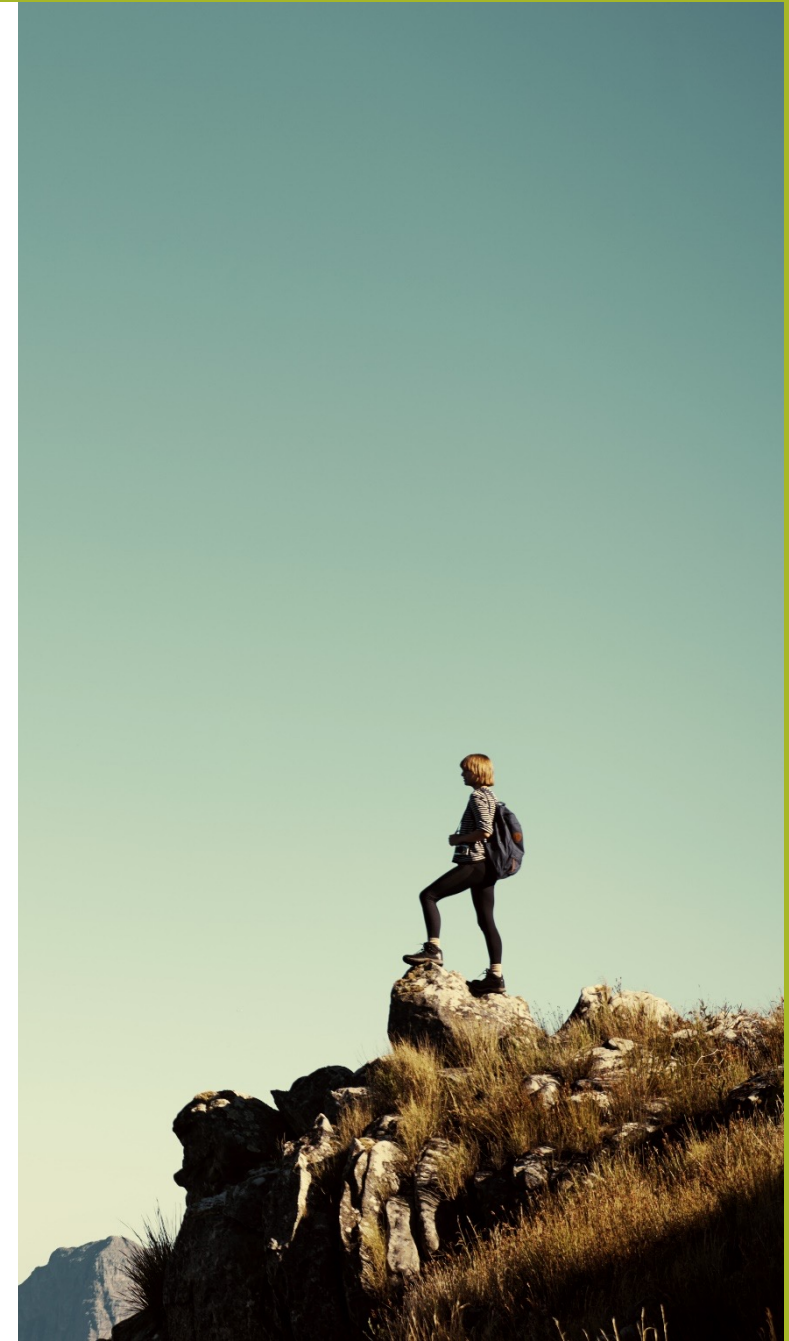
Adventure



Enthusiasm



Discovery



Selection Criteria

Qualities sought in the selection of fellows include:

- Leadership
- Imagination
- Independence
- Emotional Maturity
 - Courage
 - Integrity
- Resourcefulness
- Responsibility

Application Components and Deadlines



"MEET" WITH ME TO DISCUSS BY April 15th



Application forms (3 pages)



1500-word personal statement



1500-word proposal



2-3 letters of reference using Watson form (at least 1 needs to be from someone at Caltech, typically faculty)



Proposed budget breakdown and contact list (Note: stipend is taxable, may use stipend to pay taxes)



Transcript (Unofficial OK)



DEADLINE: April 19th by 5pm PST



Everything emailed together to SAapplications@caltech.edu Recommenders email their reference forms to

SAreferences@caltech.edu

Qualities for Composing a Successful Proposal

- What they are looking for in the project and personal essays:
 1. Passion
 2. Vision
 3. Intention
 4. Independence
 5. Resourcefulness & Courage
 6. Feasibility, Sustainability
 7. Stretch
 8. Fit
 9. Person ⇔ Project





Please Note:

- Remember, at least one of the recommendations needs to be from someone at Caltech, typically a faculty member. And they email their reference to us directly.
- The rules are that you must select countries ranked 1 or 2 while avoiding countries ranked 3 or 4 on the US Department of State Travel Advisory site.
- Normally winners are required to begin their travel the summer they are selected. Recently they were flexible, offering deferment to winners until safe to start their project with Covid, but I do not know if they will continue to do that next year. Best to plan and prepare to have to start your project for the summer of 2024.
- Safety is a key priority for the Watson Fellowship, so although there are still some uncertainties, remember that it is always their most important consideration.



Liana Merk, Bioengineering '21
"Cultures Across Cultures"

*Iceland, Greece, Inner-Mongolia/China,
Japan, Ireland, & Switzerland*

► Merk's project took her around the world to sequence and study the DNA of bacterial cultures within local yogurts. Many different countries have some form of fermented milk similar to yogurt, but the fermentation processes vary widely, along with the types of microbes that produce the product. Merk looked for genetic signatures that indicate how strains of bacteria have traveled and evolved across cultures.

► *"Invented almost 8000 years ago, yogurt has embedded itself across cultures, with communities developing their own ways of making, propagating, and sharing it. By living with dairy farmers, hearing deep-rooted family traditions, and sequencing microbes from local yogurts, I will learn how yogurt affects both bacterial diversity and diversity of thought."*



Liana's Culture Quest

My ability to travel across borders is highly dependent on COVID restrictions, so there will certainly be changes as my journey progresses. For now, here's my plan:

December: Toulouse, France

January: Rishikesh, India

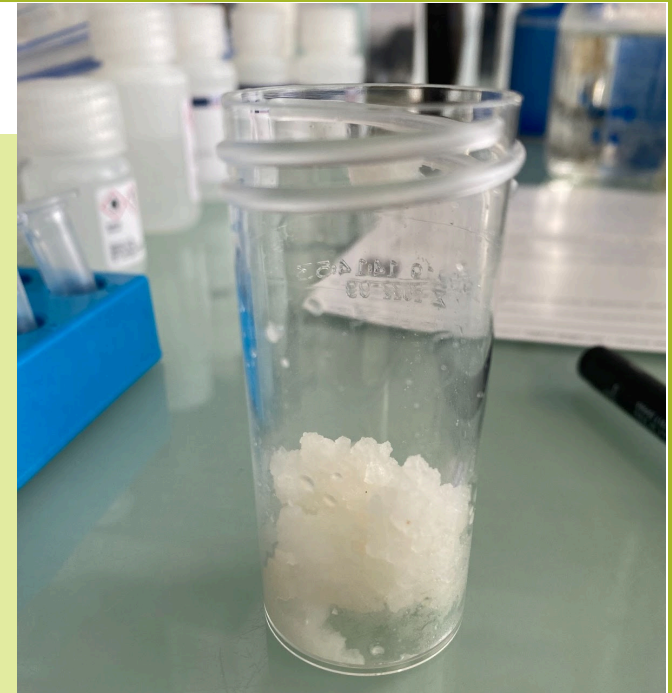
February: Singapore (here now!)

March - Mid April: Limerick, Ireland / Vitoria or São Paulo, Brazil

Mid April - end of May: Nagoaka, Japan

June: Athens, Greece

July - Mid August: Zürich, Switzerland



I would recommend as daunting as the process seems, just start now. Finding open doors will take time, and those will fuel your excitement to keep creating your project. The application has a personal statement and proposal component. I would recommend going through at least a few rounds of editing on these, and it will help your recommenders immensely if they can at least see a rough copy of these, so they can write better recommendations. So aim to have a draft by beginning of March, meaning you have about a month and a half to create an idea and get at least a few contacts.





Saehui Hwang, Electrical Engineering '22 "Touching Humankind: Wearables for Society"

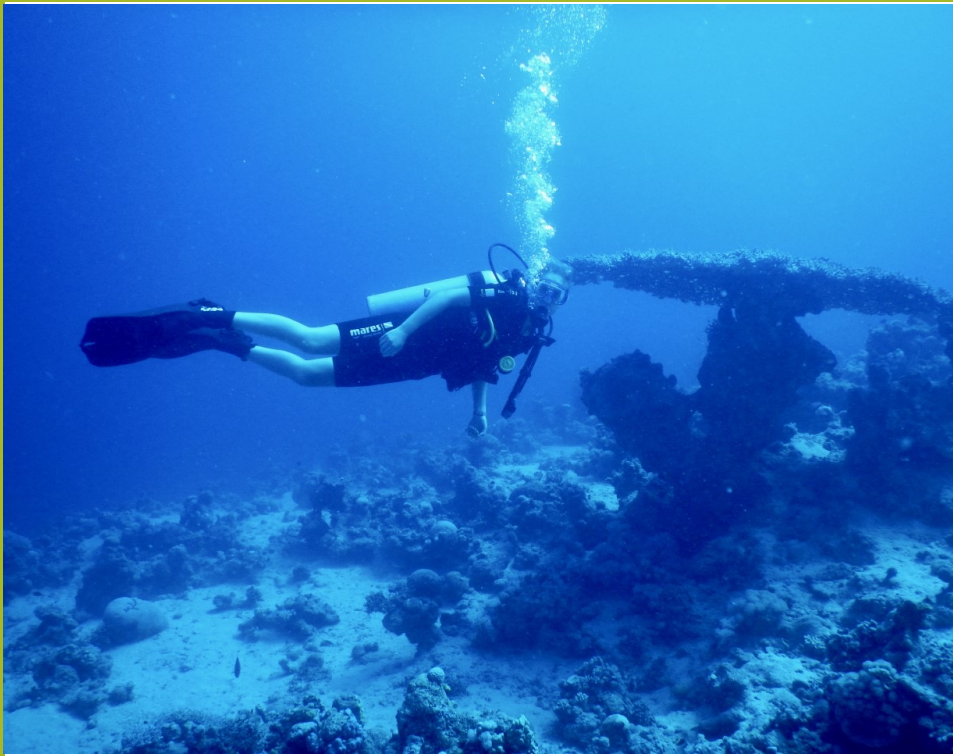
Togo, Switzerland, China

► "Engineering is a powerful tool for social equity. My project channels this passion through the design of human-centered wearable devices. From students to first responders, athletes to patients, my Watson year explores broad applications of wearables to serve the needs of populations that are too often overlooked."

In Togo, Hwang will work with nonprofit organizations that endeavor to eliminate barriers to education. There, she will look for opportunities to improve the educational outcomes of schoolchildren through the use of wearable educational devices.

Next, Hwang will travel to Switzerland, where she will design wearable devices that can track the well-being of police officers during strenuous training protocols. "These are people who suffer from fatigue on the job. If we could monitor their performance throughout their service, we could prevent injuries before they happen," she says. In Switzerland, Hwang will also explore the potential for designing performance-monitoring tools for Paralympics athletes.

Finally, Hwang will travel to China, where she will work on using printable conductive ink to create wearable electronic circuits.



FAQs

1. How to approach drafting your idea & advice on how to get started? *Meet with me and let's talk it out!*
2. Recommendations on selecting countries? *Pick places that best fit and work for the project.*
3. Advice on working w/ contacts, finding opportunities and people to work with: *Faculty, email, & internet research*
4. Tips for picking recommenders: *Read the questions*
5. General tips to consider for a successful application? *Think of your audience, this application takes time so start now.*





Here to help!

Meghan Kuroda, Caltech Watson Advisor:

mkuroda@caltech.edu

Available for emails, Zoom, or in person meetings. Office library open 8-5 pm M-F (Office closed for 12-1 lunch hour)

FASA website has the application materials and additional information:

<http://www.fasa.caltech.edu/fellowships>

Examples/Watson Fellows in our office and on the Watson website:

<https://watson.foundation/fellowships/tj/fellows>

Keep track of Covid cases, global vaccination rates, and general entry restrictions or requirements; be mindful when proposing countries:

<https://www.ciee.org/about/blog/health-risk-index-report>

[Travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov)

Remember everything due by:

5pm PST, on April 19th